

Week Three: The Language of Doubt

Doubt / [dout] *noun*: a feeling of uncertainty about the truth, reality, or nature of something. distrust or suspicion. a general feeling of uncertainty, worry, or concern. a state of affairs such as to occasion uncertainty. obsolete. fear; dread.

Discussion Starter: What first comes to mind when you think of the word “doubt”? What are some antonyms for “doubt”?

Context: This psalm is attributed to Asaph, a leader of one of King David’s choirs. Psalm 73 addresses a perpetual, disturbing question for people of faith: Why do perpetrators of evil so often prosper while the godly so often suffer? Follow the psalmist as he honestly speaks his doubts and grievances, and then as he encounters God in worship and is able to take heart in the midst of his doubts.

Scripture and Discussion: Read through the psalm silently for a couple of minutes, then have someone from the group read it aloud.

[Psalm 73](#)

- ¹ Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
- ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
- ³ For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- ⁴ They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.
- ⁵ They are free from common human burdens;
they are not plagued by human ills.
- ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace;
they clothe themselves with violence.
- ⁷ From their callous hearts comes iniquity;
their evil imaginations have no limits.
- ⁸ They scoff, and speak with malice;
with arrogance they threaten oppression.
- ⁹ Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the earth.
- ¹⁰ Therefore their people turn to them
and drink up waters in abundance.

¹¹ They say, "How would God know?
Does the Most High know anything?"

¹² This is what the wicked are like—
always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.

¹³ Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure
and have washed my hands in innocence.

¹⁴ All day long I have been afflicted,
and every morning brings new punishments.

¹⁵ If I had spoken out like that,
I would have betrayed your children.

¹⁶ When I tried to understand all this,
it troubled me deeply

¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.

¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground;
you cast them down to ruin.

¹⁹ How suddenly are they destroyed,
completely swept away by terrors!

²⁰ They are like a dream when one awakes;
when you arise, Lord,
you will despise them as fantasies.

²¹ When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,

²² I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.

²³ Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.

²⁴ You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

²⁷ Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God.

I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.

1. What do you notice about this psalm? What ideas, images or words stand out to you?
2. Which of the verses most reflects a doubt or emotion you have personally experienced? Have those feelings or doubts been resolved or do they ebb and flow? Share with the group as you are comfortable.
3. What can this psalm teach us about human nature? What do we learn about God and what He is like?

Group Prayer

Share your concerns and thanksgivings with one another and pray together. You could close your prayer time by reading verses 21-28 aloud together.

Throughout the week, practice turning Psalm 73 into a personal prayer.

One way to practice praying this particular psalm is in response to current events. Many times after watching the news or reading the newspaper, our hearts can become “deeply troubled” (v. 16), “embittered” or “grieved” (v. 21) by injustice and violence in the world. Use the words of this psalm to mirror your own feelings and experiences; follow the psalmist as he slowly releases these things to God who knows all and sees all and will ultimately bring justice and peace to all parts of the earth.