

Blown by Doubt*

BY JIM FANNIN

Acts 27:13-15

¹³ When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. ¹⁴ Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. ¹⁵ The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. (NASB)

Doubt is like the Apostle Paul's experience as his ship set sail from Crete. A light wind blows gently on your face as you leisurely sail toward your distant shore. You marvel at the changing shapes of the distant marshmallow-like clouds floating in a sea of pale, blue sky. As you sail leisurely and confidently toward your distant destination, you hardly notice the slowly stiffening breeze and the sky slowly filling with angry clouds growing darker by the moment.

Surprised by the distant rumble of thunder, you glance toward the sky as a lightning flash fades in the distance. Your confidence and peace are instantly replaced by fear as a spray of waves crashes across the bow.

Suddenly you realize you are far from shore, and it's too late to escape! The peace and certainty of your circumstances have changed. You now have doubts about your ability to survive the sudden and intense storm that has caught you unexpectedly in open waters.

The storm of Doubt has arrived!

Satan enjoys nothing more than seeing Christians helplessly floundering in an angry sea driven by wind and a cloud of Doubt. For those caught by Satan's attack, their soul is blown aimlessly about while robbing them of the peace, confidence, and assurance they thought they knew.

During the storm of doubt, Christians can be overcome by indecision and confusion about their relationships with their church, family, or Christ. Their

thoughts may be swept up in hopelessness, discouragement, and fear. They become unhappy and ineffective witnesses and perhaps negative witnesses for Christ.

Often in a sea of Doubt, spiritual growth stops. Life's joys are replaced by despair, often hidden by a facade of smiles, work, and activities. Doubt frequently becomes an emotionally driven cycle of Doubt and need for assurance.

The truth is ... all Christians face Doubt at some time in their life. But we see some Christians who seem to handle Doubt well and are always rock solid in their faith. What's the secret?

The secret to handling Doubt lies in the faith that comes from knowledge and understanding. The power of knowing and understanding God's Word is well documented. The secret is to turn to God's Word and trust the power of God to keep His Word. For instance, **Hebrews 4:12** says:

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (NASB)

Then we find in **Jeremiah 23:29**:

²⁹ "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock? (NASB)

The power of God's Word is indisputable. In the hands of the Holy Spirit working in our life, God's Word is sharp, able to see and discern our heart's very thoughts and true intentions. It's able to destroy the false and refines the truth. We must know the Word to know the truth, escape doubt, and remain confident. We can see the power of God's Word. Yet, we must do more than just see the power. To receive its power, we must first embrace and trust God's Word.

Paul then goes on to give us the next step in overcoming doubt. In **2nd Timothy 3:14-17**

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and

how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

In these verses, Paul tells us the next step to overcoming doubt is to trust our teachers, those Spirit-filled people who have been teaching us. He tells us to trust the working of the Holy Spirit's revelations that brought us to faith in Christ and the knowledge that is found in the God-breathed scripture!

Immerse yourself in God's word so you can guard against doubt, so your relationship with Christ is unclouded, your witness remains effective, your relationships are healthy, and so you can clearly see God's guidance in your life.

Be sensitive to those around you who may be struggling with doubt, offer an encouraging word, and guide them to escape doubt through immersion in the Word of God.

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