

# DOUBT

WHY WOULD A GOOD GOD ALLOW SUCH PAIN & SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?

HOW CAN A GOOD GOD BETRAY HIS PEOPLE?

DOES

MUCH OF THE

CHRISTIANITY

ISN'T ALL

EVERY DAY

IS CHURCH EVEN IMPORTANT?



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# INTRODUCTION

Doubts. Everybody's got 'em.

And, unfortunately, the church hasn't always done a good job supporting those who voice their doubts. They're often met with stock answers or insensitive advice, like "you just need to have more faith".

This fall, we want to invite our church to be content with being a safe place for the discontent. To listen well and patiently love. Jude 22 tells us to *Have mercy on those who doubt*. Think about the loyal love of Jesus for the guy known as *Doubting Thomas*!

We also want to invite anyone experiencing doubts to press in this fall as we address different doubts – obstacles to faith common to many – each week. If you haven't already, join a Life Group! Join the conversation and experience loving community who will walk with you, listen to you, and pray for you.

Can we challenge you a little bit? Don't just let your doubts fester. As Timothy Keller said, "*doubt your doubts*". And as Bruce Cockburn sang, "*kick at the darkness 'til it bleeds daylight*". Lean in, explore, listen, share, study, and pray with us.

Join us every Sunday this fall, and bring those in your life who are wrestling with doubts. We promise to roll out the welcome mat to anyone and everyone as we wrestle together with the biggest faith hang-ups in this cultural moment.

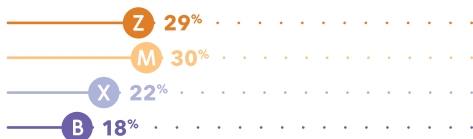
*Barna Group* in partnership with *Impact 360 Institute* did an extensive study of Gen Z (those born between 1999 and 2015) to pair with their data on earlier generations. Their findings on barriers to faith (primary faith doubts) form the framework for our sermon series this fall. They are not merely objections to Christianity from outside of the church, they are also the niggling doubts of those inside the church.

Our prayer is that as we thoughtfully and kindly engage the content and holders of these doubts, our faith in Jesus will grow, we will be better equipped to navigate our cultural moment, and we will lovingly engage the world around us with the gospel.

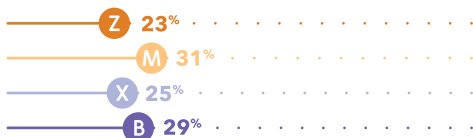
## Non-Christians' Barriers to Faith

**Z** Gen Z   **M** Millennials   **X** Gen X   **B** Boomers

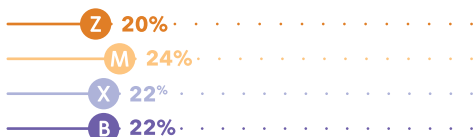
*I have a hard time believing that a good God would allow so much evil or suffering in the world*



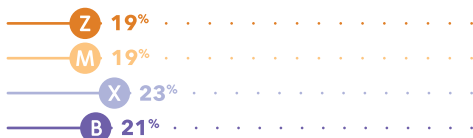
*Christians are hypocrites*



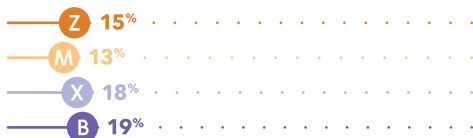
*I believe science refutes too much of the Bible*



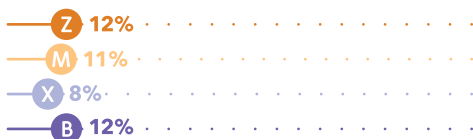
*I don't believe in fairy tales*



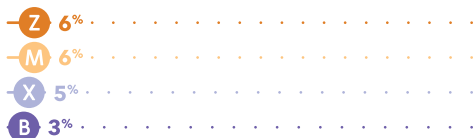
*There are too many injustices in the history of Christianity*



*I used to go to Church, but it's just not important to me anymore*



*I had a bad experience at church / with a Christian*



U.S. teens ages 13-18, n=621, Nov. 4-16, 2016. U.S. adults 19 and older, n=486, Nov. 4-16, 2016. Source: Barna Group

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Pre-Sunday Content includes a week of daily readings with suggested memory verses in order to prepare the mind and heart. (These readings do not always correspond directly with Sunday's text)
- Short introductions are provided in order to prepare you for the content of each doubt and Sunday session.
- A section is provided for taking sermon notes.
- The Post-Sunday Content is intended to guide you in your Life Group discussions or in personal study.
- Life Group Leaders, as you interact with the guide and sermon, feel free to write your own questions for the group in the space provided for note taking.

# LIFE GROUP TEMPLATE

Our Life Groups are more than Bible Studies, but they are certainly not less. Life Groups are small groups of believers and those exploring belief in Jesus who intentionally gather as community, supporting one another in the highs and lows of life and spurring one another on in the faith.

This includes the study of God's Word because it is our guide for faith and practice in the Christian life. Therefore, as we study a passage of Scripture as a group, the aim is to:

- Uncover the meaning of the passage
- Discover how it fits into the grand story of the Bible
- Discover how it applies to our lives  
(It is important to dig deep for the original intent of the author in its context prior to jumping to application)

The Bible is clear (there is an intended meaning in the text for us to submit to). Christians are called to live out those commands with conviction and humility. It is our prayer that this guide serves you well in your Life Groups and individual study.

As encouraged in the Introduction, please strive to contribute to the creation of a safe space for everyone in your group to share struggles, faith doubts and dialogue about what you are discovering in God's Word.

Outline of a typical Life Group gathering:

- Begin with evidences of God's grace or have someone share their faith story.
- Read the introduction to the week's study and ask an ice-breaker question.
- Work through a number of questions as a group (remember, it is not necessary to work through every question but to select a few that both help you discover the Truth of the text and apply it to the lives of your group).
- Close in prayer. Include things to praise God and give Him glory for; prayers of application of God's Word to your lives; and supplication - making the requests and needs of the group known to God.

# LEARNING TO LAMENT

## PSALM 13

Crying is human. We all cry. Just look at Pastor Matt! But lament is uniquely Christian. Lament is the biblical prayer language for those facing doubt, confusion, sadness, and despair.

A third of the 150 Psalms are lament. Think about that. The Psalms are the Jewish songbook and a third of their repertoire voiced and sat in the doubt-filled tension of life. The Psalms are where many of our songs in church come from. Yet, lament is often a missing part of our corporate gatherings.

We are beginning our series by learning to lament so that we have a framework – a prayer language – for turning to God when we’re confused, sad, and hurt.

One sermon on each topic is not going to perfectly satisfy your doubt. So we want to equip you with biblical prayer language so that you can bring your concerns to Jesus most of all.

There are 4 elements of biblical lament:

1. TURN to God for help
2. Bring your COMPLAINT to God
3. ASK boldly for help by calling on God to act
4. Choose to TRUST and put your confidence in God

## MEMORY VERSE

### Psalm 13:3

*Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;  
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death*

*"Lament is the song we sing in the space between pain and promise. It becomes the path between the poles of a hard life and trusting God's goodness. Lament helps us embrace two truths at the same time: hard is hard; hard is not bad."*

**Mark Vroegop**, Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy

### Psalms of Lament

<b>Personal</b>	
An individual vocalizing pain, grief, fear, or some other strong emotion	3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 39, 42, 43, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 70, 71, 77, 86, 120, 141, 142
<b>Corporate</b>	
Group or nation vocalizing pain, grief, fear, or some other strong emotion	12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 94, 123, 126
<b>Repentant</b>	
Individual or group expressing regret or sorrow for sin	6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143
<b>Imprecatory</b>	
Individual or group expressing outrage and a strong desire for justice	35, 69, 83, 88, 109, 137, 140
<b>Partial</b>	
Sections of lament within other Psalms	9:13-20, 27:7-14, 40:11-17
<b>Debatable</b>	
Psalms that some consider to be lament in total or in part	14, 41, 36, 52, 53, 63, 78, 81, 89, 106, 125, 129, 139

Sources: Rosann Catalano, "How Long, O Lord?" *A Systematic Study of the Theology and Practice of Biblical Lament*, (Doctoral Thesis, Toronto School of Theology, 1988), 59. Dennis Butcher, "Types of Psalms,"

## SERMON NOTES

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## SERMON NOTES

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## POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

### Understanding the Text

1. To whom is the psalmist presenting their laments?
2. What is the psalmist lamenting over?
3. The psalmist does not simply lament in their current circumstances. Instead they seek to get an answer. What is the psalmist asking God to do in the midst of their sorrow?
4. What disposition does the psalmist take while waiting for God to respond? What do they remind themselves of?

### Applying the Text

1. Often it is easier to disclose our deepest disappointments to others rather than turning to God and expressing our hurt. Why is this the case?
2. How can we begin to train ourselves to turn to God in our hurt, confusion, and disappointment? What obstacles might be in the way of this discipline?
3. The psalmist presses God to answer their call and address their hurt by asking God to "light up their eyes". How often do we seek God to answer in tangible ways in the midst of our hurt?
4. The psalmist's priority is that they would remain steadfast in the face of opposition. In what ways can we press God to "light up our eyes" and grant us perseverance and faith?
5. The psalmist does not end with a laundry list of requests and demands. Instead they end in reminding themselves of the past faithfulness of God in their life. How might this practice impact our current experience of suffering, hurt, and disappointment?
6. In what ways can we consistently remind ourselves of God's past work in our lives?
7. How might this disposition toward lament grant us capacity and opportunity to proclaim the gospel to our friends, neighbours, and co-workers?

# **WHY WOULD A GOOD GOD ALLOW SUCH EVIL & SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?**

**JOHN 11:1-44**

A brief survey of current headlines will reveal an undeniable reality of suffering and evil in our world. Alongside this grim reality there are philosophers, thinkers, and skeptics trying to address some of the questions that arise from such a broken world. Is there a God? Does this God care? Is this God good? Is this God powerful enough? How do we define good?

Although these academic interactions can be insightful, the more intimate struggle of personal suffering and experience of evil is what drives people to deeply question the goodness of God. The ethereal evil of the world out there takes on flesh and blood in our own experience with real scars and tangible consequences. It is in the midst of personal pain that we wrestle to understand how this could possibly be redeemed.

The account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead gives us significant insight into the nature of suffering and how Christianity uniquely addresses the pain we experience in this world. It is not only the miraculous healing of a dead man that gives us hope in the midst of pain, but how Christ approaches suffering, how he engages suffering, and how he answers suffering that is life altering.

## MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 50:20

*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*

## SUPPLEMENTAL READING

- |                          |           |                            |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MONDAY    | <b>Genesis 3</b>           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | TUESDAY   | <b>Genesis 37</b>          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | WEDNESDAY | <b>Genesis 41 &amp; 50</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | THURSDAY  | <b>Psalm 119:65-72</b>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FRIDAY    | <b>Isaiah 45:5-13</b>      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SATURDAY  | <b>Romans 8:18-25</b>      |

## SERMON NOTES

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## POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

### Understanding the Text

1. How does Jesus frame the illness of Lazarus? (vs. 4)
2. What is Jesus' disposition towards Lazarus' family? (vs. 5) What did that drive him to do? (vs. 6).
3. In verse 23 Jesus declares that Lazarus will rise again, but Martha seems to misunderstand. How does she interpret Christ's words? (vs. 24)
4. How do verses 33-35 clarify how Jesus responds to Mary and Martha's suffering?
5. Verse 42 gives a purpose statement for his prayer, but also brings back the stated purpose in verse 4. What is the purpose of this interaction with death and suffering?

### Applying the Text

1. What kinds of questions do you think Mary and Martha were asking as they waited for Jesus to respond?
2. Jesus directly links the suffering that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus experience with a means for bringing glory to God (vs. 4). Given that we often think of suffering as a result of our own guilt or sin, how does this reframe our understanding of suffering?
3. Christ knows the end of the story of Lazarus before it even began. Yet when he meets Mary and Martha he weeps with them. How does this frame God's disposition towards our suffering and pain?
4. Jesus could have healed Lazarus from far away or hurried to heal him before he died, yet he lingered and allowed the pain and sorrow of death to be felt. Why did Jesus do this? (vs. 25-27) How does this help frame our suffering?
5. Isaiah 45:7 indicates that God is sovereign over all things. For Joseph in Genesis 50:20, this is a comfort. For us it can be a stumbling block. What presuppositions do we hold that make this a challenging idea?

# HOW CAN CHRISTIANITY BE TRUE WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE HYPOCRITES?

ROMANS 7:19-8:1

In a world of prioritizing authenticity and a “you do you” attitude, hypocrisy is the unforgivable sin. This reality is particularly pointed for those in corporate, political, or religious leadership. It is of utmost importance that actions match the words spoken in order to maintain credibility.

Biblically, Christ followers ought to be people of grace, love, forgiveness, patience, kindness, faithfulness, goodness, and self-control (to name a few characteristics). However, more often than not, the typical experience with “Christians” is anything but the list above, rightly bringing into question the credibility of the church.

This reality ought to grieve authentic followers of Christ for two reasons. First, we should lament a Christian message focused on the goodness of Christians as opposed to the goodness of Christ. Second, as ambassadors of the gospel we should be saddened that our witness is tarnished by our sinful nature.

## MEMORY VERSE

Romans 7:24-25

*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with the flesh I serve the law of sin.*

## SUPPLEMENTAL READING

<input type="checkbox"/>	MONDAY	<b>Psalm 51</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	TUESDAY	<b>Jonah 3-4</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	WEDNESDAY	<b>Galatians 5:16-24</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	THURSDAY	<b>Romans 7</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	FRIDAY	<b>2 Timothy 3:1-9</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	SATURDAY	<b>Hebrews 12:1-14</b>

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## POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

### Understanding the Text

1. Read Romans 7:5-6. How does this passage frame the argument Paul makes from 7:7-8:11?
2. What is Paul's desire? What is his experience?
3. In verse 20 Paul identifies two entities (himself and sin). Why is this distinction important?
4. The reality of the internal battle of sin brings Paul to what realization? (vs. 24)
5. How does verse 25 help us clarify if Paul is talking about his pre-Christian or post-salvation life?

### Applying the Text

1. How does understanding the Christian life as struggling against sin help us address the accusation of hypocrisy?
2. Paul mourns the wretchedness of his propensity to sin (vs. 24). How might this disposition help address the accusation of hypocrisy levelled against Christians?
3. Paul's disposition towards the law of God is one of delight (vs. 22) and mental assent (vs. 25). How might we cultivate these attitudes towards the law of God as we struggle against the sin that indwells?
4. How does our inherent sinfulness work as an apologetic for the gospel?
5. How does the declaration of Romans 8:1 motivate and inform our Christian lives?

# DOESN'T SCIENCE REFUTE TOO MUCH OF THE BIBLE?

PSALM 19:1-6 | ROMANS 1:18-20

Atheist Steven Pinker has stated "The findings of science imply that the belief systems of all the world's traditional religions and cultures... are factually mistaken", and he is only one in a plethora of voices that discount faith in light of science.

The challenge is to understand the underlying assumptions inherent in declaring science as being opposed to theology. The question we ought to wrestle with is, how does the bible inform our scientific discoveries and hypotheses? In tandem, we might also ask how current scientific discovery challenges naturalistic assumptions and point more clearly to God.

As we press into both scripture and the world of science, we may just find ourselves agreeing with the professor of experimental physics, Russel Cowburn, when he declares, "Understanding more of science does not make God smaller. It allows us to see His creative activity in more detail."

**MEMORY VERSE**

Psalm 19:1

*The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

**SUPPLEMENTAL READING**

<input type="checkbox"/>	MONDAY	<b>Genesis 1</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	TUESDAY	<b>Job 38:1-7</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	WEDNESDAY	<b>Ecclesiastes 1:1-11</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	THURSDAY	<b>John 1:1-5</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	FRIDAY	<b>Colossians 1:15-23</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	SATURDAY	<b>Psalm 19:1-6</b>

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## POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

### Understanding the Text

1. How does the psalmist understand the role of creation?
2. How do verses 3 and 4 describe the scope of creation's witness?
3. In Romans, how does Paul see the unrighteous disposition towards the truth?
4. According to Paul, how has God revealed his invisible attributes?
5. What is the result of this revelation of truth? (vs. 20)

### Applying the Text

1. Has science helped or hindered your faith? Why?
2. Does the psalmist's declaration or Paul's exposition discourage or encourage scientific discovery? Why or why not?
3. How might the human condition (i.e. sin) impact our empirical study of the world around us? How might this reality shape our interactions with scientific discovery?
4. What limitations does science have? What strengths does science exhibit?
5. The empirical and methodological nature of science was developed by Christians who looked at creation and wanted to discover more about it. How does this inform our approach to science?
6. Where do you feel science has undermined the Bible? Have you pursued answers to your questions?

# IS CHRISTIANITY JUST ANOTHER FAIRYTALE?

2 PETER 1:16-21

Whether we enjoy getting lost in a miraculous story or watching the reaction of our kids as the impossible occurs, we all enjoy a well-crafted fairytale. The possibility of the fantastical captures the imagination and paves a way of escape from the “real world.” In fact, immersing ourselves in the fantastical is often preferred to dealing with the harsh reality of life. So, we dive into Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, or Game of Thrones.

The flip side of this cultural coin is the requirement for everything “real” to have a natural explanation. If fairytales contain the unbelievable, then reality ought to have natural, provable, repeatable evidence as its backbone. So, we build our house on the bedrock of science to create stability and predictability.

This two-tiered story brings into question the stories so often heard in the Bible. Are they simply another fairytale to help us deal with the harsh reality of life? How do we understand the miraculous events we encounter in the biblical text?

Peter’s answer is centred on the person of Christ and his historical ministry. Peter does not appeal to a spiritual reality but a physical one, which should inform our interaction with the stories of scripture.

## MEMORY VERSE

### **2 Peter 1:16**

*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

## SUPPLEMENTAL READING

- |                          |           |                               |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MONDAY    | <b>Acts 1:14-41</b>           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | TUESDAY   | <b>Luke 1:1-4</b>             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | WEDNESDAY | <b>Galatians 1:11-24</b>      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | THURSDAY  | <b>2 Peter 1:16-21</b>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | FRIDAY    | <b>1 Corinthians 15:1-11</b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SATURDAY  | <b>1 Corinthians 15:12-19</b> |

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## POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

### Understanding the Text

1. What does Peter emphasize about the story of Jesus in verse 16?
2. Peter declares that they were eyewitnesses to his majesty, but doubles down on their certainty by being eye witnesses to what?
3. What is Peter's conviction from this experience? (vs. 20)
4. How does Peter expand the reality of revelation from God? (vs. 21)

### Applying the Text

1. Why is the historical person of Jesus so important to the message of Christianity?
2. Why is it important that there were eyewitnesses to all that Jesus taught and accomplished?
3. How does the historical reality of Christ affirm the rest of the biblical text?
4. If Jesus is true, and he actually walked this earth and did what the Bible says, how will we need to change our understanding of reality?
5. Where does the evidence for a historical Jesus fall short of proving Christ? How does this challenge our faith?
6. How should the reality of Christ as a historical figure ground our evangelism?

# **DON'T ALL THE INJUSTICES IN CHURCH HISTORY DISCREDIT CHRISTIANITY?**

**2 SAMUEL 12:1-7**

When we think about church injustice the historical duo of the Crusades and inquisition immediately spring to mind. Unfortunately, the injustice has not remained in history or been limited to these two but continues to draw negative attention to the church as a whole. Whether one chooses to focus on the sins of the past or present, the injustice found in the church draws out legitimate questions about the church's message and purpose.

In a similar vein to the hypocrisy discussion above, the message of the church is significantly undermined by these tragedies. How could an institution with such visible corruption and flaws be the torch bearer of truth? How could the integrity of the Christian message be maintained in an environment so twisted?

As we examine the epic story of David's failure with Bathsheba we will begin to understand the relationship between sinful people called to be ambassadors and the perfect God who calls. It is in this relationship that we can begin to more clearly understand how injustice in the church does not discredit God, but exposes humans and their propensity towards sin, rebellion, and power.

## MEMORY VERSE

### **2 Samuel 12:5,7**

*Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die... Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"*

## SUPPLEMENTAL READING

<input type="checkbox"/>	MONDAY	<b>Psalm 1</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	TUESDAY	<b>2 Samuel 11-12:7</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	WEDNESDAY	<b>Romans 12:9-21</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	THURSDAY	<b>Matthew 23:1-36</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	FRIDAY	<b>Matthew 7:15-27</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	SATURDAY	<b>2 Timothy 3:1-9</b>

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## POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

### Understanding the Text

1. The Story of David and Bathsheba is familiar to most of us, which can result in us glossing over some integral details. What does the text say about what David did? (vs. 27)
2. In the interaction between David and Nathan, who is the representative of the Lord?
3. Why does Nathan use a parable instead of the “real story”?
4. What are the implications of Nathan identifying David as the man worthy of condemnation?

### Applying the Text

1. In context, David is the representative of the Lord to the people. His sin brings shame to himself and the Lord. Why is it important that Nathan is sent by the Lord to confront David and expose his sin?
2. Why has the church represented Christ so poorly at times?
3. Where has the church represented Christ well? How is this weighed against our failures? Why?
4. Why is it important to understand the difference between a representative and the actual authority?
5. How should the church respond when injustices are exposed, both past and present?
6. Does the failure of the church confirm or deny the truth of the gospel? Why?
7. How would accepting our failure, both personally and corporately, act as an apologetic to those God has placed in our lives?

# IS CHURCH EVEN IMPORTANT?

1 TIMOTHY 3:15

Given the previous questions about the historical injustices in the church and the hypocrites that call the church home, it would be rather natural to be skeptical of the value of the church. Is it really that important? Can the church offer me anything I cannot get from personal study and a beautiful walk in creation? Why is a gathering of sinners even necessary?

Yet the church is more than simply a place for people of the same faith to gather once a week. It is a community of encouragement, of correction, of support, and of love. The Bible calls it the bride of Christ and it seems that if you love Christ you would also love his bride.

Even more than that, it is the means by which God has ordained to keep and spread the gospel. It is God's means of bringing salvation, sanctification and support to the world. The church is a gathering of sinners in need of grace, but it is much more than that!

## MEMORY VERSE

### 1 Timothy 3:14b-15

*...I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*

## SUPPLEMENTAL READING

<input type="checkbox"/>	MONDAY	<b>Acts 3:42-47, 4:32-37</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	TUESDAY	<b>John 17</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	WEDNESDAY	<b>Matthew 18:15-20</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	THURSDAY	<b>1 Corinthians 12</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	FRIDAY	<b>Hebrews 10:19-25</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	SATURDAY	<b>1 Timothy 3</b>

## SERMON NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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## POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

### Understanding the Text

1. How does Paul describe the church in 1 Timothy 3:15?
2. What implications come from the different descriptors?
3. Whose is the church?
4. What is the truth Paul is talking about? (cf. vs. 16)
5. Why is Paul writing this particular portion to Timothy? (vs. 14 and 15)

### Applying the Text

1. This week's reading list should give us some idea what church should look like. Given the content in these verses, when we think of church, what should come to mind?
2. In what ways has the church been a blessing to be a part of?
3. Where has it been a challenge to be a part of the church?
4. The gospel states that we are all sinners prone to do wrong and are in desperate need of a saviour. Even once we turn our eyes towards Christ and trust him, we will, with the help of the Holy Spirit, spend our lives struggling against sin that easily entraps us. Given this context, what makes a healthy church?
5. It is important to be a part of the church for our own growth and for the growth of those around us. Scripture makes it clear the God has gifted each person to positively impact the church and help it thrive. What is your gifting and how are you investing it in the church?

## CONCLUSION

Can we level with you? We'll never be rid of all doubt this side of heaven. There's no way to tie up all the loose ends and slap a bow on them. But there is a well-worn road of saints gone before us available for us to travel on too.

It's a road of bringing your doubts to:

- Jesus in honest prayer;
- more mature followers of Jesus that you look up to;
- church with regularity;
- the Word of God for answers to your doubts - yes - but also for the daily sustenance you need in general.

### **For those walking with doubters**

A posture of kindness, patience, and listening well is at least half the battle. It can feel uncomfortable to sit in unresolved tensions or difficult to fight the impulse to rifle off a pat answer. Be a safe place by listening well, praying silently for the Spirit of God to give you wisdom, and be ok with keeping the conversation going over days, weeks, months, and years.

### **For those who doubt**

You're not alone. All of us have doubts. The severity and seasons vary from person to person, but we all got 'em. Find people in the church who are comfortable walking with you through them. Make sure Jesus is the One you bring them to first and most frequently. And hold your doubts up to as much scrutiny as you hold Christian doctrines to.

It's been said that you can doubt toward God, or you can doubt away from God. May we encourage you to doubt toward God. Your questions do not scare him, and the gospel can handle them. So, ask away.

*"The only way to doubt Christianity rightly and fairly is to discern the alternate belief under each of your doubts and then ask yourself what reasons you have for believing it. How do you know your belief is true? It would be inconsistent to require more justification for Christian belief than you do for your own, but that is frequently what happens. In fairness you must doubt your doubts. My thesis is that if you come to recognize the beliefs on which your doubts about Christianity are based, and if you seek as much proof for those beliefs as you seek from Christians for theirs – you will discover that your doubts are not as solid as they first appeared..."*

*A faith without some doubts is like a human body with no antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask the hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she failed over the years to listen patiently to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection."*

**Timothy Keller**, *The Reason for God*

## HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

**Mere Christianity** | C.S. Lewis

**The Reason For God: Belief In An Age of Skepticism** | Timothy Keller

**Making Sense of God: An Invitation To The Skeptical** | Timothy Keller

**Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion** |  
Rebecca McLaughlin

**The Problem of God: Answering a Skeptic's Challenges to Christianity** |  
Mark Clark

**Why People Stop Believing** | Paul Chamberlain

**Thinking?: Answering Life's Five Biggest Questions** | Andy Steiger w/ Sheri  
Hiebert

**Total Truth: Liberating Christianity From Its Cultural Captivity** | Nancy Pearcey

**Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics** | William Lane Craig

**Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian  
World** | James Emery White

**Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation** |  
A Barna Report

*Our Resource Library has a number of the books listed above as well as others  
that address the greatest faith questions you or others you love have. Check  
them out!*



This resource was created by and for  
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**MISSION:**

WE EXIST TO BE AUTHENTIC FOLLOWERS OF **JESUS** WHO LEAD OTHERS TO **FOLLOW HIM**.

**VISION:**

WE AIM TO SEE THE ENTIRE EASTERN FRASER VALLEY **TRANSFORMED** BY THE **GOSPEL** FOR THE **GLORY OF GOD** AND GOOD OF **ALL PEOPLE**.

**VALUES:**

**CENTRED** ON THE **GOSPEL**.  
**ROOTED** IN THE **BIBLE**.  
**GATHERED** IN **COMMUNITY**.  
**EMPOWERED** BY THE **SPIRIT**.  
**EQUIPPED** FOR **MINISTRY**.  
**SENT** ON **MISSION**.

# DOUBT

\_\_\_\_THE BIGGEST FAITH HANG-UPS  
IN THIS CULTURAL MOMENT\_\_\_\_