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*We can pray... despite  
intellectual doubts*

Recently I talked with a young man, who, because of his views about evolution, etc., thought he couldn't become a Christian. This potential believer had obviously been misinformed by well-intentioned Christians. The Bible clearly tells us that all we have to do to be "saved" is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30, 31).

Were these Christians introducing this young man to a set of theological tenets with intellectual proof, or were they introducing him to a Person who loves him? If to a Person, why not start with an introduction, make communication possible, and let them speak together?

"But what about repentance, forgiveness, the cross, and all the things you should have told him?" cries the eager, longing-to-be-right person.

Haven't you seen it happen? I have.

The moment that young man and I stopped talking *about* Christ and began to speak *to Him*, faith

asserted itself. The gift was given, the miracle took place. He belonged. Assurance was given in that very moment. Does anyone ever become a meaningful person to us until we meet and speak with them by name?

Later that same evening and all the next day, this young man recalled many things he'd heard about the Christian faith. He began to fit together truths which had appeared to contradict one another. His excitement over these discoveries was contagious. Now he was being taught by the Spirit of God.

Did anyone ever get a degree in Science by standing outside the science buildings and waiting for someone to convince him of the secret of the atom?

Is our God not great enough to reach a man just where he is? Is He limited by a certain pattern, a certain approach, a certain theology? Can we not trust Him to open whatever door is necessary for a searching heart to enter?

If we want to know we are loved by God, we should try to meet people who love Him. We would want them to give us an introduction and we would want to speak directly to Christ. We would want to be like little children coming home, coming in out of the long dark night. Certainly we would want someone to take us by the hand and welcome us.

We will do well to remember that all doubt is not intellectual, even though it may seem to be. There are usually some unseen emotional factors as we discovered in Chapter 8.

*A college student writes*

Dear Ros: What about the doubts *after* I'm a Christian? Can I still be a child of God and yet question the validity of the Christian faith? I think I believe

... I acknowledge the love and existence of Christ, but I don't seem to feel it anymore. K.

*My letter to her*

Dear K: It is not wrong to doubt. Doubt does not necessarily destroy faith. In the end it can strengthen your faith. Faith and doubt can coexist. You must not be afraid to question, and don't be too proud to ask. God's truth does not have to be defended. Trust is not based on 'feeling' but on Christ Himself.

You are coming into a maturity of your own where you must think these things through for yourself. Only then will you have a faith which is yours, not that of your parents or others.

Sometimes a mental picture helps us. Think of your left hand representing all your doubts and questions; your right hand, belief and trust in God. Shall you then cut off your left hand because it doesn't serve the same purpose as your right hand? With the loss of one, you hinder the other. Likewise, shall we cut off faith because doubt is present? It is equally unsatisfactory to submerge doubt in an effort to make faith continue.

"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," cried the father with his sick son there before Jesus Himself. He was heard, and received more than he asked, for our Lord is always a generous Giver.

Again, picture a chemical solution.

I sometimes hold my questions "in solution," (of faith) because I refuse to let that which I do not understand undermine that which I know. If I wait, my uncertainties will begin to crystalize, one by one, and sooner or later, I'll know and understand the truth.

C. S. Lewis did this. No doubt you've read some of his books? As a young man he repudiated his faith but later it all came back to him. His books are of two kinds: (1) those which proceed on a water-tight logical basis about things we need to believe—amazingly clear and simple—such as *Mere Christianity*; (2) those which deal with ideas and truths which cannot be reasoned out by human logic, but which are nevertheless true, such as his novel *Perelandra*.

Jesus Christ appeals again and again to the love-need in our hearts, seldom to the reason and logic of our minds. There are many good books on the validity of the Old and New Testament documents you should read for your own information, but it is well to remember that the power of love is greater than the power of reason.

I'd like to close this letter on a more personal note, and tell you that in my brief acquaintance with you, I admire you for your independent, honest thinking. Take your time now, don't feel pushed. My prayers are with you. Remember, God loves you. Jesus loves you. And so do I. —Ros.

P.S. (after receiving an answer to the above letter).

One sentence in that letter was more prophetic than I knew. "It is well to remember that the power of love is greater than the power of reason." I discovered through later correspondence, that one of the reasons for this deep disturbance was a growing relationship with a young man of Jewish background, and her inability to quickly bring some loose ends of her thinking together.



Counselors to young people soon learn to look for some deeper underlying emotional problem which triggers the more obvious, the intellectual one. Since we are susceptible to emotional situations, let us take time to work things out, for God has given us both emotion and intellect to act as a balance and counter-balance.

Pray to the Saviour who knows your thoughts before you utter them, and your own thinking will begin to clear.

Count on Christ being there, whether you feel like

it or not. He is there. He remains constant no matter how you fluctuate.

Read chapter 7 again, and come to Him as a little child. Speak directly to Jesus Christ—call Him by Name. Cast yourself before him—and then having done all this, go on with the business of living. He'll come through just at the right time. Something will catch your attention and give you "the message" just when you are ready—a book, a person, an event, a word, a song. Ideas will crystalize.

You have a lifetime to discover the answers to your questions. Growth and maturity come through asking questions. Creativity comes through alertness. Honesty is a vital part of growth, of having faith.

Sometimes it's more fun to find out what home is like from the inside than from the outside.

Home is a place where love is more important than unanswered questions.

Home is a place where one can learn through failure because there is love with caring, acceptance and communication.

Home is where there is a person who loves you.

Home is being with the Lord Jesus.



### *Some more questions*

1. Read the true or false statements which follow. Mark them.
2. What kind of a doubter are you?
  - a. Are you an honest doubter? Some people prefer to doubt, so they will never have to accept an answer, or make a decision.
  - b. Do your doubts stretch your mind and take

you beyond yourself? Or do they merely make you confused and critical?



*True or false?*

Read, mark, and give your reasons for or against in each case.

- ..... Faith and doubt can exist together.
- ..... One is stronger in his beliefs after he has questioned them.
- ..... If I have any doubts, I can't be a believer.
- ..... A man can become a Christian even if he does believe in evolution.
- ..... A man can be a Christian and believe in evolution.
- ..... I can be a child of God and still have questions about the validity of the Christian faith.
- ..... There has to be *more* than we know about God.
- ..... God has to be greater than ideas any mind or any book can contain.
- ..... Facing one's doubts honestly is the beginning of maturity.
- ..... One does not know what he really believes until he has had a few doubts and questions.

