

I Believe... I Think?

What to Do When Faith Feels Inherited

The Tension

Many of us grew up in church. We were baptized, attended youth group, went on mission trips. But somewhere along the way, a quiet question began forming: Is this faith actually mine or am I just running on my parents' spiritual momentum? That question feels dangerous. But it might be the most important question you ever ask—because faith that hasn't been tested isn't faith at all. It's assumption.

If you were totally honest, how much of your faith today feels like it's running on your parents' spiritual momentum, and how much feels like a choice you're actively making? What clues tell you that?

The Text

Primary Passage: James 1:2–8

James says to “consider it pure joy” when your faith is tested because it produces steadfastness (James 1:2–4). What has doubt or questioning actually produced in your life so far—deeper roots, distance from God, or something else? Why?

Supporting Texts: John 20:24–29; Acts 17:11; 1 Peter 3:15

Key Truth

Doubt is not the opposite of faith—it is the catalyst for making faith your own. God does not fear your honest questions. He invites them. The Bereans were called “noble” for examining Scripture to test what they were taught (Acts 17:11).

The Bereans were called “noble” for examining Scripture to test what they were taught (Acts 17:11). Where is the line between that kind of honest, Scripture-searching doubt and using questions as a way to stall or avoid actually obeying what you already know?

Discussion Questions

1. When did you first realize your faith might be more inherited than chosen? What prompted that moment?
2. James says to consider trials “pure joy” because testing produces steadfastness. How does that apply to intellectual and spiritual doubts—not just difficult circumstances?

3. Thomas needed to see and touch the risen Christ before he believed. Jesus didn't reject him for that. What does that tell us about how God handles our doubts?
4. The Bereans (Acts 17:11) examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true—and they were commended for it. How is that different from doubting to avoid commitment?
5. What is one belief you hold right now that you could articulate a reason for—not because someone told you to believe it, but because you've wrestled with it yourself?
6. What is the difference between asking honest questions and using doubt as an excuse to disengage from God?

The Takeaway

Write down one thing you believe about God, Jesus, or the Bible—and articulate why. Not because your parents said so. Not because your preacher said so. Because you've engaged with the evidence and the text yourself. This is the beginning of owning your faith.

Personal Reflection

What is one area of my faith I've never truly examined for myself? What would it take for me to pursue that question honestly?

What is one belief you hold about God, Jesus, or the Bible that you are not willing to let go of—even if people around you walk away? How did you come to own that belief for yourself rather than just inherit it?

My Notes