

Included in This Study Guide

- Looking Back Study Notes**

Looking Back

Matt Murphy and Titus O'Bryant *Question and Response*

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We're concluding the Don't Ask That series by responding to a handful of important but challenging questions. Working through the questions in this series is a reminder that our faith can be strengthened by responding to challenging questions. Consider how doubt is an inescapable part of faith and how we can help people grow from unbelief to belief with honesty and integrity.

My tradition teaches that no heart is as whole as a broken heart, and I would say that no faith is as solid as a wounded faith. Elie Wiesel

Many believers tend to think doubters are given over to meaninglessness, moral confusion, and despair. Many doubters assume believers are nonthinking, dogmatic, judgmental moralizers. But the reality is, we all have believing and doubting inside us. ...Both faith and doubt are needed, yet it is faith that is more fundamental. Even if I doubt something, I must believe there are criteria by which it can be judged. I must believe something before I can doubt anything. ~ John Ortberg

The deepest, the only theme of human history, compared to which all others are of subordinate importance, is the conflict of skepticism with faith. ~ Wolfgang von Goethe

Working It Out

1. How do you think the church or Christians normally respond to doubts...would you suggest any changes? Have you ever encouraged a friend who has doubts? What was that like?
2. Through this series have you felt encouraged, gained insights, or fielded questions about the topics we've explored together:
 - a. Is God real?
 - b. How can a good God exist in a bad world?
 - c. Can I trust the Bible?
 - d. Why are Christians so unlike Christ?
 - e. What about Old Testament violence?
3. Through the questions answered today, how was your faith encouraged...
 - a. How is Christianity different from other faith traditions—why is Christianity exclusive?
 - b. How could a loving God send people to Hell...even people who have never heard the gospel?
 - c. Is science opposed to faith?
 - d. Can someone lose their faith...is there an unpardonable, unforgivable sin?

- e. Why is Jesus' deity and resurrection so important? What if Jesus was just a good, moral teacher?
4. Paul faced a skeptical audience from elite society in Athens, as recorded in Acts 17. Read through Acts 17:24-34. What was the focus or main emphasis of Paul's presentation?
5. Can you identify any methods or strategies Paul used in communicating his faith? How could the response Paul received shape our expectations when sharing our faith?
6. After the Resurrection as Jesus spoke with his followers Matthew 28:17 says, "When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." How does this truth inform your perspective about faith?