

When Doubts Assail

By Dave Myer, Counselor



Most of us have encountered life situations that have shaken us to the core. During these times we become fertile ground for the enemy to sow seeds of doubt such as, *Does God see? Does God care? or Is God faithful?* During our doubts, it can feel like God is very distant and, possibly,

so offended by our thoughts of doubt that He closes heaven to our pleas.

Now, we certainly do not want to nurture thoughts of doubt. The Bible is clear about the importance of faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, *“Without faith it is impossible to please Him”* and James 1:8 says, *“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”* So then, what is God’s posture toward us when we are wrestling with thoughts of doubt?

I am thankful for illustrations from Scripture that demonstrate heaven is not deaf to our pleas as we wrestle with doubt.

In Luke 7 we read the account of John the Baptist doubting. This is John the Baptist who baptized Jesus, who heard the voice from heaven saying, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”* John is now in prison. After his disciples reported to him all the things Jesus was doing, John sent two of his disciples to Jesus with this question, *“Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”* John the Baptist doubted!

I suspect John may have been focused on the prophecy of the Messiah in Isaiah 61:1 that includes *“...to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound...”* (NKJV) Here John is in prison and Jesus is not showing up.

When you read this account, it seems like Jesus ignored John’s disciples and continued with His healing. Eventually, He told the disciples to go and tell John what they had seen, reminding John of another prophecy found in Isaiah 35:5-6: *“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing...”* thus, confirming the truth that Jesus was the Messiah.

Not only does it appear that Jesus was not offended with John struggling with doubt, but rather He commended him. As soon as John’s disciples depart to give him Jesus’ message, Jesus turns to the multitude and begins to honor John. He concludes with, *“...for I say unto you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.”*

I believe God understands and is not offended when we are tempted with sincere doubts, nor is His plan thwarted by our doubts. The Bible also records the times of doubt of other great heroes of faith.

Sarah laughed when told she would conceive in her old age. Her doubt did not cause the Lord to then say, *“OK then, be satisfied with Ishmael.”* No, Isaac was conceived.

Continued on next page

Deep Breaths

By Darla Hackman, Counselor

UPDATE ON MATTHEW

Matthew Gingerich has been doing well. We have been grateful for God's provision and healing. Scans have been stable the past year. We continue to believe in complete healing and trust the love of the Father. Thank you for praying for our family. – **Sam & Cathie Gingerich**

Zacharias doubted when told that he and Elizabeth, being barren, would conceive. He said, "How can I know?" John the Baptist was conceived despite his doubt. Some would view Zacharias's muteness as a punishment for his doubt. I view it differently. I believe he may have been given the "blessing" of being mute to increase his faith. Every time he tried to speak, he was reminded that they were going to have a baby.

The Bible story that I find most fascinating is that of Peter walking on the water. When Peter saw the waves, he doubted and started to sink. What makes this story intriguing to me is that Peter could swim. We learn this from the account in John 21:6-8 where the disciples had been out fishing all night but caught no fish. Jesus came along and told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. When they did, they couldn't draw in the net because it was so full of fish. Take note of verse 7— *"Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he...plunged into the sea."* (NKJV) Jesus could have become offended by Peter's doubt and told him to swim back to the boat, but He did not. Instead, He reached out and took him by the hand.

Situations in our lives will test our faith, and we will be tempted with thoughts of doubt. Friends, be encouraged. Heaven does not close to our pleas when we struggle with doubt. Let us, like John the Baptist, take our doubts to Jesus and allow Him to connect us to truth and increase our faith.

May God help us to this end.



"Take a deep breath." How often do you find yourself saying or hearing those words? This simple phrase can stir a variety of emotions and responses. Maybe you find yourself taking deep breaths when you are stressed, anxious or feeling the intensity of life, hoping the long slow breath will

bring perspective and a sense of calm. Maybe you find yourself taking deep breaths to absorb and enjoy the beauty of a moment, slowing down time to soak up the richness around you. For example, when I take a few minutes to sit on the front porch and linger with the sunrise, my heart is drawn to notice and worship God, orienting me for the day ahead.

The past year has given us all opportunities to take a deep breath. For many, the pandemic and other events have created extra stress, anxiety, and losses on various levels, including death. There have been deep sighs of sorrow and disappointment. Some have needed to take deep breaths to quiet their fears and settle the mind. For others of us, this past year has graced us with a slower pace of life and spare moments to absorb the simple beauty around us. There have been deep

PRAY FOR...

- Physical, emotional, and spiritual strength for the staff as they care for clients.
- Protection over our staff, clients, and facility.
- The 90 trainees who completed Core 1, Lab 1 and the 20 students who took Psych 1 & 2 this spring. Pray they would use their training to advance the Kingdom of God.

PRAISE GOD FOR...

- The healing He is granting Matt Gingerich.
- Our faithful prayer supporters.
- His faithful provisions for our needs.
- His Holy Spirit who guides, teaches, and comforts.

breaths—taking in the goodness of more time at home with family or leisure time to enjoy nature.

In my office, I hear people say that they long to feel more connected to God. They have significant head knowledge about who God is, but they long to know and experience Him in more personal ways. Perhaps one of the ways we can deepen our personal connection with God is to pause, take some deep breaths, and notice. As we slowly inhale and exhale, we can use the gift of our senses to tune in to the present moment. What we see, hear, smell, touch, and even taste can open our capacity to be aware of God in the present moment. The Psalmist encourages, “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps.46:10). How often do I miss noticing God’s presence with me because I am constantly on the go, or my mind is preoccupied with worry or uncertainty? Elijah, when looking for God, found Him not in the big and powerful displays, but rather in the gentle whisper (I Kings 19:11,12). How often do I miss God’s tender whispers because I am listening for a shout? He waits to be found in my days; it is I who often fail to see the countless ways He is present with me.

Our lives on this side of Heaven are often full and pass by quickly. Amid all that calls for our attention, let us not miss the opportunities to use our “deep breaths” to breathe in more of Jesus. Let us allow our physical senses to enrich and deepen our “God senses.” God’s invitations to be known are all around us. Oh, that we could notice and worship Him!

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

“The time I spent here with my fiancé was deeply encouraging. Our counselor helped us build up our strengths and work on our weaknesses. These few days were time and money well spent working on our relationship... I feel I understand myself, my fiancé, and our relationship better. The apartments were very comfortable.” – Texas

“This truly has been one of the best weeks of our married life! We have learned so much about giving and receiving love, and about caring for wounded hearts. A big THANK YOU to LCM for what you are doing; to our counselor for your compassion, understanding, and guidance; and to God for making this possible!” – Montana

Rocky Mountain Men’s Retreat

August 7-11, 2021

STILL ROOM FOR A FEW MORE MEN!

Contact the office for more information
Phone: 717.871.0540 or Email: info@life-ministries.com

LCM is offering a 6-week class for married women—
Letting Go: A Portrait of a Woman at Rest.

The course involves daily interactive emails, one group Zoom call per week, and journaling homework.

Next Class: Aug. 9 – Sept. 20th

For more information contact
Brenda at the office:
bhershberger@life-ministries.com
or 717-871-0540.



2021 MATCHING FUND

LCM is grateful to generous partners that have committed up to \$50,000.00 to our summer matching fund. Beginning in June, your donations will be matched, doubling the funds available to support the ministry over the lean summer months. Your donation allows the LCM staff to continue to care for those in our communities struggling with issues of life. We appreciate your faithful and generous support. God bless you!

– Glenn Hoover
Interim Director of Development

Ten-Course Subjects Offered in 2021

(Prerequisite course: Core 1, Lab 1)

- **Core 1/Lab 1** – Nov. 18-20; Jan. 20-22, 2022; Mar. 17-19, 2022
- **Marriage/Family** – Fall 2021
- **Counseling the Sexually Abused** – Fall 2021
- **Biblical Interpretations** – February 2022

To register for Ten-Course subjects, please contact the office.



Life Counseling
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250 Meadow Lane
Conestoga, PA 17516

Return Service Requested

2021 Upcoming Events

- **Father/Son Retreat** – Filled
- **Rocky Mt. Men's Retreat** – August 7-11, 2021

COMING SOON!

Video clips from the spring
Appreciation Event will soon be published
on our website. Check it out on

www.life-ministries.com/events/event-videos

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Life Counseling Ministries is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established to provide counseling for individuals, marriages, families, and church leaders. LCM also offers training and teaching through workshops and seminars. This newsletter is published quarterly and is available to interested persons at no cost.

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