

ASKING FOR A FRIEND I'M HAVING DOUBTS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

JUDE 22; 1 KINGS 18-19; MATTHEW 11:2-6

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IDENTIFY THE SOURCE(S) OF YOUR DOUBT AND PURSUE YOUR QUESTIONS.

Jude 22

And have mercy on those who doubt.

“Doubt is not unbelief. Unbelief is rebellion against evidence that we cannot or will not accept. Doubt is stumbling over a stone that we do not understand. Unbelief is kicking at a stone that we understand all too well.”

– Elmer Towns¹

“God suffers questions oftentimes to arise for trial of our love and exercise of our abilities. Nothing is so certain as that which is certain after doubts. Shaking settles and roots. In a contentious age, it is a wise thing to be a Christian, and to know what to pitch [set] our souls upon. **It is an office of love here to take away the stones, and to smooth the way to heaven.**”

– Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*

Troubleshooting your doubts

- Identify the source(s) of your doubt(s)
 - Do I feel physically exhausted?
 - Do I feel emotionally depleted? Increased or prolonged pressure at work or home.

1 Kings 18-19 The Prophet Elijah faced down 400 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

1 Kings 18:27 *And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” . . . 18:38 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.”*

1 Kings 19:1-7

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow."³ **Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life** and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. **And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."**⁵ **And he lay down and slept** under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "**Arise and eat.**"⁶ And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. **And he ate and drank and lay down again.**⁷ And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "**Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.**"

- Do I feel abandoned by God?

Matthew 11:2-6

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them."⁶ **And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."**

- Do I feel guilty because of an unconfessed sin or habit?
- Am I facing a tough objection to Christianity?
- Pursue your questions into the ground.
 - If all truth is God's truth, then you have nothing to fear from honestly pursuing your questions.

Jude 22

And have mercy on those who doubt.

Recommended reading and resources

- Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed* (1631).
- www.gotquestions.org

¹ Elmer L. Towns, "The Ministry of Doubt," *The Evangelical Beacon*, September 28, 1965, p. 6.