WP-16 FAITH IN PRACTICE

Overcoming Doubt

STATEMENT

Scripture never promises a life without doubt. It tells believers to expect doubt, to recognize where it comes from, and to overcome it deliberately by taking thoughts captive, remembering God's faithfulness and building trust with truth.

Read time **3 min** Sources & resources **4** Series **Faith in Practice** Author **Lee Gregory**

01 ABSTRACT

Many Christians feel guilty about doubting, as though doubt proves their faith is fake. Scripture is more realistic. Even a father begging Jesus to heal his son cried, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). This paper looks at what doubt is, why it comes, and the practical tools Scripture gives for defeating it.

02 WHAT DOUBT IS

In James 1:6 the word translated "doubt" is **diakrinomenos** (Strong's 1252): to be divided, to hesitate, to waver. The person who doubts is "double-minded" (**dipsychos**, Strong's 1374), literally "two-souled," and "as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind" (1:6–8). Doubt is not a lack of information. It is divided loyalty between what God said and what circumstances say.

03 WHERE DOUBT COMES FROM

Trials and temptations, including the temptation to quit, produce doubt. James says to expect them: "when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow" (James 1:2–3). The word for endurance, **hypomonē**, means steady, patient perseverance. Joseph waited years in prison "until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the LORD tested Joseph's character" (Psalm 105:19).

Doubt is also an attack. The word "devil" (**diabolos**) comes from *dia*, "through," and *ballō*, "to throw": one who keeps throwing accusations until something penetrates. Paul says, "do not give the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:27); the Greek **topos** means a specific place, an area of life such as money, health or marriage.

04 HOW TO OVERCOME IT

Take thoughts captive. "We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Doubts are thoughts; they can be identified, challenged and replaced.

Encourage yourself in the Lord. When David's own men talked of stoning him, "David found strength in the LORD his God" (1 Samuel 30:6). Recall what God has already done.

Build trust with truth. Apologetics, the reasoned case for the faith in this library, tears down arguments raised against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:5) and gives us confidence in God's promises. Peter tells believers to be ready to explain the reason for their hope (1 Peter 3:15).

Ask for wisdom, and don't waver. "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you" (James 1:5). Then settle it.

05 SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT

OBSERVATION	DATA & SOURCE	CONFIDENCE
Doubt is expected	Mark 9:24; Luke 24:38 (Jesus to the disciples: "Why are your hearts filled with doubt?").	HIGH
Doubt means divided loyalty	James 1:6–8: diakrinomenos (wavering), dipsychos (double-minded). James 1 ↗	HIGH
Trials test and grow faith	James 1:2–4; Romans 5:3–5; Psalm 105:17–19.	HIGH
Thoughts can be captured	2 Corinthians 10:4–5.	HIGH
Encouraging yourself in God	1 Samuel 30:6.	HIGH
Reasoned faith is commanded	1 Peter 3:15.	HIGH

High = directly measured, or stated plainly in the text. **Moderate** = well-supported, with recognized debate. **Interpretive** = consistent with the text, but depends on how the passage is read.

06 OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

OBJECTION

If I doubt, my faith must not be real.

RESPONSE

Scripture records doubt in Abraham, Moses, David, John the Baptist, Peter and Thomas. Doubt is not disqualifying; staying in it is the problem. James gives a process for moving out of it.

OBJECTION

Anxiety and doubt can have medical causes.

RESPONSE

Yes, and medical care is appropriate (Luke was a physician; Paul advised Timothy on his health in 1 Timothy 5:23). Scripture's call to take thoughts captive works alongside medical treatment, not against it.

07 CONCLUSION

Doubt will come. It comes through trials and through accusations aimed at specific areas of life. Scripture's answer is

deliberate: recognize the thought, capture it, remember what God has already done, build trust with truth, ask for wisdom, and settle on God's Word instead of wavering.

> *"I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!" Mark 9:24*

08 FURTHER RESOURCES

SCRIPTURE **James 1: testing and wisdom** New Living Translation
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%201&version=NLT

SCRIPTURE **2 Corinthians 10: taking thoughts captive** New Living Translation
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2010&version=NLT

TEACHING **Logical and illogical strongholds** Rick Renner Ministries
https://renner.org

Biblical Worldview White Paper Library