

D. You Might be Living by Your Feelings

“I would draw attention to the danger of thinking that we are not Christians at all because we have not had some particular type of feeling or experience... I am thinking of people who hear others, while talking or giving their testimony, testifying to some wonderful feeling, and they say to themselves: ‘I have never had that.’ And they begin to wonder whether they are Christians at all. Feelings must be engaged in true Christianity, but the mere fact that we have not had certain particular feelings does not of necessity mean that we are not Christian.” *Spiritual Depression*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, p. 112-113

“... Your business and mine is not to stir up our feelings, it is to believe. We are never told anywhere in Scripture that we are saved by our feelings; we are told that we are saved by believing. ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ Never once are feelings put into the primary position. Now this is something we can do. I cannot make myself happy, but I can remind myself of my belief. I can exhort myself to believe, I can address my soul as the Psalmist did in Psalm 42: ‘Why are you cast down O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope... believe... trust. That is the way. And then our feelings will look after themselves. Do not worry about them. Talk to yourself, and though the devil will suggest that because you do not feel, you are not a Christian, say: ‘No, I do not feel anything, but whether I feel or not, I believe the Scriptures. I believe God’s Word is true and I will stay my soul on it, I will believe in it come what may.’ Put belief in the first place, hold on to it.” *Spiritual Depression*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, p. 112-113

2 Timothy 1:9-12 "Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel... **for I know** whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."

For Personal Reflection

- Do you doubt your salvation? If so, how frequently?
- When it comes to sin in your life... do you stumble or wallow? Are you a ‘sheep’ or a ‘pig’?

Soul Check

Are You Doubting or Delighting in Your Salvation?

Am I the Only One Having Doubts?

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“I felt at that time very weary, and very sad, and very heavy at heart; and I began to doubt in my own mind whether I really enjoyed the things which I preached to others. It seemed to be a dreadful thing for me to be only a waiter, and not a guest, at the gospel feast.” C.H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography, Volume 2: The Full Harvest*, The Banner of Truth Trust, p. 365

“I am often surprised to find how my doubts can mingle so freely with my faith. Even at moments of most intimate prayer, a doubt - like a fly tapping and buzzing against the windowpane - can flicker at the edge of my thinking.” *Your God Is Too Safe*, Mark Buchanan, p. 61

- Does the Bible say anything about doubt?

Jude 20-22 ²⁰ But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, ²¹ and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God’s love. ²² And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering.” *New Living*

NIV “Be merciful to those who doubt.”

TWO WARNINGS

- I. **Don’t Make the Mistake of Putting Doubt in the Same Category as Unbelief**

Doubt is not the same as unbelief.

Mark 6:3-6 “... And they were offended at Him... and He could do no mighty work there... and He marveled because of their unbelief...”

Acts 19:9 “But some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way...”

Or:

Mark 9:23-24 “Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.’ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!’”

“Doubt may lean in one of two directions. It may be skeptical doubt leaning away from faith and toward unbelief, or doubt that is straining toward faith but lacking in something. Often what is lacking is a more thorough understanding of the truth. As pieces of the truth increasingly fall into place, they are wholeheartedly embraced.” *How Can I Be Sure I'm a Christian?* Donald Whitney, p. 21

Don't be too hard on yourself if you're guilty of doubts from time to time; that's not the same thing as hardened unbelief.

II. Don't Try to Fight Fuzzy Doubt - Instead Ask God to Help You Find the Source of What's Feeding Your Doubt

A. Your Spiritual Immaturity Could be the Source of Your Doubts

The more you begin to drink in the details of what Christ did for you, the more assurance you'll have. The more you begin to see of GOD in your salvation instead of YOU, the more confidence and assurance you'll have.

2 Peter 3:18 “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...”

Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

B. Satan Could be Attacking and Taking Advantage of You

Revelation 12:10 “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’”

Zechariah 3:1-4 “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. ² The LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke

you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?’ ³ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. ⁴ The angel said to those who were standing before him, ‘Take off his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.’”

C. You Might be Dealing Poorly with Your Own Sin

There are two extremes that Christians are guilty of:

1. Being overly sensitive to your sin – devastated and unable to move on every time you spot sin in your life
2. Being careless and lazy about sin – indulging the flesh and making excuses

If a Christian doesn't understand he's been given new eyes, he might lose heart as he sees his sin-infested heart.

“As long as I am stricken with the guilt of my sins, I will be captive to them, and will often find myself re-committing the very sins about which I feel most guilty. The Devil is well aware of this fact; he knows that if he can keep me tormented by sin's guilt, he can dominate me with sin's power.

The gospel, however, stays sin at this root point and thereby nullifies sin's power over me. The forgiveness of God, made known to me through the gospel, liberates me from sin's power because it liberates me first from its guilt; and preaching such forgiveness to myself is a practical way of putting the gospel into operation as a nullifier of sin's power in my life.”
The Gospel Primer, Milton Vincent, pg. 19

Romans 7:14-25

“Sheep and swine both end up in the mire. Yet the essential difference in their two natures is quite visible from the reaction each has to its fallen condition. While sheep do stray and stumble into the mire, they quickly loathe the situation and struggle to get free. They may be dirty, but they desire to be clean. They may be stuck, but they bleat for their shepherd to come and save them out of the muck. But swine, in keeping with their nature, wallow in the muck, content to stay there all day... authentic Christians can and do fall under temptation and into the mire of sin... The apostle Paul prepares us for this: 'Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness' (Galatians 6:1).” *The Great Work of the Gospel*, John Ensor, p. 126-127