

## WEEK 1: CAN I STILL BE A CHRISTIAN IF I HAVE DOUBTS?

### ABOUT THIS SERIES

As we start the new year, join St. Mark on Sunday mornings for conversations on faith and doubt in our series *Reason for God*. Together, we'll take on some of the common questions people have about faith and Christianity.

### ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles

### CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

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|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for your group | <input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Discussion Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean meeting area  | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathroom                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Crack front door        |

### OPENING (5 MIN)

*After a general welcome, say:* Hey everyone! Hope your new year is going well. Let's start with a quick icebreaker—

### WHAT'S THE BEST BOOK YOU'VE READ RECENTLY?

*After a brief discussion, say:* Whatever the best book you've read may be, we're in a series based on another book called *The Reason for God* where we're going to have an honest conversation about faith and doubt. Today, we're going to examine the idea *Can I Be A Christian if I Still Have Doubts?*

Before we get started, will you please pray with me?

### OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

*Host, lead the group in prayer.*

### ABOUT DOUBT (APX. 10-12 MIN)

*After a prayer, say:* We're all at different places on our faith journey, and we all wrestle with different doubts.

### IT'S A VERY SHORT BOOK IN THE BIBLE, BUT CAN SOMEONE READ JUDE 1:22 ALOUD FOR THE GROUP?

### WHY DO YOU THINK THIS INSTRUCTION FROM SCRIPTURE IS IMPORTANT?

*After a discussion, say:* On Sunday we heard that doubt is not unbelief, neither is doubt the absence of faith. Rather "doubt is the evidence of faith".

### DOES THE IDEA THAT DOUBT IS EVIDENCE OF FAITH BRING YOU PEACE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

### WHY DO YOU THINK DOUBT IS SUCH AN UNSETTLING TOPIC FOR CHRISTIANS?

### ABOUT FAITH (3-5 MIN)

*After a discussion, say:* This new idea of doubt gives us an interesting way to think about faith. On Sunday we talked about how faith “fills in the gaps” between what we know and what we can’t or don’t know. By this definition—from the atheist scientist to the theistic farmer—everyone has faith in something. By extension, everyone’s faith can doubt.

### **IF YOU’RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, WHEN HAVE YOU SEEN GOD BE FAITHFUL TO YOU?**

### HELP MY UNBELIEF (10-12 MIN)

*After a discussion, say:* Today in our Small Group we’re going to read a story from Mark’s biography of Jesus that highlights faith, doubt, and unbelief. It then ends with a simple prayer we’ll pray to close our time together.

### **EVERYONE TURN TO MARK 9:14-29 SO WE CAN FOLLOW ALONG. CAN I GET A VOLUNTEER TO READ IT ALOUD FOR US?**

*After the reading, say:* There are some interesting things to consider about faith, doubt, and unbelief in this reading.

### **WHY DO YOU THINK THE DISCIPLES DOUBTED THEY COULD CAST OUT THE DEMON?**

### **DO YOU THINK THE FATHER IN THE STORY HAD FAITH IN JESUS? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

*After a discussion, say:* The father asks Jesus, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.”

### **IF YOU’RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, WHAT ARE YOU STRUGGLING (OR DOUBTING) TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOD RIGHT NOW? IT MIGHT BE A CONCEPT ABOUT GOD OR A BELIEF THAT GOD WILL DO SOMETHING.**

*After a discussion, say:* When we pray in just a moment, we’re going to pray that prayer in unison, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.” It’s a prayer for both the things we discussed, but also as a prayer for this entire series.

### CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT AND PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

*After a discussion, say:* Speaking of prayer—

### **ARE THERE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?**

*Host, after taking prayer requests, close out the group in prayer.*