



The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Draw Closer to God

Gary R. Habermas

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by Professor Gary R. Habermas

Originally published by Broadman & Holman: Nashville, TN (1999).

Professor Gary R. Habermas wrote this book for 'Christians who doubt' as well as those who are just a little unsure about their faith. The chapters are available separately, and can all be accessed from the links below (some are not yet available).

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Introduction: Defining Religious Doubt

Professor Habermas gives the background to his book, explaining his own battle with doubts and his experiences of meeting many people with doubt. He explains that doubt can take a number of forms, and surveys the words used in the New Testament to express 'doubt'.

Chapter 1: Both Believers and Unbelievers

It is not just believers who suffer doubt. Atheists can also doubt their atheism! Almost everyone doubts their beliefs at some time. Old and New Testament examples are given of believers who doubted, and lessons from these are drawn out.

Chapter 2: Common Myths

Some of the common myths about doubt are dispelled, considering what doubt is and does, as well as what it is not and does not do!

Chapter 3: Two Species of Doubt

Three species of doubt are identified - factual, volitional and emotional. Emotional doubt is the key concern of the rest of this book, but this chapter investigates doubts arising from factual questions and from issues relating to the will. Ways to identify these two species of doubt are given, and factors that lead to or aggravate such doubts are also discussed.

Chapter 4: Emotional Doubt: What If ... ?

In this chapter, Professor Habermas narrows his focus onto Emotional Doubt, the most common, and most distressing, form of doubt. The chapter looks at how to identify emotional doubt and then at some of the factors that can lead to it.

Chapter 5: A Solid Foundation

Professor Habermas briefly explains the factual and historical basis of Christianity, which is the essential backdrop when dealing with emotional doubt. Christians do not believe that Christianity is true because believers are helped with emotional and other problems. Rather, believers can be helped by their Christian faith precisely because Christianity is true.

Chapter 6: Mapping a Specific Strategy

This chapter is the first of three which describe one process which can help to conquer emotional doubt. Some Biblical principles are described, based on Philippians 4:6-9, ensuring that our thoughts reflect God's truth.

Chapter 7: Additional Suggestions

Further practical advice on overcoming emotional doubt.

Chapter 8: Practice! Practice! Practice!

This chapter addresses the need to apply the principles described in previous chapters. Additional steps that can be taken to help to overcome emotional doubt are also described.

Chapter 9: Living with Questions

Sometimes we have to accept that there are some questions we simply cannot answer definitively. This chapter considers how we live with elements of doubt and with differences between Christians.

Chapter 10: Negative and Positive Consequences

This chapter considers the negative consequences of religious doubt, but also emphasises the positive consequences that can follow when it is properly addressed.

Please note that some of the chapters have been slightly edited for use on bethinking.org.