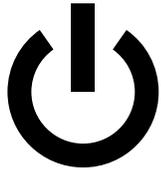


Speaker: Hillary Morgan Ferrer

Title: Diagnosing Doubt

Key Verses: Matt. 11:1–15; Eph. 6:12; 1 Kings 19:1–18; John 16:33

Summary: We keep doubt from gaining a foothold when we diagnose it.



Power Up: Take a moment to prepare

Everyone has doubted God at some point – His promises, nature, or plans for life. Share a doubt you have wrestled with. (You can diagnosis later!)



Replay: Take some time to watch

Note the flow of Hillary's talk: **1)** false definitions of doubt; **2)** diagnosing doubt; **3)** doubt and our God-given design (mind, will, emotions, spirit); **4)** four main sources of doubt (emotional, behavioral, intellectual, spiritual)



Comment: Take some time to talk

What are some common misunderstandings of doubt?

How does doubt affect our emotions? Choices? Bodies? Beliefs?

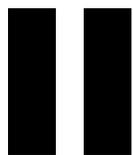
Hillary debunks the myth: "Doubt is evidence for weak faith." *Who gives a picture of strong faith despite doubts in the Bible? Church history?*

When diagnosing doubt, what steps does Hillary suggest?

Hillary describes three kinds of people. *Who are they? Which are you?*

What are some examples of cognitive dissonance in your life? How does this apply to your spiritual beliefs?

What are the four kinds of doubt? What are the best ways to respond to each kind of doubt? Which kind of doubt have you faced?



Pause: Take a moment to pray

Thank God for the gift of faith and space to doubt. Thank Him for loving people with whom we can share our doubts. Ask Him for wisdom as we listen to those struggling with doubts. Ask Him for grace in our doubts.



Take Action: Take a step forward

Give a name to your doubts. Write them on an index card. Attach a label to the kind of doubt you're facing. Then talk with a trusted adult about your doubts to hear their insights.

Bonus Features | Additional Notes and Quotes from Hillary Morgan Ferrer

Power Track Summary: Doubt is a master of disguise. But it does not necessarily mean your faith is weak. There can be a lot of other factors that shape our doubts, some within your control and some not. Whether you struggle with doubt or have a friend that does, this Power Track discusses four main areas where doubt gains a foothold, symptoms of doubt, and strategies to identify and address the various types of doubt.

About the Speaker: Hillary Morgan Ferrer is a wife, mother, scientist, speaker, writer, and apologist. More information can be found at www.mamabearapologetics.com

“Generic advice for specific problems will not help us... There is power in a diagnosis. There is power in a name. You can't fight an enemy without a name.”

False Definitions of Doubt

- “Doubt itself is sin.” (Actually, in Eden, doubt preceded sin.)
- “Doubt is uncommon.” (Actually, everyone has some doubts)
- “Doubt is evidence of secret sin.” (Actually, doubt is natural and healthy to talk about.)
- “Doubt is always bad.” (Actually, doubt can show you something deeper is wrong.)
- “Doubt will go away if you shove it down.” (Actually, it may later come out worse.)
- “It's possible to have absolute certainty.” (Actually, faith is necessary.)
- “Doubt is evidence of a weak faith.” (Actually, great saints have expressed doubt.)

A Background Check for Diagnosing Doubt

How long have they been a believer? “New believers have so many questions. Asking questions is not the same thing as questioning authority.

What is their history? Her husband is an atheist magnet.

Do they have a history of abuse and trauma? It changes their physiology.

Are they from a legalistic church? Almost every atheist has some hyper-fundamentalist church background.

What was their relationship to their father? Many atheists are estranged from their dads.

What is their personality type? Thinker/feeler/doer

“Emotions are a bad place to find truth.”

Doubt and Our God-given Design

We are created to think, feel, and act in truth. We are created for consistency in the mind (what I think), will (what I do), emotions (what I feel), and spirit (what I truly believe).

“What you truly believe isn’t manifest until you look at what you think, do, and feel.”

“Doubt moves through a person.”

“**Cognitive dissonance** is a psychological discomfort felt by individuals when their thoughts, beliefs, and actions are inconsistent with one another.”

“Your mind and your brain are always watching what you are doing and drawing conclusions.”

Four Main Sources of Doubt

1. **Emotional doubt** disguises itself because we don’t want to admit we’re driven by emotions; cannot be answered by intellectual answers, but intellectual answers can uncover emotional doubt; often comes down to a trauma for felt need.
 - a. **Expectational doubts** occur when God does not coordinate life according to our dreams/expectations. “The solution to expectational doubt is good theology.”
 - b. **Conditioned doubts** result from negative emotions tied to God, church from an endless number of things (gossip, divorce, feeling left out). Bad conditioning will be broken through genuine relationships with believers that breaks negative stereotypes.
 - c. **Transitional doubt** happens when a major transition (marriage, divorce, college) throws our worldview into question. We must reevaluate every piece of the puzzle.
2. **Behavioral doubt** surfaces to defend poor choices and bad behaviors; it rationalizes sin. “The mind cannot believe what the heart cannot obey.”
3. **Intellectual doubt** results from unanswered questions but usually masks other kinds of doubt. True intellectual doubters are big question askers. They admit if a good point is made; genuinely curious. False intellectual doubters are skeptics, not truly looking for truth/answers. They’re angry. They ask questions to “Stump the chump.” They rarely cede a point.
4. **Spiritual doubt** reflects the spiritual battle raging in the unseen world. Often it’s signified by an ability to articulate the doubt; deep angst. Verbalized prayer and worship, as well as bodily rest help counter spiritual doubt.