



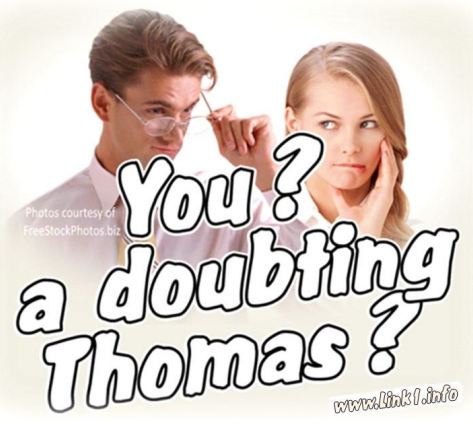
Article Title— "You a 'Doubting Thomas?'"

Article Category— Practical Christianity



Are you a doubting Thomas? Have you ever been accused of it? If you are or have ever been a churchgoer, have you ever heard something or observed something in church that didn't sound or feel quite right? If so, have you kept those thoughts and feelings to yourself? Have you also felt guilty about entertaining those thoughts and feelings? If so, then we have something in common. That something may well be our mutual key to learning what's true and what's new! God's Written Word is Original Truth. That, alone, matters. As you are to soon learn or confirm, that is not sensibly debatable.

For decades before my 2006 retirement from a rewarding secular career, I was also an adult Bible teacher. By the measure that is currently acceptable within familiar Christian circles I was a very successful Bible teacher—large Sunday morning sanctuary classes. As with other Bible teachers and preachers, my primary study curriculum was prescribed, printed and distributed by our denomination.



The denominational literature always directed me to the Bible passages that would yield competence to deliver each prescribed message. I was faithful to study those passages diligently and prayerfully in preparation for each Sunday morning lecture. I became an effective spokesman for our denomination's "what 'we' believe" franchise. (Every denomination has one of those.) Fully literate and reasonably intelligent, I never learned the pleasure of limiting my study to God's written word...until later. Frankly, I wouldn't have known HOW to do that. After all, our denominational leaders had done and were doing that for me...well, weren't they? Who was I, a mere layman, to question the superior knowledge and insight of God's anointed ones, the professional clergy?

Annually, our churches praise those who've read the entire Bible, cover to cover. To understand the folly of that practice, ask any of the honorees to explain what they learned from their 12-month experience. You may already know that "reading" and "studying" aren't even first cousins. But are you and I any better, by comparison? I say no. There are several important reasons for it that I dare not mention at this early point in our learning relationship. But you can discover each of them for yourself by becoming a regular visitor of our www.Link1.info site. For now, though, I'll share three of the more obvious reasons why I think you and I are probably not much better off than those who dutifully read the entire Bible through each year:

- 1 "Life happens." Arguably, it is almost impossible to find or even make TIME for a serious and reasonably productive study of God's Written Word while working a job, pursuing a career or even being a stay-at-home parent. There is no reason to feel guilty about that; it's just the way things are. But we might be wise to come to agreement on a definition of "a serious and reasonably productive study of God's Written Word," though. Here's my working definition—
 - A. A fully organized, on-going series of topic-specific personal Bible research projects that include comparisons of multiple English-language translations[^] of the Bible.

[^]Several of the Bible "translations" are little more than paraphrases (i.e.: commentaries), instead, and several other "translations" are of questionable Greek and/or Hebrew manuscripts. To learn what you'll want to know about that, be sure to find and read G. A. Riplinger's book, New Age Versions. The first printing was in 1993. I have a copy of the eleventh printing, 2000. ISBN #0-9635845-0-2. Library of Congress catalog card #93-92561.

I was a successful Bible teacher for a LOT of years—big sanctuary classes.
I knew what my denomination believed and that's what I taught.
Yes, I should've checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches.

"In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." —Samuel Clemens



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- B. Enhanced by regular reference to Abbingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (for the original meanings of ancient Hebrew and Greek words and phrases) and one or two of the "Interlinear" Hebrew/Greek-to-English literal translations. (I can direct you to online access to both of those extremely valuable resources. Here's a HOTLINK for requesting that info: www.Link1.info/contact-us.)
- C. Further enhanced by the intermittent study of World History and Church History. I am continually delighted to discover that the two are inseparable! Together, they're "His Story." (I published a chart about that several years ago, but I'll need to update it to reflect what I've learned since then.)
- D. Reading, studying and analyzing each scripture, always, as-if-no-one-had-ever-explained-what-it-means.

- ② For reasons you are to soon comprehend, our churches do not teach us HOW to study God's word. What they teach us is WHAT to study. The diligent faithful become fully versed, thence, in "what 'we' believe."
- ③ Consistently, our preachers work to gain and maintain our trust. For the most part, though that trust is misplaced. See Jeremiah 17:5 to confirm that.

- A. Prior to the Twentieth Century, literacy was the exception. Parishioners had no choice but to trust their preachers to dispense truth. Amazingly, the literate continue in that no-longer-necessary-or-acceptable dependency.
- B. Based on the strong warning at Jeremiah 17:5, should you trust any member of the Bible Explorers Club, LLC, for truth? No! Our primary objective is to expose the stark contrasts in Bible truth and the fables that have cunningly infiltrated the mainstream of Christian teaching. We pray that, when you comprehend each of those contrasts, you will use YOUR OWN MIND to begin the long, but rewarding, process of discovering what's true and what's new. Here are two quotes that we hope you'll find worth remembering:
- > "Much of what masquerades, today, as 'old time religion' is actually quite new."
 - > "God's gift of a sound mind is a terrible thing to waste."

I'm convinced that God would not have left us His Written Word in a form that could be "interpreted" in many different ways by so many different "experts" and organizations. Yet, each denomination claims a monopoly on truth.


- > "All of us approach truth with our fists tightly clinched to our haggard bag of things we want to be true, desperately hope are true and notions we're hell bent on pretending are true, regardless of what evidence [says] otherwise. This reality is as true for middle-aged white men with bad suits and obvious comb-overs as it is for tattooed hipster Christians who are heavier on cynicism than orthodoxy." —Rick Henderson
- > "Millions of believers study to confirm Doctrines. Few study to gain Truth. Per Matthew 7:13-14, God clearly prefers the few." —yours truly

We sincerely hope and pray that you'll embark on your own aggressive study of God's written word to gain Truth—as opposed to studying to confirm Doctrine. We're convinced that you'll discover that it is much easier to do that than you might think. You may even want to encourage a few close friends and/or family members to study with you. I assembled a small group of people like that even before I retired. Multi-denominational, we quickly learned that we had each been studying to confirm "what 'we' believe." Why? Because that's what our preachers had taught us to do. The more you study for Truth, the more you will learn about how and why your preachers have done that. 'Maliciously? No; they're victims, too. The visible church has missed the mark of its high calling. The Church will arise from its ashes. Will you be counted with those who'll rise up with it?

—T. C. Newsom 

PS: Comments? Questions? Scriptural rebuttals? They're all welcome! www.Link1.info/contact-us.
To participate in sensible Bible-related discussions, join us at TC's Friends Club. Here's the hot link:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/136708110091989/>

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