



The Origins of Doubt

Do we decide what we believe?

By Charles Colson, *The Daily BreakPoint*

Theologian Lynn Anderson remembers the time a brilliant novelist came to the small Canadian town where he lived as a boy. One day, as he visited with Anderson's family, the writer asked Lynn, "Do you really believe the Bible's true? Babies born from virgins, dead people coming out of the cemetery?"

"Yes," Lynn answered, "that's what I believe."

The writer responded, "I'd give anything to believe that because . . . the only people who really seem to be [happy] are the people who say they believe what you believe. But I just can't believe because my head keeps getting in the way!"

It's an argument I've heard myself many times. But as Anderson told former journalist Lee Strobel, quite often, it's not that people can't believe in God; it's that they won't.

In his new book, *The Case for Faith*, Strobel asks Anderson to explain what he means. "I started thinking about what [the nov-

elist] would lose if he followed Jesus," Anderson says. For instance, "He was part of a guild of brilliant writers who all think religion is a total crock. I really believe his professional pride and the rejection of his peers would have been too high a price for him to pay."

Unfortunately, the writer isn't alone. "When you scratch below the surface," Anderson concludes, "there's either a will to believe or there's a will not to believe." Scripture backs up this idea. Abraham is called the "father of faith," not because he never doubted, but because he never gave up on God. Joshua said, "Choose this day whom you will serve" [Joshua 24:15].

"Faith, at its taproot," Anderson adds, "is a decision of the will." It is, indeed.

Mortimer Adler, one of the great intellectuals of the twentieth century, said he would like to become a Christian, but it would

mean changes in his life that were too great to make. He later overcame those reservations, however, and became a committed believer.

Journalist Malcolm Muggeridge, who came to faith late in life, might be called the patron saint of doubters. As a young man, he once predicted his epitaph would read: "Here lieth one whose soul sometimes burned with great longings. To whom sometimes the curtain of the Infinite was opened just a little, but who lacked the guts to make any use of it." Well, Muggeridge went on to become a devout Christian.

If you have a friend who says he just can't get beyond the "intellectual objections" to faith in God, dig a little deeper. Try to find out what's really stopping him. Then, lovingly show him it's not the mind that's holding faith hostage, but the heart.

And then, pray that, like Malcolm Muggeridge, he'll finally have the guts to act on it.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart.

—Helen Keller (1880–1968)

Let's not hold back when God is holding out such wonderful things to us—the possibilities and potential that faith can bring to pass.

Let's jump in! Let's seize what He offers! Let's go for it! As the old saying goes, "He who hesitates is lost." He hesitates, loses faith, and then he loses what faith can give—all those possibilities that faith can bestow on him.

Our faith is not in empty nothingness or in vague imaginations, but it is in a real and living God who always comes through on what He has promised.

—David Brandt Berg