

Even Me Mary Magdalene

In John 16:33, Jesus said, “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*” Even though we know and trust this verse, we still have doubts when going through various trials. **We must go through doubt to go deeper in our faith.** In fact, experiencing doubt is normal within our faith journey, and it does not necessarily indicate an absence or lack of faith. We can have both doubt and faith at the same time. While God wants to take us through the doubt into something deeper, the enemy wants to tempt us through doubt into the place of despair. To navigate and deal with our doubt well, we must expect Jesus to meet us in our uncertainty.

GETTING STARTED

Do you tend to be more trusting of people and situations, or more skeptical? Why do you think you lean that way? What is the difference between authentic hope and naïve optimism in the midst of a difficulty? What is the difference between discernment/wisdom and jaded cynicism?

GO DEEPER

1. In John 20:1-2, Mary does not assume that Jesus was raised from the dead even when Jesus had said it would happen. Why do you think it was challenging for Mary to see the situation as a promise being fulfilled rather than His body being carried away?
2. From James 1:2-4, what does it look like to experience a strengthening of our faith in the midst of a trial? Why must we go *through* doubt in order to go deeper in our faith? How do we battle against the temptation of the enemy to embrace despair?
3. In John 20:11-18, Jesus fulfills His promise to Mary by graciously revealing Himself as raised from the dead. How do we continue to seek Jesus, like Mary, when we have doubts, confusion, and questions?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. In what ways can you relate to Mary Magdalene’s story and her experience of doubt in the midst of a promise being fulfilled?
2. What doubts are you currently experiencing? In the midst of those doubts, do you find yourself leaning more towards trust and hope in our Heavenly Father, or more towards fear and despair?
3. What makes it difficult for you to trust God in this season?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Take time as a group to pray through your doubts or lack of faith. In the areas you are experiencing doubt, ask God to reveal His truth and to remind you of past experiences where He has revealed Himself and shown Himself to be faithful.

BLESS

Revelation 12:11 says that we will overcome *by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony*. Who is someone that you can share your testimony with about encountering God in the midst of a season of doubt?