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# NAMPA BIBLE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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## Believing Doubt - By Sharad Yadav

**S**coffers aren't really open to hearing any answers, because they aren't really asking serious questions. And as much as they like to be seen as "only being after the hard truth", they usually are far from what the Proverbs call "searching for wisdom as for hidden treasure" – they read a lot less than people think they do, and they often uncritically parrot the objections of others rather than working through these things themselves. I think they mistake doubt for a kind of knowledge – as though being educated meant learning to deny everything. It might be what the author of 1 Tim. 6:20 meant when he talked about opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge". Such is our age.

But among evangelical Christians, scoffers are a minority group. The majority group might be what the book of Proverbs dubs "the simple". The simple confuse strong faith with the absence of doubt, resulting in a lobotomized, night-of-the-living-dead kind of brainless submission to self-proclaimed authorities. Promoting a life of faith, in other words, is tantamount to encouraging you to ignore your own experiences, swallow your questions, keep your objections to yourself and continue pretending that life really works the way your theology says it does even when it's obvious to you that it doesn't. This is a kind of faith which is very much like the flu – it swells the eyes shut and plugs the ears so that the only clear voice to be heard is our own: and it's singing, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." While our lives are burning down, the simple cue the violins. For the simple, faith is an alternative to reality.

But this sort of faith betrays a superficial acquaintance with the Biblical story. The most cursory glance at Genesis or Kings will yield not a few tantrums, a lot of panicking and a metric ton of confusion – but very rarely do we see the kind of bland spirituality some call strong faith, the kind of faith which meets every challenge with an effortless: "As you wish, Lord. Your will be done!" Does that sound like Moses to you? Or David (or Jeremiah, or Habakkuk)? If so, it's time to revisit some of those stories. In fact, Genesis 32 foreshadows the strange distinguishing mark of God's people; struggle. It is because Jacob wrestled with God that the text says he is renamed "Israel". The point here is that **we are not Muslims**. Christians don't believe in a God who wants submission above all else. We believe in a God who invites us to engage Him, to bring Him our hearts, not just offer our

compliance. He wants us to trust Him, a proposition that entails going to Him with our questions, not ignoring them. In short, He desires a relationship in which we can say: "I don't see how this makes any sense at all" before we begin to search for the answers which hide like treasure. He wants us to be honest about that which is unbelievable, unreasonable, confusing, and even those things that make us angry.

Jesus was not Ned Flanders, though He's been read that way through our contemporary evangelical lenses. There's no doubt that He always did the will of the Father – but as God directed Him to the cross, Jesus emphatically did NOT say: "Okely-dokely"! The Gospel writers depict the Garden of Gethsemane as a place of writhing anguish. Luke displays Jesus, drenched in agony, racked with uncertainty. He knew what He had to do, but was, at that moment, faced with the indecipherable absurdity of it all. He didn't refuse the cup He was given to drink, but He didn't want to drink it, either. This scene isn't what leaps to mind when we ask: "what would Jesus do"? But careful readers of Scripture have witnessed this before in the lives of men and women throughout Israel's history. There is such a thing as **believing doubt**, a kind of doubt that is actually the mark of **mature faith**, a faith that fights for understanding. And the ironic thing is that it's much more like the faith of Jesus than the "*Bible says, I believe it, that settles it*" crowd. It's the kind of faith that hung on the trembling lips of a grieving father in **Mark 9:24**. Jesus proclaimed, "All things are possible to him who believes!" and he replied, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

There's a whole section in our Bible that's dedicated to grappling with the hard questions about what we believe. It's called "The Wisdom literature" – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. It questions what other parts of Scripture take for granted. Genesis 3 says that sin is the cause of all human misery. But in Psalm 73 and most of the book of Ecclesiastes the authors ask, "Why then do evil people seem to prosper and enjoy life so much?" Deuteronomy, the theological center of the Old Testament, says that living for God will generally bring blessing and disobedience will generally bring cursing – but Job isn't so sure. In presenting these challenging questions to the theology presented in other books of the Bible wisdom literature isn't invalidating

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these other traditions as wrong or contradictory. They're inviting us to honestly struggle with a God who can't be contained by theology or neatly harmonized with experience. The Scriptures are inviting us to take our faith seriously enough to actually care whether the things we read make sense in real life. By accepting that invitation, you

will enter the world of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Wesley, Edwards, and all those who've learned that any belief worth having (certainly any relationship worth living and dying for) must survive the titanic struggle of life: the struggle with God Himself.

## Current Calendar Events....

### March 1st thru 7th

2nd - Choir Practice at Lake-view Bible Church  
 2nd - YG Game Night  
 2nd - Awana Games prep  
 3rd - Lighthouse Mission  
 3rd - Cecelia Book's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 4th - Janice Denney's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 5th - Gordon Goldsmith's Home Group  
 6th - Creative Homemaking  
 6th - Kim Arnold's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 7th - Creative Homemaking

### March 8th thru 14th

8th - Awana Games - Mt View HS  
 9th - Awana RollerMania  
 9th - Choir Practice  
 9th - YG "Book of Joel"  
 10th - Cecelia Book's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 11th - Janice Denney's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 11th - Josh Norris' Home Group  
 12th - Jim Rickwa's Home Group  
 13th - Kim Arnold's Ladies I Peter Bible Study

### March 15th thru 21st

16th - Choir Practice  
 16th - YG Discussion Night  
 16th - Awana Movie Madness night  
 17th - Cecelia Book's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 18th - Janice Denney's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 19th - Gordon Goldsmith's Home Group  
 20th - Kim Arnold's Ladies I Peter Bible Study

### March 22nd thru 31st

23rd - YG Prayer & Testimony  
 24th - Cecelia Book's Ladies Bible Study  
 25th - Janice Denney's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 25th - Josh Norris' Home Group  
 26th - Jim Rickwa's Home Group  
 27th - YG Bowling  
 27th - Creative Homemaking  
 27th - Kim Arnold's Ladies I Peter Bible Study  
 30th - YG Service Project  
 30th - Awana Talent Night  
 31st - Cecelia Book's Ladies I Peter Bible Study

## Ministry Spotlight: Men's Ministry

**The purpose** of the Men's Ministry of Nampa Bible Church is to provide biblical instruction and relational support to help men *"deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope of the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds"* (Titus 2:11-14)

**The Priorities** for this ministry include:

Holiness—helping men overcome addictions and learn to possess their own bodies in sanctification and honor.  
 Happiness—helping men learn to be content in their present circumstances because God is their treasure.  
 Humility—helping men grow in humility and learn to be servant leaders.  
 Home—helping men to be godly husbands and fathers and lead their families to follow and serve Christ.

**The Program** involves:

Saturday Super Seminars—Times for men to learn and encourage  
PAC groups—Small groups that meet regularly for accountability  
DATES—Social events that build strong relationships.

## Pray For...

- The Men's Ministry...that it would be a valuable tool in helping men to bring glory to their God and Savior, and that it would be a unifying force at NBC.

## Did You Know....

- We moved! Directions to the new location can be found at [www.nampabible.org/moving](http://www.nampabible.org/moving)
- You can be involved in the newsletter! Email [webmaster@nampabible.org](mailto:webmaster@nampabible.org) or talk to Josh Norris to get involved.

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