



In an Instagram post this month (that has since been deleted), popular Christian musician Marty Sampson informed his legion of followers that he is losing his faith. Here is what he had to say:

Time for some real talk. I'm genuinely losing my faith, and it doesn't bother me. Like, what bothers me now is nothing. I am so happy now, so at peace with the world. It's crazy.

This is a soapbox moment so here I go ... How many preachers fall? Many. No one talks about it. How many miracles happen. Not many. No one talks about it. Why is the Bible full of contradictions? No one talks about it. How can God be love yet send four billion people to a place, all 'coz they don't believe? No one talks about it. Christians can be the most judgmental people on the planet—they can also be some of the most beautiful and loving people. But it's not for me.

I am not in anymore. I want genuine truth. Not the "I just believe it" kind of truth. Science keeps piercing the truth of every religion. Lots of things help people change their lives, not just one version of God. Got so much more to say, but for me, I keeping it real. Unfollow if you want, I've never been about living my life for others.

All I know is what's true to me right now, and Christianity just seems to me like another religion at this point. I could go on, but I won't. Love and forgive absolutely. Be kind absolutely. Be generous and do good to others absolutely. Some things are good no matter what you believe. Let the rain fall, the sun will come up tomorrow.

In it, Sampson voices a few Christianity Criticisms. Giving answers to all of his challenges would be in line with what we have been discussing. Rather than spend the whole article refuting the challenges Marty put forth, I want to talk about a bigger issue here that Marty appears to be going through and that is doubt.

## **The Christian Response**

As apologists, our first instinct may be to take all of Marty's issues with Christianity and start refuting them. Ever since he put up this post, he's gotten a lot of that. Unfortunately, he's also gotten a lot of ugly responses from Christians scolding him for his doubt, saying



his worship before was empty, and chastising him for not “just having faith”.

Marty is going through a season of doubt. Doubting is normal. Wrestling with the truth is *normal*. The name Israel means “wrestles with God” after all.

The Bible deals with the issue of doubt frequently. Two of the bigger figures who had doubts were Abraham and John the Baptist. With Abraham, God had made several promises to him or gave him instructions that didn’t make sense at the time. And, because they didn’t happen within Abraham’s expected timeline, he had doubts. God promised him land and it fell victim to famine, God sent him to Egypt and he became separated from his wife. And, God told him he would have offspring too numerous to count. Yet, he remained childless into a very old age. Abraham had many moments of doubt. But, God did not forsake him. He kept his promises.

The second example of doubt I want to point out is John the Baptist. John is sitting in one of Herod’s prisons. Things probably aren’t going the way he pictured it. He is starting to doubt if Jesus is the person he thought he was. So, John sends some of his disciples to ask Jesus if he’s the guy. Jesus gives them evidence that he is the one whom John is looking for and they return. But, rather than chastise John for not “just believing”, Jesus says that no greater man has been born of women.

Wrestling with these issues is a good thing. It means you are searching for the truth. Now, I will admit that some people hit questions they don’t have answers to and use that as an excuse to leave because something else in their life is going on. I can’t speak for Marty’s motives other than what I have read. But, I will say that he is conversing with guys like William Lane Craig and Ravi Zacharias, and has been sharing their videos on his social media accounts. It *appears* he is seeking answers to his questions.

I have a few thoughts on how we can deal with people who have doubts. First off, stop dogpiling on top of them. If they are standing on shaky ground, all your bold criticism is going to do is chip away at what little foundation is left. Instead, walk with them. This is why it [is important that you are equipped to be an ambassador](#); to be able to answer tough questions with wisdom and good character.

Second, resist the urge to oversimplify the issue. Humans have complex motives for their actions that aren’t always clear - even to themselves at times. When things like this happen, we often feel like we need to uncover the smoking gun and then have a response that points to a single thing that a person should or shouldn’t have done to keep from being in this situation. Common responses to Marty’s post have been along the lines of “he didn’t have



enough faith” or “he was worshipping too much with emotion” or “he should have read this book by that person”. While those may all be true, it is never that simple. Likely, some combination of *all* of those things - and many more things we won't know about - would have something to do with it.

Boiling things down to one single issue/solution is oftentimes just a way for people to have an opinion on something they don't want to take the time to dig into. I call this “drive-by commenting” - the urge to make a comment on something you only have a tiny bit of information on. In cases like this, though, it's just not that simple. Now is not the time for your apologetics to take center stage and for you to shoot holes in their reasons for doubting. Now is the time to patiently walk with that person, listen and offer counsel and advice as needed.

Finally, before you make your comments or give your opinion ask yourself “would I say this to his or her face if they were present?”. Most of the comments we leave on posts would probably not be something we would say directly to the person. We would either take a kinder approach, or not say anything at all. In today's social media culture, we have the ability to interact with so many people across the world without even having to know them. We can freely voice our opinions on their personal lives. But, just because you *can* doesn't mean you *should*. It's OK to not comment or weigh in on something you know little about.

## **For The Marty Sampson's Of The World**

If you are someone who is struggling, or if you have doubts, just remember it's OK. We all have doubt from time to time. It's in my seasons of doubt where I come closer to God and learn more about Him. If you are struggling now I have some advice based on personal experience that might help you through.

First off, most of the questions that will come to you, or the challenges you may hear, have come up before and have been answered by some pretty intelligent people. If you *really* want your questions answered, you can't be lazy about it. Seeking the truth requires work and struggle. That means studying the issue - reading, watching lectures, prayer, and conversing about it with other mature Christians whom you trust.

Second, we all need to worship as Jesus said; with our hearts, our souls, or strength and our minds (Luke 10:27) I've always pictured this like a square block that I am standing on. If any of these corners become too great, or too little, then I lose my balance. Too much emotion (heart) and your foundation is weak. Too much knowledge and you can become heartless and legalistic. Yes, love and sing joyously. But, if you do not have the knowledge to back up



what it is you are singing about, or how to handle the more difficult parts of the Christian world view, then when you or someone else start asking questions, your foundation may get rocked.

Third, if you are going through struggles like Marty is, don't announce it on social media. Instead, seek private counsel. People on social media may not know you very well. And, as discussed earlier, people on social media may become emboldened by sitting behind a keyboard and say some pretty hurtful stuff that won't help. Don't get me wrong; I don't think you should keep your struggle to yourself. But, there are some things you share with the public and some things you only share with your close, personal friends in private.

If someone you know is experiencing doubt, the best thing you can do is to listen to them. Ask questions. Probe a bit under the surface. And only then should you offer up and responses; always with gentleness and respect. And if you are struggling with how to answer questions like Marty is struggling with, I encourage you to stick around because I will be attempting to address them in the next few articles.

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