



From the Manger to the Cross, the Men in Christ's Life: Doubting Thomas

by Kris Swiatocho

Editors note: This is a part of a series.

My stepfather is only one example of a man who has impacted my life as a result of his relationship with Christ. Throughout this series, I want to share with you about some of the other men who have impacted my life solely because of their relationship with Jesus. I believe as I share that you, too, will connect with them and discover for yourself how God has always had a plan for you, is working it out in your life and will never leave you.

There are times in all our lives that we may question God. We may question if He is really there. We may question that Jesus was His son. We may question if He really cares about us and is listening to us. We may question if He loves us and why.

When I was a small child, I was very "religious." I grew up going to a Catholic church. Even though my birth father was Catholic and my brothers and I were baptized Catholic (my mom preferred not to convert from being a non-church-going Presbyterian), I was the only one who went to church. As I think back, I have tried to come up with a reason why I would choose to go to church (mass) even though none of my family went. The only thing I can come up with was church was just one more place I could talk, be creative, and build friendships. I wouldn't know it at the time, but it would create the foundation of my walk with the Lord.

From an early start in life I had always been very independent. So going to church (I would walk three blocks since the age of six) was something normal to me. I liked it, so I went. But there is something else I remember: I would learn to not only have reverence for my Holy God, but I was to fear Him, too. I was aware of when I did something bad that God would not be happy with me, but it would be many years before I would ask the Lord into my heart and receive salvation. Years before I understood why I feared God and why I needed to be "saved." This fear of God would lead to a relationship of doubt. A relationship of rules and regulations. A relationship of worry if I didn't follow the rules. A relationship where I was the child and God was the parent, waiting to strike me down, spank me or hurt me. I would grow in my relationship not really understanding His love for me. I would grow wanting God to prove Himself to me. I had become a doubting Thomas.

As the years passed, I would fall away from the Lord, stop going to church, and get into all sorts of trouble. I would spend several years chasing whatever that I thought would lead to happiness--whether it was wealth, fame, pleasure, or relationships, I was on the fast track. But like all fast tracks, they lead you in a circle, a wreck or sometimes death. Yes, mine would lead to a death, a death of my old life with the birth of a new life in Christ. But despite where Christ had saved me from, despite all the blessings of a new life, new direction, and new peace, etc., I would still have days of unbelief. Days where I just wasn't sure if God was God. Days that I wish He would just show up and I could touch Him. I could put my own fingers in His side. For sure, then I would then believe. If I could just touch Him, I would never not believe again. Or would I?

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:24-31).



What I Have Learned from Thomas:

1. Thomas was a leader.

We know from earlier scripture that Thomas was a tax collector (Matthew 10:3). No doubt he was used to dealing with people. He was used to hearing every type of excuse and problem in relation to people paying their taxes. We also know from earlier scripture that Thomas was the one who spoke up in reference to going back to Judea to see Lazarus (John 11:16). Thomas also spoke at the Last Supper, making reference that he did not know where Christ was going (John 14:5). So, we can deduct from this that Thomas was not afraid to speak his mind or ask questions. He was not afraid to go or do what he thought was best at the time. This is probably why we don't see him with the other disciples in this specific verse. Thomas' ability to speak on his own and ask questions shows his leadership. It would be needed down the road as he traveled to share the news about Christ.

Thomas taught me that a good leader speaks up. A good leader is willing to take chances in what he may say and the responses that come from it.

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came (John 20:24).

2. Thomas showed me that it's normal to doubt, but we need to use this doubt to believe.

Sometimes we want to knock Thomas upside the head. I mean, shoot, Jesus has been there with you these three years, healing, performing miracles, changing lives, etc., and you still don't believe. What is wrong with you, Thomas? But, what is wrong with us? How are we different than Thomas? Yes, they may have had the son of God in front of them, but we have the testimony of many men and women for two thousand years. We have our own lives and what Christ has done. We have the Holy Spirit. Then why do we doubt? Because it is human nature. The world constantly pulls at us. The world says, "Believe me, believe in yourself, believe in your car, your checking account, your family, your, your. ..." This constant pull toward the world pull us from the Savior. The more our minds are full of the world, the less they are full of the Savior. It only makes sense that we would then start to doubt or question.

Sometimes our doubt comes from the past. Like in my case, I never understood unconditional love. Between what I was being taught in church to my birth father, who was an army man (I was his little soldier), my life was full of rules. It would take a new father on earth (my mom would marry a wonderful Christian man) and one in heaven to redirect and renew my thinking. It is a process that I am still in to this day. To take all the lies from my past and turn them to truth. Acknowledging the goal of the devil with the goal of the Lord.

People ask me, how do you know the will of the Lord? When I notice my doubting starts to creep in, sin starts to show up, fear starts to overtake ... I have allowed His will to be overshadowed. It is only when I seek Him EVERY DAY that I am able to hear from the Lord for what He wants me to do, His will. Don't allow your doubt to make your heart hard, produce stubbornness and pride.

So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it" (John 20:25).

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10).

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2).



3. God's timing is perfect for what He is doing. He wants us to learn to have confident patience.

A week had passed since Thomas heard that Jesus had appeared. He had stated that he would not believe "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." Of course, I would be like, "OK, Thomas, let's go find Jesus so you can see that he's real." But this didn't happen. Instead, a week would pass and Thomas didn't get to see or touch Jesus.

What I love about this period of time passing is the gift the other disciples got that Thomas didn't get. Thomas said he wouldn't believe unless he could touch Jesus himself. Wow, then a whole week passed where perhaps the other disciples were sharing their experiences of seeing Jesus. Can you imagine what it must have been like? To begin with, this might have only aggravated Thomas' doubt. I mean, "Jesus, if you are real, then show up right now and give me a job, find me a spouse, fix my relationship, give me money. Jesus if you are really God's son turn these stones into ... umm." Yikes! What have I become? Who does that sound like?

God's timing is perfect. Jesus wants us to learn to have confident patience for what He wants to show us in His timing. He wants us to have everything in His will for our lives. But everything needs to be for His purpose, not ours. Sometimes waiting makes us even more frustrated and impatient. This is when we need to be drawing toward Christ even more. Maybe that is what God was trying to do with Thomas. Maybe that is what He is trying to do with us.

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" (John 20:26).

4. When Jesus tells you to do something, you don't talk back. Just do it.

Wow, I can hear the Lord speaking to me at this very moment. It's like, "Kris, OK, you have had your little panic moment. You've allowed the world in again. You've allowed someone or something to have more truth than me. Stop! Stop! I am the Spirit of God living in you. In you! Call on me to guide, teach and direct you. Call on me to give you peace. This world gives you NOTHING! Then why do you keep going to it to fill you, complete you, and comfort you. You need proof? Think back to all the times I have loved you, protected you, provided for you, and ultimately saved you from hell. Think back to all the times you have seen me protect and love others. See me in this horrible world of selfishness shine above it. So stop, Kris! Stop doubting! I am here! I have always been here. I have not changed. Believe!"

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe" (John 20:27).

"I the LORD do not change" (Malachi 3:6).

And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well (Luke 12:29-31).

5. Thomas taught me I could believe without physically touching Jesus.

Thomas would see Jesus and as far as we know, not touch Him and would believe. So what is our proof today? Jesus died on the cross to save us. It is in the fact that He provides, protects, and loves us. That His Holy Spirit now lives in us for those who have received Christ. Why is it so important that we have Jesus in front of us? So we can touch Him? We have touched Him. We have felt His arms around us. We have eaten dinner with Him, cried with Him, and laughed with Him. God's arms are in those who love us. We are an extension of the Lord. We are his arms, hands and feet.



Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward (Mark 9:41).

6. Jesus sends hope to all of us.

I am blessed because I was not there to see Him physically. Isn't that wonderful? God acknowledges and understands that it is harder to believe because we were not there. He is giving us a blessing because we have believed. So be excited in knowing He understands. And because it is harder, He knows we may slip back to questioning. But, this questioning can lead to a desire to know the Lord more.

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

7. We have Jesus' Word, His witnesses and His Spirit to believe.

Jesus did all he did so that we would believe. God recorded this to help the future generations. On top of that, we have the Holy Spirit to guide us, give us hope, peace, encouragement, etc. And God continues to use others as witnesses on this earth. For the Lord wants all to come to know Him. Now it is our turn to be His arms and feet to help others to believe.

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31).

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come (John 16:13).

God would show me then and now that even though, due to life circumstances, I may still doubt, it is a way to bring me back to Him, to His arms, to His presence. Sometimes I have hard time believing that He loves me as I am with all my cracks and scars. That He loves me unconditionally. That nothing I can do can take that love away from me. If I only get that in my head and start to believe, I could change the world through Christ. I am getting there, one day at a time. Are you? Let your doubt deepen your faith and draw you closer to the Savior.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand (John 10:28).

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

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TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their



single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click [here](#) to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.