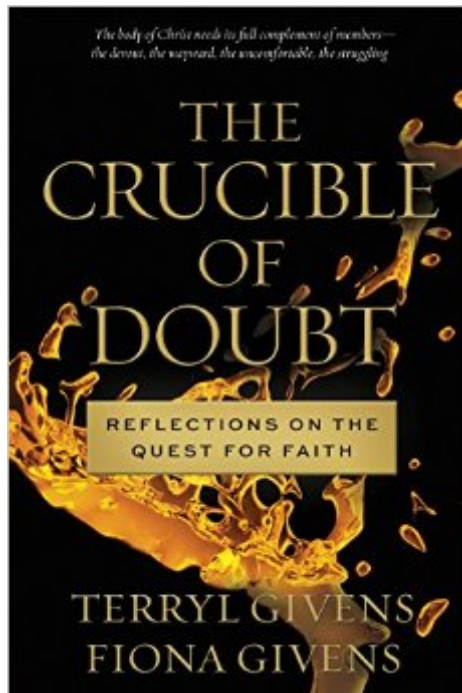


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# The Crucible Of Doubt: Reflections On The Quest For Faith



## Synopsis

Faith is the first principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So what happens when a person has doubts? Questioning is not the problem, according to authors Terryl and Fiona Givens. After all, they write, the Restoration unfolded because a young man asked questions. The difficulty arises when questions are based on flawed assumptions or incorrect perceptions, which can point us in the wrong direction, misdirect our attention, or constrain the answers we are capable of hearing. This insightful book offers a careful, intelligent look at doubt at some of its common sources, the challenges it presents, and the opportunities it may open up in a person's quest for faith. Whether you struggle with your own doubts or mostly want to understand loved ones who question, you will appreciate this candid discussion. You'll come away feeling more certain than ever of the Lord's love for all of His children.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a pretty thin book, about 170 pages. But don't quibble about page count or even price. This is a book you will re-read. As a bonus, the book production feels "quality" - nice font, book paper, book design, etc. The book is full of gems such as this one from page 31: "We feel unmoored if our religion fails to answer all our questions, if it does not resolve our anxious fears, if it does not tie up all loose ends. We want a script, and we find we stand before a blank canvas. We expect a road map, and we find we have only a compass...." It is curious in this regard that so many critics attribute to religion a kind of facile wish fulfillment, imaginative fairy-tale scenarios that reduce complexity and mystery to easy answers and glib forms of consolation. As any disciple knows who has lived a life of faith thoughtfully, attuned to the rhythms of humanity's travails, to the demands of mercy and

unconditional love, and to the call of patient waiting, religion is not the coward's way out of life's difficulties."As Flannery O'Connor wrote, 'Religion costs. They think it is a big electric blanket, when of course it's a cross.'".... As Elder Holland has said, 'Sadly enough, it is a characteristic of our age, that if people want any gods at all, they want them to be gods who do not demand much: comfortable, smooth gods.'"I heard with interest in a recent KUER radio interview the authors said the church leaders asked them to write this book, just as with their earlier book *The God Who Weeps*.CONTENTSIntroduction: Paradigms and Premises: On Starting Off on the Wrong Foot1. Of Methods and Maps: The Use and Abuse of Reason2. On Provocation and Peace: Of Life's Fundamental Incompleteness3.

Written for the believer, as well as the doubter... I repeat, A MUST READ.Terryl and Fiona, have once again, masterfully and with a knack of, weaving into their writing sources from across the ages. They take from the reservoirs of great thought; inspired composers, writers and artists, sublime poetry, and powerful insights from philosophers of deep thought; to open our minds and hearts, to look at our foundations of belief. They guide us to help remove the pride or guilt of our souls, almost as permission, to be OK with starting anew. The words seem to say, of course you can rebuild a different, more secure foundation... a reset. In other words, change our paradigm... to allow us to understand better how the heart, mind and will of God settles like dew on humanity.It seems as though, theres a rhetorical question throughout the pages... "How is an all encompassing perfect communication, from Deity, going to be received, translated and understood? But before we answer, we must realize that this communication is perfect and complete from the source but FOREIGN to humanity. When it leaves the heavenly courts, it is interrupted and becomes corrupt, by the weak, simplistic mind, trying desperately to interpret what has been received and then somehow; it needs to be communicated to the world, now through a broken language. Yikes.They help us see that our duty is to use all resources to help interpret for ourselves what is the will and heart of God. Staring with the Holy Ghost, then the inspired leaders, scripture and every other form, including art, literature, science, music, poetry, theatre, nature, etc. Yet, it seems, we, unfortunately, make up or create idolatrous notions such as, infallible leaders and scriptures, new "doctrines" based on a 200 yr.

Modern life has brought with it a complex worldview. The advent of social media allows us to reinforce connections with friends and family, however it has also created artificial relationships cemented by the free exchange of information. Facts and information ebb and flow in a tide without

the restraints of the past. The sheer volume of worldly opinions bombards the faithful, often causing them to doubt their convictions. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) and other religions are not immune to this uncertainty. The Givens have written a volume to address not only different sources of doubt, but how people can resolve their concerns. A number of topics are discussed relating to how doubts develop and are manifested. The authors describe how logic is not always the best method of evaluating truth, the differences between a church and a religion, and the perils found in worshiping leaders. They wrap it all up with recommendations for living a dedicated life despite our doubts. In these times of science and technology, we rely heavily on our ability to reason when seeking truth. Peer-reviewed studies and facts often form the focus of our faith. These practices create a shallowness that allows us to form surface beliefs, susceptible to change as new information becomes available. The Givens note that we must learn the appropriate time to apply logic and when we need to learn to listen to our feelings. While many may teach that emotions are whimsical and unreliable, the inward impressions we experience in our spiritual journeys are expressions of the Holy Ghost confirming the reality of God and His will for us. Confusion and doubt also persist concerning what constitutes a religion and what is a church.

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