

Book Review and Recommendation

The Value of Doubt

By Bill Tammeus

Most all of us have encountered narrow-minded religious folks. These are generally folks that will give you a set of rules and tell you that you are faithful if you just follow them. They fail to see the difference between faith and belief. The theme of Bill Tammeus' new book is the challenge, 'Do you want unanswered questions or unquestioned answers?'

In less than 140 pages, Tammeus takes us through many of the unanswered questions we all encounter at one time or another. That is not to say he has answers for them, but that is the whole point. Christian growth starts with questioning. But, why are we sometimes afraid of uncertainty? Well, uncertainty is the topic of one chapter in which he says that doubt is the correct first step toward understanding. We grow up memorizing this verse or that, without asking the why or wherefore of each one. Until we question what we have been taught, we follow out of habit, not knowing where we are actually going. The opposite of faith, he says, is not doubt, but false certitude. True faith cannot survive in an atmosphere in which answers are unquestioned. We need to think about this when our children have questions. In simple language, Tammeus hammers home the point. Once young people abandon faith, it takes powerful effort and skill to reengage them.

Bill Tammeus is a veteran journalist and Presbyterian from Kansas City. He has an international experience beginning as a child when his father's work took the family to India. *The Value of Doubt* is in its first printing, published very recently, and available from Amazon.

Mike Slayter