



The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our "Correct" Beliefs

By Peter Enns

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The controversial evangelical Bible scholar and author of *The Bible Tells Me So* explains how Christians mistake “certainty” and “correct belief” for faith when what God really desires is trust and intimacy.

With compelling and often humorous stories from his own life, Bible scholar Peter Enns offers a fresh look at how Christian life truly works, answering questions that cannot be addressed by the idealized traditional doctrine of “once for all delivered to the saints.”

Enns offers a model of vibrant faith that views skepticism not as a loss of belief, but as an opportunity to deepen religious conviction with courage and confidence. This is not just an intellectual conviction, he contends, but a more profound kind of knowing that only true faith can provide.

Combining Enns’ reflections of his own spiritual journey with an examination of Scripture, *The Sin of Certainty* models an acceptance of mystery and paradox that all believers can follow and why God prefers this path because it is only this way by which we can become mature disciples who truly trust God. It gives Christians who have known only the demand for certainty permission to view faith on their own flawed, uncertain, yet heartfelt, terms.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a very fine, very readable, often humorous, and much needed analysis of what Western Christianity is up against." ---Richard Rohr, author of *Falling Upward*

From the Back Cover

"I had never openly explored my thinking about God, because I was taught that questioning too much was not safe Christian conduct—it would make God very disappointed in me, indeed, and quite angry. So dangerous thoughts lay dormant, never entering my conscious mind. . . . But a common and ordinary moment worked unexpectedly to snatch me from my safe, familiar, and unexamined spiritual neighborhood and plop me down somewhere I never thought I'd land. It was a forced spiritual relocation."—*The Sin of Certainty*

When did being "right" with God come to mean believing the right things about God—believing the right doctrines, reading the Bible the right way, holding the right views? For many Christians, this idea is at the very center of their religious lives. And that's a problem. Because this focus on being correct can actually distract us from faith and from God. What happens when the security of "knowing what you believe" gets disrupted—as it does sooner or later? What if once-settled questions—like "What is God really like?"—suddenly become unsettled?

These are some of the questions that teacher and scholar Peter Enns addresses in *The Sin of Certainty*. Here he explores what goes wrong when we have "believing the right things" at the center of our faith and what, instead, should be standing there. For those who have experienced their once rock-solid beliefs beginning to falter, Enns offers hope and guidance for finding a more trustworthy anchor. By exploring scripture and reflecting on his own journey, Enns reveals that challenges and crises of faith may be opportunities for deepening our faith and that God may be the one encouraging us to face those dangerous questions—in order for us to move from needing to be right to trusting God instead.

Why "Having the Right Beliefs" Is Not the Same as Having Faith

Many Christians have gone off course by putting belief and certainty at the center of their faith instead of simply following and trusting Jesus.

"Seldom have I read a book that I so totally agree with! This is a very fine, very readable, often humorous, and much needed analysis of what Western Christianity is up against."—Richard Rohr, author of *Falling Upward*

"Enns is brilliant. This book is accessible, freeing, empowering, and beautiful. I underlined almost every page. I'm deeply thankful for Enns's work and his new book is right on time for many of us."—Sarah Bessey, author of *Out of Sorts* and *Jesus Feminist*

"If you're afraid that your theological questions and doubts disqualify you from being a person of faith, theologian Peter Enns has good news for you. Really good news. And it's a delightful read, too!"—Brian McLaren, author of *A New Kind of Christianity*

“Readers will welcome his puckish affirmation of the buoyant, sometimes outrageous, boundary-breaking capacity of biblical faith.”—Walter Brueggemann, author of *The Prophetic Imagination*

About the Author

Peter Enns is the author of several books, including *The Bible Tells Me So*, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, and *The Evolution of Adam*. He is the Abram S. Clemens Professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, and has taught courses at several other institutions, including Harvard University.

An award-winning audio engineer for over forty years, Tom Perkins has expanded his skills to narrating and has more than sixty titles to his credit. He learned by working with the world's best voice talent during his career, and he continues to engineer a variety of projects.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stuart Ross:

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