

## **I Believe: Why Belief Matters**

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Fundamental premise: Our beliefs determine our actions.

**Information** learned and practiced develops knowledge.

**Knowledge** experienced over time develops beliefs.

**Beliefs** frame our worldview and determine our actions.

Romans 10:13–17 NLT

For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

Knowing God is more than having facts about God; it means embracing His truth, living by it, and allowing it to shape our hearts and decisions.

Hosea 4:6 ESV

My people are destroyed [perish] for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me.

We crave certainty so deeply that in areas where we lack personal beliefs, we will grab onto the beliefs of others *as if they are our own*.

Three Challenges that Come with Borrowed Beliefs:

1. Borrowing beliefs in a hyper-information age with a craving for certainty sets us up to be manipulated and controlled.

2. Borrowing beliefs leads us to blindly accept some people and reject others, promoting division.

John 8:31–32 NLT

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

3. Borrowing beliefs in a divisive culture gives us permission to hate others.

Matthew 9:10–13 NLT

Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?”

When Jesus heard this, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” Then he added, “Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’ For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

Luke 15:1–2 NLT

Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. <sup>2</sup> This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!

Ephesians 6:12 NLT

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Real discernment can only be exercised from a belief system built upon biblical truth!

As Christians, we believe we have the **truth**! We have the **cure**! We know the true source of all **hope**!

Ephesians 4:14–16 NLT

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the

church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

# Small Group Guide: Why Belief Matters

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## Opening Question:

How has the way you gather information changed over the past few years—whether from social media, news sources, or conversations? How do you decide what you actually believe when there's so much information coming at you from all directions?

## Navigating Information and Forming Beliefs

In today's world, we're constantly bombarded with information via social media, television, news, and podcasts; however, much of what we receive from these sources is conflicting information. It's hard to know what to believe!

Belief is foundational because it shapes how we see the world and how we act. Information alone is not enough; it becomes knowledge through practice, and knowledge grows over time into deeply held beliefs. These beliefs frame our worldview and guide every decision and action we take.

Scripture shows us that faith starts when we hear about Jesus and truly receive His message (Romans 10:13-17). That moment of belief is what opens the door to a relationship with God, and it changes how your heart beats and how you live. Knowing God means embracing His truth, living according to it, and allowing it to shape our hearts; **knowing God through a personal relationship with Him and knowing information *about* God are two different things!**

It is easy to “borrow” beliefs, which means picking up ideas just because they are popular or convenient. Refer back to the message notes to see the dangers associated with borrowed beliefs. When we adopt beliefs without genuine understanding or personal conviction, we risk being manipulated, blindly dividing people into “us versus them,” and even hating others. This is a serious challenge because it sets us up for spiritual immaturity and divisiveness instead of unity and growth. We must know what we believe, and our beliefs must be built on the foundation of biblical truth.

True wisdom and spiritual growth come from putting down roots in God's word, not the latest trending ideas. Jesus encourages us to stick close to His teachings so that we can know the truth that sets us free (John 8:31-32). This is something we all must take responsibility for. When we are rooted in God's truth, we can then engage with the world who does not know Jesus with grace and love, rather than harshness or judgement (Matthew 9:10-13).

When we're grounded in biblical truth, we don't get tossed around by every new idea or election headline or viral post. Ephesians 4:14-16 reminds us that growing in Christ means becoming steady wise, and full of love. From this place, we can operate in true discernment and share with the world the hope of Jesus Christ as the body of Christ, working together to advance His kingdom on earth.

### **For Discussion**

1. "Our beliefs frame our worldview and determine our actions." How have your beliefs about God influenced your daily decisions and relationships?
2. Can you think of any beliefs or ideas you've had that might really be 'borrowed' – things you picked up from family, friends, or culture without really thinking through for yourself? What helps you recognize when a belief is borrowed rather than truly your own?
3. Ephesians 4:14-16 talks about growing to maturity and not being tossed by every new teaching. How can we personally grow in biblical knowledge and discernment in a culture full of competing beliefs and opinions?