

Faith.

Week 7 of 8 : StartingPointGroup.org

INTRODUCTION

The ability to believe is the most powerful force at mankind's disposal. Everything that has been done, for good or bad, was done because someone believed it could be or should be done. Every problem that has been solved was solved because someone believed it could be or should be solved.

We constantly look for evidence to support what we believe is true.

In the case of religious belief, that means if you believe deeply enough any religious system becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If that's true, isn't it possible that Christianity is just an example of groupthink on a massive scale?

LISTENING GUIDE

Faith has a Starting Point.

- Faith is perhaps the most confused, misused, and abused concept in religion.
- Faith = Believe

3 Observations about Faith.

1. The ability to believe is the most powerful force at mankind's disposal.

"Ideologies and belief systems drive world events."

"When we believe something is possible, we look for a way until we find a way."

"Optimists always outsell their smarter, less-optimistic peers."

"Belief empowers us to try - try again - anticipate - hope - imagine - create - improvise."

2. We constantly look for evidence to support what we believe to be true.

"Couples that believe the best, see the best."

3. Belief is easy to maintain within a community of shared belief.

What is Belief?

- Religious belief is simply belief applied to things of a religious nature.
- Religious faith hinges on *"I believe that . . ."*
- Believe deeply enough and any religious system becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What did the Disciples BELIEVE after the Crucifixion?

- When Jesus died, those closest to him believed that he was dead.
- They believed that he was a powerful speaker whose powerful speaking got him crucified.
- They believed thathe was not the messiah.
- They believed thattheir lives were in jeopardy.
- Jesus' closest followers lost faith in the end.

What did the Disciples PREACH after the Resurrection?

- You killed him.
- God raised him.
- We've seen him.
- Say you're sorry.

Acts 17

³¹ *"He has given us proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."*

What did the Disciples BELIEVE after the Resurrection?

- We believe that Jesus was crucified for our sin and God raised him from the dead.
- We don't believe this because the *Bible said so* . . . we believe this because ***we saw a resurrected JESUS***.

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The fundamental question of faith is . . .

Who is Jesus?

A single **event** changed how those closest to Jesus answered that question.

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"The foundation of Christianity isn't a list of believe thats . . . It's a personal call to believe in Jesus." - Andy Stanley

John 3

¹⁶ *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life."*

John 11

²⁵ *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die."*

John 14

⁶ *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father but through me."*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did Jesus say about himself that made him different than any other spiritual leader?
2. Why did the disciples scatter at the death of Jesus?
3. What event changed the disciples from hiding to dying for?
4. How do the disciples' actions add proof to the resurrection?
5. How important is the resurrection to the Christian faith?

MOVING FORWARD

*Christians believe that when you place your faith in Christ's death, that single act of faith leads to forgiveness of sin. And that is why we said from the very beginning that the starting point for the Christian faith is a question: "**Who Is Jesus?**"*

A single event - the resurrection - changed how those closest to Jesus answered that question. In a moment, they went from unbelief to belief . . . the moment they saw him risen.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Acts 17:31 - "He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

HOMEWORK: Read Chapter 7 | Answer Reflection Questions

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