

I Believe... A study of questions of faith

Do you know what you believe? Can you articulate what you believe about the most fundamental questions of faith? Who is God? Why is he concerned for Man? What is Sin? What role should scripture play in your life? Was Jesus a man – or God? What is the role of the church today? Is there a heaven or hell? Why do they call Jesus – Savior?

No matter where you are along the journey of your life, these questions demand your consideration. Have you worked out – FOR YOURSELF – what you believe about these questions? Can you articulate why (and offer proof) for what you believe to be true?

This 13-lesson series will NOT provide you answers to what you should believe (that is yours alone to work-out), but it will provide you a starting point for the inquiry into several of pressing faith questions. In fact, the scriptures selected to start your study are NOT completed and may not be the ones that most clearly describe each topic – but are selected to engage your thinking/consideration.

If you are not a believer in God and His work among men, it will provide you a systematic way to examine the questions demanding answers from you. If you are a believer, then this series perhaps can assist you in sharpening your understanding and ability to articulate clearly YOUR faith (not that of the minister, parent or friend). Either way, this lesson series is offered to you as a tool to explore and define what YOU believe about these questions of faith.

May God Bless you in this study..... Jim Ice

“... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” - 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

The Purpose of Instructional Program

This 13-lesson series is designed to

- Engage the seeker in a personal journey to build their own faith;
- Provide the seeker a starting point for their journey into the scriptures to build personal understanding;
- Encourage the seeker to identify new questions for inquiry;
- Engage a group to share their faith (based on knowledge); and,
- Challenge the seeker to articulate (and defend) a personal statement of their own beliefs related to each topic AND define specific implications of their faith in their daily lives.

Questions of Faith...

This series will address the following questions of faith:

Lesson 1	Do the Scriptures have authority?
Lesson 2	Who is God? What is the nature of God?
Lesson 3	Who is Man? What is the nature of Man?
Lesson 4	What is Sin? Why does it matter?
Lesson 5	Who is Satan? What is his nature?
Lesson 6	Who is Jesus? Why did he come?
Lesson 7	Why did Jesus have to die?
Lesson 8	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Lesson 9	What comes after death?
Lesson 10	What is Grace? Why not works?
Lesson 11	What is the role of the Church?
Lesson 12	How should believers live?
Lesson 13	What has God promised man?

General Study Questions:

Within each lesson we will ask the following questions:

- What do these scriptures reveal about the topic?
- What additional scriptures shed light on the topic?
- What additional study is required?
- What is the implication for my daily life?

How to Use this Program

This program is designed to facilitate your bible study and development of a stronger personal faith. This 13-lesson series can be used individually, in a group-based (classroom) study – or ideally, in a combination of both personal study and group discussion and sharing.

Each topic lesson will provide:

- A brief **introduction** to the topic.
- A few **inquiry questions** to stimulate your thinking/wonder.
- Seven **key scripture references** and space for your personal notes to help you INITIATE and DOCUMENT your study of the topic

Scripture	Notes
2 Timothy 3:16-17 *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scripture is "God Breathed" – from God • Useful for instruction in 'right-living'

- Space for you to add **additional scripture references and/or notes** you discover during your study and discussions.
- Space to list **new questions** your study raises and/or areas where you desire additional focused study.

Personal Application – in addition each lesson provides you the opportunity to directly apply what you are learning, by providing you:

- Space for you to describe your (current) **statement of faith** related to this topic. Understanding that faith grows over time, and with additional study, a statement date is included. We **STRONGLY ENCOURAGE** you to write out your faith statement as it will focus your thinking and provide you a wonderful reference point for review, additional study and witnessing later.

FAITH STATEMENT - I believe...

Date: 2/12/15

...that the Bible is the inspired revelation of a holy and almighty God, intended to reveal who He is and His desire for relationship with man. I believe it holds truth and instruction for right living and salvation.

- Space for you to briefly outline the impact this believe will have in your life by describing an **action statement**. This statement describes the "so what" of your personal learning application.

ACTION STATEMENT - Because I believe this, I will...

... take His word seriously (believe what it says) and commit to study, memorize and apply His word through weekly personal bible studies.

(Optional) Pre-Test

Some participating in this study series might like to complete a "pre-test" to assess their current understanding of each of the topic areas and their ability to clearly articulate their individual "faith statements". This assessment can also be used at the end of the series as well to explore how your faith has been enriched by the study of scripture.

1. Describe the nature of God.
2. Explain the role of scripture in revelation of God's plan.
3. Explain the difference between the old and new covenants.
4. Explain how man is like and not like God.
5. Define sin. List acts of the sinful nature.
6. Describe Satan and his nature/actions among man.
7. Describe Christ's mission on earth.
8. Explain the role of Christ's resurrection.
9. Summarize the role of the Holy Spirit.
10. Outline the concept of "Saved by Grace".
11. Characterize the role of the New Testament Church.
12. Describe the judgment day scene.
13. Explain God's plan for eternal life and eternal death.
14. List three of your favorite promises from God.
15. Describe four acts that characterize a Christ-like lifestyle.

Bonus: Describe why you decided to have a personal relationship with God.

(Optional) Scripture Memory Program

"I have hidden your word in my heart..." - Psalm 119:11a (NIV)

For each lesson in this workshop series two scriptures have been suggested as memory verses (marked with *) to help those who wish to build an active knowledge and ready use of the scriptures. The following steps may help you to write the scripture on your heart:

1. Look up the verse in your own bible
2. Pray for God to stamp the verse on your heart
3. Read the Verse in context.
4. Get the meaning of the Verse.
5. Read the Verse aloud.

6. Print/Type the Verse on a small card.
7. Practice (4 times without mistakes).
8. Review Daily.

1. DO SCRIPTURES HAVE AUTHORITY?

Our understanding of who God is and what he desires for our lives is found in in our experience with scripture (reading/hearing). God’s unique gift of ‘inspired scripture’ is one of our greatest blessings as seekers of God. Some question the reasonableness, authority and usefulness of this collection of “writings from God”. What is your view?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Where did scripture come from? What is its purpose?
- What separates scripture from all other writings? Organized?
- How could the bible maintain its integrity to the original intent?
- How did we get the 66 books (canon) we have today?

Scripture	Notes
2 Timothy 3:16-17 *	
Hebrews 4:12-13 *	
2 Peter 1:20-21	
John 12:48	
John 17:17	

Scripture	Notes
Deuteronomy 29:29	
John 20:30-31	
Additional References/Notes:	
Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:	

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2. WHO IS GOD? WHAT IS THE NATURE OF GOD?

Is there a God... and who is He? These questions are perhaps the most fundamental of all questions man raises about the world in which we live – how it came to be and what is the “meaning of life”. If we are created beings, then what is the creator like and what does he want from me? Should I live in fear of Him? Can I take comfort in his power and wisdom? This lesson BEGINS the study of the nature of God – from God’s own words.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Where did God come from? Who created God?
- What are the characteristics of God?
- How does God describe Himself?
- How is God different from Man?

Scripture	Notes
John 4:24 *	
1 John 4:16 *	
Acts 17:24-25	

1 John 1:5	
Jeremiah 31:3	

Scripture	Notes
Romans 1:18	
James 1:17	
Additional References/Notes:	
Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:	

FAITH STATEMENT - I believe...	Date:
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ACTION STATEMENT - Because I believe this, I will...

3. WHO IS MAN? WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MAN?

With a better understanding of God, our attention turns to who we are as Man. How are we like God and how are we different from Him? What is our purpose on earth? Are we just another animal or do we have some special purpose? Are there conditions common to all mankind? And why would a holy and all powerful God care about us at all? All challenging questions included in a study of the nature of man.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Where did Man come from?
- How is Man different from God? Similar to God?
- What is Man's purpose?
- What is Man's fate?

Scripture	Notes
Genesis 1:26-28 *	

1 Peter 1:24 *	
Acts 17:26-28	
Jeremiah 17:9	
1 Corinthians 2:14	

Scripture	Notes
Ezekiel 18:20	
Romans 7:14-15	
Additional References/Notes:	

Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:

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Scripture	Notes
Isaiah 59:2 *	
Romans 8:13 *	
1 John 3:4	
James 4:17	
Romans 3:23	

4. WHAT IS SIN? WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Morality – is it a matter of opinion, personal preference and/or cultural perspective? Or is there a truth that should direct all man’s actions? Do these truths evolve as man moves through time? Who decides the consequences of disobedience? To truly understand who God is and our condition as man requires an understanding of sin – that which caused God to create a plan of redemption.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- What is Sin?
- How can you recognize/identify Sin?
- What is the cause of Sin? Why does man Sin?
- What is the result of Sin? Today? Later?

Scripture	Notes
Galatians 5:19-21	
Romans 1:18-32	

Additional References/Notes:

Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:

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5. WHO IS SATAN? WHAT IS HIS NATURE?

No doubt there is evil in our world. We see evidence all around us – in the news and in our daily encounters. We agree there are evil people, but is there really a devil – a spiritual being spreading evil in our world? Some believe there is a kind and loving God, but no Satan. Others see

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Satan behind every action with which they do not agree. What do you believe about the one called “the father of lies”?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Who is Satan? What were his origins? What is his purpose?
- Is Satan an evil God? How is he like and not like God?
- How is he like and not like man? Does he operate alone?
- What tactics does he use to entice and trap man in sin?

Scripture	Notes
1 Peter 5:8-9 *	
James 4:7 *	
Ephesians 2:1-2	
Ephesians 6:11-12	
John 12:31	

Scripture	Notes
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Genesis 3:14-15	
Romans 16:20	
Additional References/Notes:	
Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:	

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6. WHO IS JESUS? WHY DID HE COME?

Jesus is perhaps the most well-known of all historical figures. His influence in history is undeniable. However, people's opinions vary greatly about who He was and what he did. Some call him a myth; others a wonderful teacher; and still others a holy prophet. There are some however that call Him – God. His claims about himself, if true, demand your attention and call for you to decide who he was/is.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Where did Jesus come from? What is his purpose?
- What separates Jesus from others who claim to be from God?
- How did Jesus live His life? Who testifies to His life?
- Why do they call Him 'Christ'?

Scripture	Notes
Colossians 1:15-16*	
Acts 4:11-12 *	
John 1:1-5;14	
Matthew 7:28	

Matthew 28:18-20	
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Scripture	Notes
Matthew 1:23	
1 Peter 2:6	
Additional References/Notes:	
Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:	

FAITH STATEMENT - I believe...	Date:
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7. WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?

God’s plan for the salvation of man required Him to send His Son to earth. Jesus came to teach us about the Father – His nature and His expectations for man, His ultimate creation. He came in the form of a lowly man, not an earthly King – to teach us where true riches are found. But why did he have to die? Could salvation have been brought to man without the cruel torture and sacrifice of this holy man?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Why is blood required for forgiveness of sin?
- Why does God demand sacrifice?
- What is significant about the way He died?
- How does this death model how we are called to “die”?

Scripture	Notes
Colossians 1:19-20 *	

Romans 5:9-10 *	
Hebrews 9:12-14	
Revelations 5:9	
Matthew 26:28	

Scripture	Notes
Acts 2:23-24	
John 11:25	
Additional References/Notes:	

Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:

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8. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

God (the Godhead) is described as three distinct personalities – The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the most difficult for us to understand is the Spirit. Some people believe that He exists to bring the word of God to man and our interaction with the Spirit is primarily through our study. Others believe that he has an active role in our lives, directing and encouraging us toward God. What do you believe?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- What is the role/s of the Holy Spirit?
- How is the Holy Spirit like our spirit? How is he different?
- How does the Spirit draw us to God?
- What does God desire for the Spirit’s impact in your life?

Scripture	Notes
John 16:7-8 *	
Romans 8:9 *	
Romans 8:26	
1 Corinthians 3:16	
2 Peter 1:21	

Scripture	Notes
John 14:26	
Galatians 5:22-26	

Additional References/Notes:

Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:

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9. WHAT COMES AFTER DEATH?

Traditions across the world teach many different things about what happens after death. Some believe that death represents the end of existence, while others teach that death is only a transition to another form of life. Teachings of the afterlife include teachings about eternity,

and rewards/punishment as a result of behavior in life. Your view of what happens at death directly impacts how you live your life.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- What does the bible say happens at death?
- Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? What are they like?
- Describe the 'judgment' scene.
- How does your belief of what happens at death impact your life?

Scripture	Notes
2 Corinthians 5:10 *	
Acts 17:31 *	
Matthew 25:31-32; 46	
John 6:27	
1 Corinthians 15:53	

Scripture	Notes
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Revelation 20:12	
1 Thessalonians 4:17	
Additional References/Notes:	
Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:	

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10. WHAT IS GRACE? WHY NOT WORKS?

“Saved by Grace”... “Faith without works is dead”. For some these two statements, both from the bible, paint conflicting or at least confusing explanations on how salvation is obtained. Some believe that your salvation is dependent on how you act – what you do/do not do in response to God’s call. Others suggest salvation only depends on the action of Jesus and his love for you. What do you believe?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- How would you define grace? Why is grace necessary?
- How is grace obtained?
- Explain the role of works in response to salvation.
- How does an understanding of grace change us?

Scripture	Notes
Ephesians 2:4-5 *	
James 2:17-18 *	
Titus 3:3-8	
Romans 3:21-26	

Matthew 5:16 *	
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Scripture	Notes
Romans 11:6	
Titus 2:11-14	

Additional References/Notes:

Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:

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11. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH?

In the first century, Jesus established ‘the church’ (the “called out”), providing a social support network for the implementation and communication of His message. Today, we have His word (bible) and a variety of communication tools at our disposal to share the gospel with the unbeliever. Is the church still relevant today? Do the traditions and structure of the church still serve a purpose for our Christian walk?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Who is the Church? What is its mission?
- How do you become a member of the church? Is it an option?
- What role should the church play in the Christian’s life?
- What is your accountability to others in the church?

Scripture	Notes
1 Corinthians 12:12-13 *	

John 13:34-35 *	
2 Corinthians 5:18-20	
Acts 2:42-47	
Galatians 6:2 *	

Scripture	Notes
Romans 12:3-8	
Ephesians 4:11-13	
Additional References/Notes:	

Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:

FAITH STATEMENT - I believe... Date:

ACTION STATEMENT - Because I believe this, I will...

Scripture	Notes
Matthew 16:26 *	
Mathew 5:14-16 *	
John 8:12	
John 15:19	
John 17:6	

12. HOW SHOULD BELIEVERS LIVE?

God will be found by those that seek Him. As you search the scriptures and reach out to God, He provides you evidence of His wisdom, power and loving kindness. When you recognize His design and sustaining hand in the world, faith begins to develop. As believers we are called to live a different, differentiated life – to stand apart from the world. How do you stand apart? How can you live your faith in your daily life?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- How are believers different?
- What does the world think of God and His wisdom?
- What does it mean to be ‘in’ the world but not ‘of’ the world?
- Where is the ‘home’ of the believer?

Scripture	Notes
John 18:36-37	
1 Corinthians 1:21	

Additional References/Notes:

Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:

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13. WHAT HAS GOD PROMISED MAN?

Throughout history, God has provided promises to man: from the predicted consequences of eating of the fruit in the garden to the rainbow reminder of His promise to Noah; from his covenant with Abraham to the promise of resurrection/eternal life – God reveals

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Himself, the consequences of disobedience and His steadfast love through His promises. Do you know His promises for you?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Which of God’s promises provide you comfort? anxiety?
- What is your favorite promise of God? Why?
- Why do you think God articulated His promises to man?
- How will these promises impact how you live your life?

Scripture	Notes
1 John 1:7 *	
John 3:16 *	
John 15:7	
Isaiah 41:10	
Jeremiah 29:11	

Scripture	Notes
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Psalms 32:8	
Romans 12:3	
Additional References/Notes:	
Additional Questions Raised/Study Required:	

ADDITIONAL NOTES

FAITH STATEMENT - I believe...	Date:

ACTION STATEMENT - Because I believe this, I will...

ADDITIONAL NOTES

ADDITIONAL USEFUL REFERENCES

Below are listed several useful references to support your faith building journey.

Little, P. E. (2003). *Know What You Believe* (fifth ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Little, P. E. (2003). *Know Why You Believe* (fourth ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Pickering, F. A. (1985). *Sharpening the Sword – Beginners Manual* (fourth ed.).

Simmons, R. (2000). *Basic Training - A Manual for Teens – Thirteen Basic Bible Teachings that You Need to Know*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate.



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*This faith building
workbook belongs to:*

Here is one useful free website <http://www.kitzkikz.com/flashcards/> which allows the simple creation of a flashcard version of our memory verse. (avoid 'cutting and pasting' to support practice/memorization)

"If you hold to my teaching, you are truly my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." - John 8:31-32 (NIV)

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*Created for the
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Instructor – James Ice*