

B E Y O N D B E L I E F



A CONNECT GROUP JOURNEY

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INTRODUCTION

Everything we think, feel, and do comes out of our beliefs. Our beliefs determine our thoughts and emotions, which then determine our actions. Instead of just trying to change our behavior, we will focus on changing our beliefs.

In this series, we will specifically explore our beliefs, or narratives, of who God is. Narratives are the ideas that we tell ourselves about God and how He works in our lives. This study will complement the weekend sermon series at Christ Place in the Gospel of John.

As a church, we're so excited for this "Connect Group Journey Beyond Belief!"

Pastor Paul Welch
Discipleship Pastor

USING YOUR WORKBOOK



GROUP OPENER

On the next pages is a list of conversation starters for your group to break the ice each week.



VIDEO LESSON

This is the main point of the video lesson content provided by Christ Place Discipleship Pastor, Paul Welch. Each video lesson is between 10-20 minutes in length.



NOTES

Writing things down and taking notes helps you engage with content. Each lesson has places for fill-in-the-blanks and open areas for you to take notes along with the video lesson each week. You will want to reference your notes during your group discussion.



BIBLE REFERENCE

We have provided the Scripture reference we will be studying in New Living Translation within your study guide.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Your Connect Group will walk through these questions together in discussion. You may not get to every question, or your group leader may skip some to keep the discussion moving.



GROUP PRAYER

Take time as a group each week to share prayer requests and prayer together.



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Recommended Tool

Inductive Bible Study is an investigative approach to Bible Study and can be a powerful tool to help you understand the Bible. In each week of this study, there is a recommended tool to take the study further. (For more on Inductive Bible Study, see page 33 for Recommended Resources.)

Going Further

At the end of each lesson is a way for you to apply what you've learned and take it further in your own life. Take some time to do this one thing on your own during the week between your Connect Group meetings.

GROUP OPENER IDEAS

Would You Rather Questions

- Would you rather see a movie or go on a hike?
- Would you rather have only summer or winter for the rest of your life?
- Would you rather have your lunch made for you every single day but never get to choose what the dish was, or be able to choose your lunch every day but have to make it yourself?
- Would you rather never watch another TV show or movie again or never use social media again?
- Would you rather have to commute a long distance to your dream job or live close to a mediocre job?
- Would you rather be a celebrity or be famous in your professional industry?

Ice Breaker Questions

- What do you do for fun?
- What is your ideal vacation?
- What is the most memorable activity you did with your family as a child?
- What quality do you appreciate most in a friend?
- What is one characteristic you received from your parents you want to keep and one you wish you could change?
- What is a good thing happening in your life right now? What makes it good?
- If you knew you could not fail and money were no object, what would you like to do in the next five years?
- What would you like said about you at your funeral?
- When, if ever, did God become more than a word to you, and how did that happen?

B E Y O N D B E L I E F

WEEK ONE



GROUP OPENER

- Choose a conversation starter or ice-breaker to get everyone talking (see page 5 for ideas)
- Pastor Rick started the Gospel of John series this past weekend. What stood out to you from his message? What was God saying to you?



VIDEO LESSON

In this series we want to explore our _____ of God _____
and _____.

Narratives are



STORY POINT

We've all come to wrong conclusions about _____, so
it's possible we have come to a few wrong conclusions
about _____.



NOTES

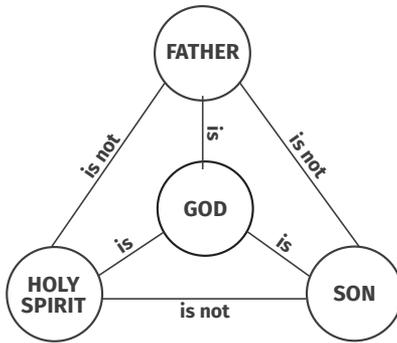
Three Keys to Changing Beliefs:

1. Determine to _____
2. Decide to _____
3. Commit to _____

If you faithfully practice the three things above, you'll experience God in ways that you would have otherwise missed.

To do this, we will focus on three things:

1. The _____.
2. The _____ and _____ of Jesus.
3. The understanding of the _____.



BIBLE READING: Read John 1:1-5

"1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He existed in the beginning with God. 3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him."

1. God is _____.
2. God is the _____ of all things.

3. God is Omnipotent - which means “_____ - _____.”

Only an all-powerful, eternal God can create a way for flawed people to have access to eternal life with Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tell the group about a time you thought something about a person but then found out it was not true.
2. On a scale of 1-10, how open are you to the fact that your view of God may not be 100% accurate?
3. Why is the belief that God is eternal such a big deal?
4. In what ways do you notice God’s creativity in the world around you? In what ways do you exhibit God’s creative nature?
5. Have you ever been disappointed about something our all-powerful God didn’t do? Over time were you ever able to see why He didn’t do it how you thought?
6. In what ways do you need this all-powerful God to intervene in your life right now? Share this with someone and pray for this as a group.
7. How important are these three characteristics of God we explored? Consider each one. What if they were not true?
 - a. What if God wasn’t eternal?
 - b. What if God wasn’t the creator?
 - c. What if God wasn’t omnipotent?



GROUP PRAYER

Take some time to pray together as a group



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Recommended Tool

Write it down

Going Further

One very powerful way to help grow the right beliefs is to write things down. Our mind remembers things better when we write things down. Write down three belief statements that stood out to you today. (Or write down wrong beliefs you know God may want you to change. Then write out one truth from scripture to overcome that wrong belief).

BEYOND BELIEF

WEEK TWO



GROUP OPENER

- Choose a conversation starter or ice-breaker to get everyone talking (see page 5 for ideas)
- As a group, discuss the weekend message. What stood out to you? What is God saying to you?



VIDEO LESSON



STORY POINT

You'll always find what you're _____ for.

If you believe God is out to get you, punish you, or doesn't care about your circumstances, chances are that's what you'll see.

If you choose to believe that God pursues a loving relationship with you that is real and personal, and that He has your best interest in mind, you'll find that too.

It really comes down to our belief in who God is.



BIBLE READING: Read John 1:4-9

"The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. 6 God sent a man, John the Baptist 7 to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. 8 John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. 9 The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world."



NOTES

1. God is the _____ - _____.

2. God is the _____.

Only when light shines in the darkness can God reveal it and bring back to life that which was once dead.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you found this statement to be true in your life? “You’ll always find what you’re looking for.”
2. Tell about a time when your perspective changed toward a person or a situation.
3. How has God been a life-giver to you personally?
4. In what ways do you need God to be a life-giver now?
5. Do you see a difference between God as a life-giver and a light-giver?
6. God’s light can guide us, and His light can reveal the darkest places inside of us. What is your typical reaction when God shines his light in those dark places?



GROUP PRAYER



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Recommended Tool

Verbalizing the truth of God's Word to yourself.

Going Further

Another effective way to help us change our beliefs is to repeat truth out loud. Our mind hears and records our own voices with higher priority. This week take your truth statements from last session and repeat them out loud twice a day. You could even try adding scriptures, or more truth statements to your list.

BEYOND BELIEF

WEEK THREE



GROUP OPENER

- Choose a conversation starter or ice-breaker to get everyone talking (see page 5 for ideas)
- As a group, discuss the most recent weekend message. What stood out to you? What was God saying to you?



VIDEO LESSON



STORY POINT

We project our perceptions and experiences on to others.

People project things onto _____ from their
past _____, _____, or
_____ about how we think things should be.



BIBLE READING: Read John 1:10-13

10 “He came into the very world he created, but the world didn’t recognize him. **11** He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. **12** But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. **13** They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.”

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was your family of origin like? How did they interact and communicate? How did they resolve conflict? What did they believe about God?
2. What was something your family of origin did well? What was one thing your family struggled with?
3. Taking some time to reflect, is there anything from your family of origin that you have projected onto God?
4. What stood out to you about God's goodness? Do you see God more as a Good Father or an angry judge?
5. Adoption is a powerful picture of who God is and what He's done for us. How did Rachel's story reflect the attitude of God adopting us into His spiritual family?
6. Read and discuss John 3:1-21. What does this portion of scripture say about God as the life-giver?



GROUP PRAYER

Take some time to pray together as a group.



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Recommended Tool

Turn what you've written and verbalized into a prayer.

Going Further

Take your list of truths you've been writing down and saying out loud, update it, and pick one truth you want to focus on this week and turn it into a prayer. It can be a short, simple prayer. Then say that prayer out loud this week.



GROUP OPENER

- Choose a conversation starter or ice-breaker to get everyone talking (see page 5 for ideas)
- As a group, discuss the most recent weekend message. What stood out to you? What was God saying to you?



VIDEO LESSON



STORY POINT

We need to have an accurate picture of who God is.

Zoom out to get a more complete picture of who God is so we

can change _____,

or add _____.



BIBLE READING: Read John 1:14-15

14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. **15** John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"



NOTES

1. The God of the universe became _____.
2. God is _____.
3. God always _____ for what's next, because He's _____.

The all-knowing God became human and, therefore, has empathy for our human-experience. A reasonable response to this fact is to give Him all the glory He deserves and practice verbalizing these beliefs to those around us!

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you missed seeing the whole picture of a situation? How did it affect the accuracy of that situation? Is it possible you may not have a complete picture of who God is yet?
2. How can someone “zoom-out” to get a more accurate picture of who God is?
3. God could have carried out His plan of salvation in any way, so why is it significant that Jesus became human and dwelt among us?
4. Why is it important to give glory to God? Make a list of ways to give God glory.
5. What is your initial reaction to the phrase “There is nothing hidden from God.” (This response could help reveal a belief you currently hold about God).
6. God uses people to prepare His way. How has God used you to work in the spiritual lives of people around you?
7. Why is it hard to verbalize our faith and beliefs in God? How could we begin verbalizing our faith in God to others?
8. We will also be focusing on practical ways to live out our beliefs as a group. Take a few minutes of your group time today to discuss how your group can live out your beliefs through serving.
 - a. **Local or Global Missions:** For ways to serve as a group with local or global missions, email ayeackley@christplace.church.
 - b. **Serve at your local Christ Place Campus:** To serve as a group at a Christ Place Church campus, visit christplace.church/connect and click on the “Serve as a Group” link.



GROUP PRAYER

Take time to pray together as a group.



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Recommended Tool

Verbalize the truth of God's Word to others.

Going Further

Take your list of truths you've been writing down and praying, update it, and tell someone about it this week. Practice verbalizing your beliefs to others by telling them about what God has been doing in your life over the past four weeks. ***Use the space below to make a list of people you may want to share with and write a few notes about what you might say.*** Be ready to share how your conversations went next week!



GROUP OPENER

- Choose a conversation starter or ice-breaker to get everyone talking (see page 5 for ideas)
- As a group, discuss the most recent weekend message. What stood out to you? What was God saying to you?



VIDEO LESSON



STORY POINT

Just because we've read the book doesn't mean we have a relationship with the author.

What kind of relationship do you have with the author of the Bible? The author of the Bible, God Himself, wants to transform you, your beliefs, your entire life!



BIBLE READING: Read John 1:16-17

16 From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. **17** For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.



NOTES

1. God is _____.

2. God is _____.

3. God is _____.

4. God is _____.

As we build a relationship with the author of the Bible, we see that God faithfully offers His abundant grace to you and me out of His perfect love for us!

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between knowing about God and having a relationship with God?
2. How have you personally seen, or experienced, God's abundance in your life? How can we recognize God's abundance in our lives more consistently?
3. God's grace can be difficult to understand and accept. Why is it so difficult to accept something we want and need so desperately? What is your biggest take-away about God's grace today?
4. Love is not just something God does; it is who He is. Have you ever felt unloved? Have you ever seen yourself as unloveable? Why is it so important to believe God loves us unconditionally?
5. How does Jesus coming to earth demonstrate God's unfailing love and faithfulness?
6. How can knowing right beliefs about who God is help make scripture reading more engaging and personal?
7. Did you tell someone about how God was changing your beliefs last week? Tell the group how it went.
8. Take a few minutes of your group time today to discuss how your group can live out your beliefs through serving.
 - a. **Local or Global Missions:** For ways to serve as a group with local or global missions, email ayeackley@christplace.church.
 - b. **Serve at your local Christ Place campus:** To serve as a group at a Christ Place Church campus, visit christplace.church/connect and click on the "Serve as a Group" link.



GROUP PRAYER

Take time to pray together as a group.



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Recommended Tool

Practice finding out who God is from scripture on your own.

Going Further

Take your list of truths you've been writing down and update it, adding more truths God is revealing to you. The Apostle John also wrote 1, 2, 3 John. This week read 1 John chapters 1-2. Write down any words or phrases that describe who God is. What stands out to you? What did you notice?



GROUP OPENER

- Choose a conversation starter or ice-breaker to get everyone talking (see page 5 for ideas)
- As a group, discuss the most recent weekend message. What stood out to you? What was God saying to you?



VIDEO LESSON



STORY POINT

During this series God has been addressing your beliefs and many times this leads to a crisis of belief. This is part of the process of internal transformation, and that's a good place to be.

God pursues a loving relationship with you that is real and personal.

Will you take the next step of living out your new beliefs no matter the risk?



BIBLE READING: Read John 1:18

18 No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.



NOTES

1. God is _____.
2. God is perfectly _____ to us by _____.
3. Using the _____ to understand the _____
_____ is impossible.
4. Put your beliefs into _____.

When we better understand and believe who God is, our new set of beliefs are eventually reflected in our actions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Hebrews chapter 11. What is God teaching you about faith in these scriptures?
2. From the video, think about the ways to interact with a God you cannot see. Which of the interactions is most comfortable to you? Which one is more difficult?
3. What is something you already know about Jesus that reflects who God is?
4. What has God been showing you throughout this series? Take some time to email three beliefs God has revealed through this series to connect@christplace.church.
5. Take some time to plan how and when you could serve together as a group. If you have already served as a group, talk about that experience and what you got out of it.



GROUP PRAYER

Take time to pray together as a group.



PERSONAL APPLICATION

Recommended Tool

Find a practical way to put your beliefs into action.

Going Further

You have served together as a group, now find a practical way to put your beliefs into action as an individual. How could you continue practicing the beliefs you have written down? (Saying your beliefs out loud every day, interactions with your family, interactions with those you work with, scheduling a consistent serving time, etc.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

My Imaginary Jesus

by Matt Mikalatos

A fun and wild spiritual adventure to track down Matt's imaginary Jesus. (This book is a fun exploration of what we believe about Jesus.)

The Cure

by John Lynch, Bruce McNicol and Bill Thrall

We thought so, but eventually most of us unwittingly carry an old, dead outlook into our new life. However, God's cures rarely come in the form we expect. What if God is not who we think He is... and neither are we?

The Good and Beautiful God

by James Bryan Smith

We all have ideas we tell ourselves about God and how He works in our lives. Some are true, but many are false. James Bryan Smith believes those thoughts determine not only who we are, but how we live. The subtitle of this book is simply, "falling in love with the God Jesus knows."

Lord, Teach Me to Study the Bible In 28 Days

by Kay Arthur

A practical tool to learn the inductive Bible study method. This method of Bible study was used in creating the content for this Connect Group series. Kay Arthur's hands on workbook teaches readers one concept a day freeing them to study the Bible themselves.

The Bible Project

Explore free videos, study tools, and other Bible resources that help people experience the Bible in a way that is approachable, engaging, and transformative. www.bibleproject.com

Personal Care at Christ Place

Care Ministry is a collection of support groups, classes, and individual counseling to help you during the most challenging seasons of life. www.christplace.church/care

