I Don’t Know What I Believe.
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I Don’t Know What I Believe

As the Apostle Paul entered the final days of his ministry, one that would shape the lives of believers for thousands of years, he penned the following words to his successor, Timothy:

9 He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. (2 Timothy 1:9-14)

Over the next six weeks, you will have the opportunity to take these words, process them, and leverage them transform any misconceptions you have about who Jesus is and propel you forward into the life He makes available to you today.

Each session within the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” study approaches one of six topics that have served for centuries of theological discussion. Using the DVD and accompanying Leader and Participant’s guides, we believe you will lead both yourself and your eGroup into a deeper understanding of who Jesus is—not for the sheer sake of knowledge, but for the development of a loving, devoted faith in Him.

The following Leader Guide has everything you will need to lead you through an experience that, if you let it, will transform your faith.

The best is yet to come,

^ The eGroups Staff
How To Use This Study

The I Don’t Know What I Believe Leader Guide is broken up into six distinct sessions, one for each week of the series. Use these sessions in conjunction with the I Don’t Know What I Believe DVD. In each session, you will find the following structure:

SESSION OVERVIEW:
This page is designed to give you a high-level overview of the topic for each session. Here you will find the focal point for each session, as well as the key Scripture references and highlights from the corresponding DVD session.

LEADERSHIP 101:
Each session will contain a set of practical guidance to assist in the development of your eGroup and a few final recommendations as you prepare for each group meeting. From communicating to your group to creating an atmosphere conducive to discussion, use this resource to create a “press-play” environment for your group.

DISCUSSION:
The I Don’t Know What I Believe DVD is intended to prompt discussion amongst your group members. Use the questions provided in each session to facilitate your group’s discussion and application of each topic.

I DON’T KNOW WHAT I BELIEVE:
The very nature of the I Don’t Know What I Believe study will encourage people to ask genuine, but challenging questions about their faith. As the leader, you are not expected to resolve doubts or to have every answer to your group’s questions, but we want to provide you with enough direction to pursue these answers with your group. Use this page to prepare for the questions that may arise during each session.

WHAT’S NEXT:
At the end of each session, we have included personal study resources to help you pray, read, and reflect between group meetings. Feel free to use these resources for your own growth or share them with your group.

NOTES:
Use the blank page in each session to record any notes, prayer requests, or stories of life change your group experiences throughout this study.
Session One:
Salvation
Session One: 
Overview

It’s not **WHAT YOU BELIEVE**, it’s **WHO YOU BELIEVE IN**.

**KEY SCRIPTURE:**
2 Timothy 1:9 “…He has saved us…”

**WHAT YOU’RE WATCHING: RAISED TO LIFE**
This session will revolve around a teaching from Pastor Steven on the practical meaning of being raised to life in Christ. Using the following tweetables as a guide, encourage your eGroup to take notes and think through any questions they may have on the topic of salvation.

**GOAL FOR THIS SESSION:** **BUILD A FOUNDATION**
This session will be foundational for the rest of the study. Encourage your group to begin processing any questions they may have about who Jesus really is and what it means to place their faith in Him. Transparency at this stage will lead to transformation later in the study.

**TWEETABLES:**

“*The point God has always been about is that we would know Him.*” – Pastor Steven (@stevenfurtick)

“*Jesus came to save us from sin and to save us to God.*” – Pastor Steven (@stevenfurtick)

“*Salvation is not just meant to keep us from eternal death, but to bring us into a full and abundant life here and now.*” – Pastor Steven (@stevenfurtick)
Leadership 101

Atmosphere
Thursday evening. The pressure of the workweek has peaked as you are merely hours away from Friday—your last opportunity to squeeze an entire week’s workload into five surprisingly short days. Tonight, however, is a night to disconnect, to momentarily step away from the demands of work.

As you grab your Bible and walk to the front door, you wonder what your eGroup leader is going to ask tonight. You step inside and take a deep breath, as if your exhale would release you from the grips of your week and allow you to refocus on the spiritual task at hand.

“What’s that smell?”

You mask the cough that interrupts your peaceful exhale. It’s a good thing you are focused on ignoring the smell—you didn’t even notice the litter box you sidestepped to make your way into the living room. Setting aside the laundry basket resting on the armchair, you finally sit down.

“What’s my eGroup leader?”

The Last Ten Percent
• Atmosphere is often the last ten percent a leader accounts for in his or preparation, but is often the first ten percent people notice.

• Clean your house, brew some coffee, and play music in the background. This is not unnecessary ambiance, but creation of an atmosphere that will contribute to, not detract from, a healthy group discussion.

Final Prep
• Read 2 Timothy 1:9-14 aloud with your group before each group meeting. Set the tone that this will be the theme passage for the series.

• Identify two or three questions from the next page that you want your group to focus on during discussion. You don’t need to ask and answer every question provided—focusing on a select few will allow for discussion to develop naturally within the group.
Discussion

Identify the direction you want to lead your eGroup in during this session and use the questions below as needed to facilitate your group’s discussion time.

Open The Discussion
1. In your own words, what is salvation?
2. Share your salvation story. When did you make the decision to follow Jesus?

Dig Deeper
3. Why was Jesus’ message of eternal salvation so counter cultural to those He preached to?
4. What requirements does the Bible lay out for someone to be “saved?” How is this different from the religious requirements of the Old Testament?

Make It Personal
5. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me (John 14:6).” What does this mean? What ideas or teachings have you heard about Jesus that would suggest otherwise?
6. Have you ever had doubts about who Jesus is and what He’s done? How did you deal with those doubts?
7. What doubts or questions do you still have about Jesus? How do these questions affect your ability to trust Him and follow Him on a daily basis?

Make It Stick
8. Challenge your eGroup to begin memorizing 2 Timothy 1:9-14.
9. Using the cards included in your I Don’t Know What I Believe study kit, challenge everyone in your group write down the number one idea they are wrestling with in their faith right now. This can be a question, a doubt, or any statement they are currently processing. To keep the cards anonymous, ask your eGroup members to fold them up and put them into a box. After the group leaves, read through these cards—this will give you a good idea where your group stands as you prepare for the rest of the study.
I Don’t Know What I Believe

Each video featured in the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” eGroups Study is designed to prompt discussion with your eGroup. Use the following as a guide to prepare you for any difficult questions that may arise within your group.

IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN?
Jesus is more than eternal fire insurance; He is our direct access to truth, freedom, and abundant life on Earth. Jesus made several bold “I am…” statements proclaiming His authority as the Son of God, with John 14:6 asserting His position as both the only way to eternal life and the only way to truly experience life on Earth.


IS SALVATION REALLY AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE?
Until Jesus came, God reserved reconciliation for His chosen people who followed His Law. When Jesus came, however, God didn’t change; our approach to Him did. Today, salvation is available to all people, regardless of their background. The grace offered through Jesus is truly a gift, unable to be earned. The only stipulation is to believe in Him.


DO PEOPLE REALLY GO TO HELL IF THEY DON’T BELIEVE IN JESUS?
Heaven and Hell are eternal places of existence, with Heaven serving as an eternal union with God, and Hell standing as eternal separation from God. Still, God does not desire for any of us to perish and He promises to reveal Himself to all those who earnestly seek Him. This can happen in any number of ways, but anyone who believes in Jesus for who He truly is will experience eternal life.

Also see: 1 John 5:11-13, Revelation 20:15, 2 Peter 3:9, Romans 1:20, Jeremiah 29:13, Romans 10:12-13.

WHY SHOULD I CARE SO MUCH ABOUT SOMETHING THAT DOESN’T AFFECT ME WHILE I’M ALIVE?
The promise of salvation is immediate. Jesus came that we may have life, and have it to the full. When we believe in Jesus, we aren’t deferring our blessings until eternity. Jesus offers us a unique freedom to experience true joy, peace, and love in our lives today. In a moment, salvation offers us an eternal promise, but also enters us into the process of experiencing the true life God intends for us on Earth.

Also see: John 10:10, Ephesians 2:1-10, Matthew 5:6-14
What’s Next?

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP:
In addition to praying for the specific prayer requests in your group, use the following as a guide to pray for your group as a whole throughout the week:

Jesus, I surrender every part of my leadership to you. You are the one who saved me, and I believe you died for each person in my group. Help them to focus on who you are and what you have done and help me to focus on the direction you wish to lead this group throughout this series. I thank you for the opportunity to lead these people and I pray that you will change their lives through this study. Amen.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
Visit www.elevationchurch.org/idontknowwhatibelieve to view the video for this week’s study session and to download digital copies of the Leader Guide and Participant’s Guide.

I DON’T KNOW WHAT I BELIEVE DEVOTIONAL SERIES:
Continue your personal study by signing up to receive e-mail devotionals exclusive to the I Don’t Know What I Believe series. Enter e-mail addresses for your entire eGroup at www.elevationchurch.org/idontknowwhatibelieve to sign up.

TWITTER #IDKWIB:
Follow @eGroups on Twitter to stay up-to-date on what other groups are doing with the I Don’t Know What I Believe series. Tweet at us throughout this study to share what God is doing in your group.
Notes
Use the space below to record any notes or prayer requests from your eGroup meeting.
Session Two: Sanctification
Session Two: Sanctification

WHO YOU BELIEVE IN shapes WHO YOU ARE BECOMING.

KEY SCRIPTURE:
2 Timothy 1:9b “…and called us to a holy life…”

WHAT YOU’RE WATCHING: IMPERFECT PROGRESS
Sanctification is a theological term describing the process of gradually becoming more like Jesus. The grace of salvation is received in a moment, but our imperfect lives grow to reflect Jesus, who gives us our salvation, over time. In this video, Elevation Worship leader Jane Williams shares how Jesus has developed her as a worship leader, wife, and mother.

GOAL FOR THIS SESSION: PROGRESSION
The idea of sanctification revolves around that believing in Jesus enters people into a lifelong process of God shaping us into His likeness. God loves us as we are, but doesn’t want to leave us where we are. Encourage your eGroup to recognize how God has already changed them and assess how they can continue moving towards God on a daily basis.

TWEETABLES:
“I wasn’t designed to please others. I was designed to please God.” – Jane Williams (@janewwilliams)

“God knows what’s ahead, so He knows how to prepare you the best.” – Jane Williams (@janewwilliams)

“I’m not perfect, but every single day I’m getting there. Every single day is an opportunity to become more like Jesus Christ.” – Jane Williams (@janewwilliams)
Facilitating Discussion
Starting the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” eGroups study is as simple as opening your home, pressing play on a DVD player, and watching God do the rest.

Until people start talking.

Every video in this study is designed to prompt discussion, so don’t be surprised if questions naturally arise within your group during each session. Your role as eGroup leader is not to deliver an answer to every perceivable question in this series, but to facilitate a discussion that allows for your group to seek God for a better understanding of each topic.

Don’t Lecture; Facilitate
• Know where you plan to lead the discussion with your eGroup. Process the study material in advance and determine what practical takeaways or landing points you want your group to make during each session. This will allow you to ask the right questions to steer your group in that direction.

• Ask open-ended questions. Nothing silences a group like a “yes-or-no” question.

• Don’t be afraid of what people may ask. Allow your eGroup members to process each week’s topic out loud with the group. If questions arise, that is a sign that your eGroup is actively engaging with the topic.

• Don’t be intimidated—you’re not expected to have every answer. Use the resources in this Leader Guide to assist you and your eGroup as you seek answers from God’s Word.

Final Prep
• This week’s video documents how Jane, a worship leader at Elevation, has processed her recent growth as a leader, wife, and mother. Before your group meets, make a brief list of the roles God has called you to play. How have you grown in each of these areas? Processing this will help you to relate the concepts of sanctification and imperfect progress to your group.

• Encourage your eGroup to focus on the small steps they’ve taken in faith recently. Keep the discussion time grounded by probing for small tangible ways your group is growing in their faith.
Discussion

Identify the direction you want to lead your eGroup in during this session and use the questions below as needed to facilitate your group’s discussion time.

Open The Discussion

1. What does sanctification mean to you?
2. Think about the way God has changed your life since you came to know Jesus. What are you most thankful for in these changes?

Dig Deeper

3. Aside from Jesus, every person God uses in great ways is imperfect. Who in the Bible fits the bill as an imperfect leader? What does this teach you about God’s character?
4. What does it mean to “live a holy life?” Why is this a process?

Make It Personal

5. What weaknesses do you regularly pray for God to transform? How does this develop your faith and lead you towards a life that is more like Jesus’?
6. How can you tell if you are growing closer to God?
7. Living a “holy life” is not about following a set of rules that highlight your own discipline, but about entering into a process that highlights God’s ability to transform your very character. How do you tell the difference between following rules and follow Jesus in the process of sanctification?

Make It Stick

9. Every single day is an opportunity to become more like Jesus. Focusing your prayers on one area of your life allows you to consciously seek God’s help on a daily basis. What are you praying God would develop in your life over the course of this study? Write this word on the notes page of your Participant’s Guide and pray that God will transform this area of your life throughout this series.
I Don’t Know What I Believe

Each video featured in the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” eGroups Study is designed to prompt discussion with your eGroup. Use the following as a guide to prepare you for any difficult questions that may arise within your group.

I THOUGHT SALVATION WAS IMMEDIATE?
Salvation is immediate. When you make the decision to believe in Jesus, you are counted “dead to sin” and “alive in Christ.” In that moment, you are promised eternal life. Also in that moment, you are deemed a “new creation,” one God will continually mold into His likeness through your faith in Jesus.

Also see: Romans 6:8-11, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 17:15-19.

WHY DOESN’T GOD JUST CHANGE US INSTANTLY?
God is fully capable of transforming us in an instant. But God isn’t interested in coming to Him in formulaic ways. He’s interested in our faith. When we place our faith in His son, Jesus, we do not eliminate sin from our lives altogether. Instead, sin is no longer able to master us, allowing us to work out our salvation by faith in Jesus, who will free us from the bondage of our past.

Also see: Romans 6:8-14, Philippians 2:12-16, Galatians 2:20.

WHY DO I KEEP SINNING EVEN WHEN I WANT TO GLORIFY GOD?
Because we are innately sinful people living in a sinful world, there is no way to fully escape sin. This however, is not an excuse to keep on sinning. God does not condone our sin—that’s why we become convicted in our sin—but He does not condemn us. The enemy will attempt to infiltrate your mind with doubt and condemnation, but when you push through and allow your conviction to continually return to God, He is greatly pleased and glorified.


I FEEL LIKE I’VE BEEN IN A GOOD PLACE WITH GOD FOR A LONG TIME. DO I NEED TO EXPERIENCE GREAT SIN OR FAILURE SO THAT GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED IN MY PROGRESS?
The glory God seeks is not found in the magnitude of the sin he rescues you from, but in the totality of your faith in Jesus. We were nothing we came to know Jesus, so the best way to glorify Him is to faithfully and continually surrender everything we have to Him. No perception of our sin or failure can separate us from the love He has for those who place their total faith in Him.

Also see: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Romans 5:6-8, Ephesians 2:8-9.
What’s Next?

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP:
In addition to praying for the specific prayer requests in your group, use the following as a guide to pray for your group as a whole throughout the week:

Jesus, I thank you for the process of sanctification. I am grateful for the way I get to follow you every day, allowing you to shape everything about me. Continue to transform my heart, my thoughts, and my actions every day. I pray specifically for the people in my eGroup as they seek your guidance in their own development as believers. Keep them close to you as we move forward in this study. We believe you will transform all of us in major ways. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
Visit www.elevationchurch.org/idontknowwhatibelieve to view the video for this week’s study session and to download digital copies of the Leader Guide and Participant’s Guide.

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TWITTER #IDKWIB:
Follow @eGroups on Twitter to stay up-to-date on what other groups are doing with the I Don’t Know What I Believe series. Tweet at us throughout this study to share what God is doing in your group.
Notes

Use the space below to record any notes or prayer requests from your eGroup meeting.
Session Three: Sovereignty
Session Three: Sovereignty

GOD’S PURPOSE is not confined to WHAT WE UNDERSTAND.

KEY SCRIPTURE:  
2 Timothy 1:9c “…according to his purpose and grace…”

WHAT YOU’RE WATCHING: THE LAYMONS  
The full, abundant life Jesus has saved us to is deeply rooted in the purpose and grace of God Himself. However, His grace, purpose, and provision often looks much different than we are capable of understanding or expecting. This video revolves around the story of the Laymon family, who are learning to see God’s purpose at the bottom of the greatest tragedy their family could experience.

GOAL FOR THIS SESSION: PERSPECTIVE  
The idea of God’s infinite, sovereign power is one of the loftiest ideas in all of theology. Encourage your eGroup not to seek the ultimate answer to centuries of theological discussion, but to consciously embrace a new perspective on God’s ability to work all things, good or bad, to ultimately display His purpose and grace.

TWEETABLES:

“While it’s a natural thing to mourn with other people, there was a sense of the Holy Spirit just comforting us… There was a sense of peace that I couldn’t explain.” – Tom Laymon

“Our son didn’t die in vain, but what I did see was the Holy Spirit comforting us by showing that there was purpose, not only in Riley’s life… but also in his death.” – Tom Laymon

“God is sovereign. Our knowledge is limited and our understanding is limited, but we see His work in our past and we see His work in our lives today.” – Tom Laymon
Leadership 101

Communication With Your Group

Few things have the power to either improve or derail an eGroup as drastically as the communication within the group.

From verifying meeting times and places to sharing prayer requests, communication is essential to the health of your eGroup. As a leader, you cannot expect anything from your group if you cannot communicate those expectations to your group members.

As you continue with the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” study, lead the way in communicating with your eGroup. This will set a standard that multiplies into better group meetings, more meaningful discussion, and a better overall experience with this study.

Communication Never Ends

• Communicate regularly with your eGroup. Contact them to communicate anything your group members need to know before the meeting. Reach out to your group after you meet to share prayer requests and remind them of any takeaways your group had from your meeting time.

• Communicate clearly. Whatever form of communication your group members prefer, keep things clear and simple. This will ensure everyone in your group is on the same page throughout this study.

• Connect your eGroup members to each other. Relationships will form and community will develop outside of the group as your group members begin to connect with each other outside of your leadership.

Final Prep

• This week’s video documents how Jane, a worship leader at Elevation, has processed her recent growth as a leader, wife, and mother. Before your group meets, make a brief list of the roles God has called you to play. How have you grown in each of these areas? Processing this will help you to relate the concepts of sanctification and imperfect progress to your group.

• Encourage your eGroup to focus on the small steps they’ve taken in faith recently. Keep the discussion time grounded by probing for small tangible ways your group is growing in their faith.
Discussion

Identify the direction you want to lead your eGroup in during this session and use the questions below as needed to facilitate your group’s discussion time.

Open The Discussion
1. What typically comes to mind when you think of sovereignty? How does an idea like sovereignty affect your daily life?

Dig Deeper
2. Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-13. How does David’s prayer reflect his view of God’s power, purpose, and grace?
3. Read Ephesians 1:3-14, focusing on verse 13. If God has a sovereign plan to redeem us, how does our conscious decision to believe in Jesus enter us into this promise?
4. Read Romans 8:28-39. If we choose to believe in Jesus and are held within the promise of salvation, how does God promise to use any circumstance in our lives to display His grace?

Make It Personal
5. How does the story of the Laymon family affect you? How does their perception of God’s purpose in their loss encourage or inspire you?
6. Identify a time in your life when it was difficult to perceive God’s purpose and grace. In hindsight, what made those moments difficult for you?
7. Reflecting on your life, what are some of the greatest ways God has shown His purpose and grace to you?

Make It Stick
8. God’s sovereignty is evident in His unmatched power and wisdom. He is capable of achieving His purposes on Earth with or without our assistance. However, our conscious decision to believe in Him allows us the opportunity to recognize and participate in the advancement of His purposes while we are alive. In your own life, how have you seen your decisions and actions influencing your ability to perceive God’s sovereign purpose and grace?
9. Look back at the area of your life you began praying for God to develop in session two. What purpose do you believe God has for developing that area of your life? What practical steps are you taking this week to move your prayer towards reality?
IN MY SALVATION GOD’S PLAN OR MY CHOICE?
Both. God is all-knowing and all-powerful, existing outside of our tangible concepts of time and reality. In His infinite power and authority, He chose us as His children before the beginning of time. Still, it takes our active, conscious decisions to fully realize God’s plan to call us His children. God’s plan, accompanied with our faithful participation, will ultimately bring His will to Earth.


WHY IS GOD SO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND SOMETIMES?
God is impossible to fully comprehend. His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways. Thought people were made in the image of God, we are not God and are incapable of comprehensively knowing Him. The degree of faith required in our basic knowledge of God is one way we are able to worship Him as an entity greater than ourselves.

Also see: Isaiah 55:8-9, Isaiah 64:3-4, Hebrews 11:1.

DOES EVERYTHING HAPPEN FOR A REASON?
Not everything circumstance is of God, but everything can be used by God. There are many things in the world that remain a mystery to us, but there are certain promises God makes clear to us. While the reason for a given circumstance may be unclear, the promise that God can use anything for the good of those who love Him is very clear.

Also see: Romans 8:28, Ecclesiastes 3:1-12, Isaiah 55:10-11.

HOW CAN I TRUST GOD IF I DON’T FULLY UNDERSTAND HIM?
Placing our faith in God is less about how much we understand and more about who we understand Him to be. While we may not be able to record a comprehensive list that would allow us to recreate God, we can understand elements of His character. The more our understanding of God’s character grows, the more our faith and love for Him will grow.

Also see: 1 Corinthians 2:6-12, Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 119:137-144
What’s Next?

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP:
In addition to praying for the specific prayer requests in your group, use the following as a guide to pray for your group as a whole throughout the week:

Jesus, I praise you for your unmatched power and purpose. Your grace is something you’ve always wanted me to experience, but I thank you for the opportunity to choose to enter into it. Let me not take for granted my ability to participate in your purposes here on Earth. I pray that you will give a fresh perspective to my eGroup as they learn to take steps towards your plan for their lives. I love you Jesus, Amen.

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Notes
Use the space below to record any notes or prayer requests from your eGroup meeting.
Session Four: Suffering
Session Four:
Suffering

WHO YOU BELIEVE IN is greater than WHAT YOU ENDURE.

KEY SCRIPTURE:
2 Timothy 1:12a “That is why I am suffering as I am.”

WHAT YOU’RE WATCHING: TREATMENT
Believing in Jesus promises us the opportunity to experience a full, abundant life. That does not, however, mean that we are excluded from the pain of unexpected life circumstances. The video for this session is a creative piece highlighting the often-unexpected nature of our suffering. Use this session as an opportunity to discuss how God, simply by His nature, has the power to completely transform our tragedies into triumph.

GOAL FOR THIS SESSION: VICTORY
Jesus endured an unimaginable suffering on the cross so that we could have life through Him. However, this life He promises us is not promised to be one without suffering. When Jesus used one of his final breaths to say, “It is finished,” He was not surrendering in defeat, but announcing an eternal victory over all death and suffering. Use this session to focus on the victory Jesus offers in any situation, no matter how grim.

TWEETABLES:

“When Jesus said, “It is finished,” He was issuing a victory cry.” – Pastor Steven (@stevenfurtick)

“God doesn’t want to rescue us from something, but deliver us through something.”
– Pastor Steven (@stevenfurtick)

“My joy is not determined by what happens to me, but by what Christ is doing in me and through me.” – Pastor Steven (@stevenfurtick)
Leadership 101

Difficult Questions
One of the biggest fears for any leader is not having the answers your group needs.

The “I Don’t Know What I Believe” study is designed to prompt in-depth discussion around some of the most widely discussed theological topics in history, but by no means are you expected to be a renowned theologian as you lead your eGroup.

Don’t be intimidated by any questions your eGroup may have over the course of this study. Questions are sign that your eGroup is actively engaging with each topic, which is certainly encouraged.

If however, you do not know how to handle a question or issue in your eGroup, you are not alone. There are several ways we want to support you as your group continues to process their faith.

Keep The Group Moving
• It’s okay to not have an answer to a question, but it’s not okay to leave a question unaddressed. If someone asks a question you are unsure of the answer to, don’t let it stop you. Resolve to pursue clarity on that topic through Scripture and the corresponding experiences of others.

• Ask for help. Our staff is available to assist you in any way. Simply e-mail us any questions you have at eGroups@elevationchurch.org.

Final Prep
• This week’s video is very short. Make sure you open the group by reading 2 Timothy 1:9-14 with the group, focusing on verse 12. After the video, read John 19:30 as well as the Tweetables section before jumping into discussion with your group.

• Rely heavily on the Scripture references and guidance in the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” section during your discussion time. Allow yourself some extra time before your group meeting to review this section.
Discussion

Identify the direction you want to lead your eGroup in during this session and use the questions below as needed to facilitate your group’s discussion time.

Open The Discussion
1. What struck you about the video for this session?

Dig Deeper
2. Read John 19:30. What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is finished?” How was this a proclamation of victory instead of an admission of defeat?
3. Reflect on the lives of Job, Paul, John the Baptist, and others in the Bible who are well-documented for enduring suffering. How does the theme of God’s victory over suffering run throughout each of these stories?

Make It Personal
4. While suffering is inevitable, our response to it dictates the effect our suffering has on our lives. How have your responses to unfavorable circumstances influenced your ability to live through those moments?
5. How have you seen God use the moments of suffering to shape you into the person you are today?
6. Victory through Jesus doesn’t always mean removing us from suffering, but delivering us through suffering. How is it possible for God to be glorified in moments that seem so unfavorable on the surface?

Make It Stick
7. Challenge your eGroup to continue memorizing 2 Timothy 1:9-14.
8. What kind of suffering is your eGroup going through right now? Encourage your eGroup to be honest with the group during this session. Using the cards provided with this study, ask everyone in your group to write down one circumstance they are praying for victory over. You don’t need to collect these cards, but encourage one or two of your eGroup members to share what they are praying for victory over. At then end of your group meeting, pray for victory through the circumstances shared with the group.
I Don’t Know What I Believe

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IS IT GOD’S WILL FOR HIS PEOPLE TO SUFFER?
We cannot know for sure. Suffering is an inevitable byproduct of living in a sinful world and it is impossible to fully comprehend why we suffer on this side of eternity. We can, however, realize the promise that God is near to those who suffer and make a point to grieve and comfort those in pain.

Also see: Matthew 5:4, Job 13:15-16, James 1:27.

WILL THINGS EVER GET BETTER?
Jesus came and died so that we may experience a full and abundant life. The life He intends for us does not defer peace and joy until eternity, but gives us the opportunity to realize His peace and joy today. The love of Jesus transcends anything we may face, so even if we don’t see an improvement in our circumstance, we can always access a higher perspective that offers contentment in the unfailing love Jesus has for us.

Also see: Romans 1:12, Romans 8:18, Philippians 4:11-13, 1 Thessalonians 1:6.

WHAT IF I FEEL LIKE GIVING UP?
Struggle is not necessarily a sign that we are in trouble. They are often more indicative of the fact that we are still fighting for our faith. Jesus has already achieved victory over death and promises not to burden us beyond what He can bring us through. While we may have moments we when are tired of fighting, if we endure, Jesus will stretch our faith and prove Himself greater than our struggles.

Also see: Romans 5:3-5, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Psalm 103:1-6.

WHY WON’T GOD JUST PULL ME OUT OF MY SUFFERING?
God is less concerned about rescuing us from our struggles and more concerned with delivering us through our struggles. God is glorified and our faith grows when we learn to draw near to Him through our struggles. Such a posture of dependency upon God during our toughest moments sets us up to trust Him as our guide long after He delivers us through our suffering.

Also see: Roman 8:18, Galatians 6:9, James 4:8
What’s Next?

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP:
In addition to praying for the specific prayer requests in your group, use the following as a guide to pray for your group as a whole throughout the week:

*Jesus, you are the only one capable of achieving victory over death. I believe that because you live within me, you will provide victory and purpose through every situation in my life. I surrender every moment of suffering I have ever, or will ever, experience to you, Jesus. You have the last word over every situation in my life, and I believe that regardless of what happens, you are faithful to me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

ONLINE RESOURCES:
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TWITTER #IDKWIB:
Follow [@eGroups](http://twitter.com/eGroups) on Twitter to stay up-to-date on what other groups are doing with the I Don’t Know What I Believe series. Tweet at us throughout this study to share what God is doing in your group.
Notes

Use the space below to record any notes or prayer requests from your eGroup meeting.
Session Five: Sound Teaching
Session Five:
Sound Teaching

WHO YOU HEAR will determine WHO YOU BELIEVE.

KEY SCRIPTURE:
2 Timothy 1:13 “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.”

WHAT YOU’RE WATCHING: EAT THE FISH AND LEAVE THE BONES
In Jesus’ time, many people built their lives around the false teachings and religious systems of the day rather than holding onto the faith and love offered through Him. To this day, as sinful people, we are inherently suspicious of God’s Word, making us susceptible to the life-stealing beliefs and opinions that surround us. The video for this session will introduce practical ways you can filter through the voices of the world around us to identify and follow the leading of God’s voice.

GOAL FOR THIS SESSION: DISCERNMENT
The “sound teaching” Paul spoke of in 2 Timothy 1 is one of faith and love in Jesus. Surrounded by conflicting ideologies, Paul encouraged to Timothy to hold firm to the teachings of Jesus Paul had shared with him. Today, we found ourselves in a similar place as Timothy, empowered to live for Jesus, but left to filter the noise of everyday life down to our faith in Jesus. Use this session to develop your eGroup’s ability to discern the true “sound teaching” of Jesus in their lives.

TWEETABLES:
“Everyone has a voice, but only Jesus’ voice can bring life.” – Chris Allen (@christaitallen)

“Eat the fish and leave the bones.” – Chris Allen (@christaitallen)

“Whose voice are you following?” – Chris Allen (@christaitallen)
Inviting People To The Group
It’s week five of the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” eGroups study.

The people in your group who are still attending are likely those who have found the intrinsic value of discussing their beliefs and growing with the people around them. These people are also likely to be the core of your eGroup as you move beyond this study.

But this is just the beginning. Every person in your group regularly interacts with people outside of your group who have yet to experience the benefits of connecting with fellow believers outside of the typical church setting. Those people may be part of the future core of your group.

Who else does your eGroup have the potential to reach?

Invite Someone

- Invite one of your friends, co-workers, or family-members to check out your eGroup. Encourage your eGroup members to do the same. Your group has the potential to reach exactly how many people you are willing to reach out to.

- Don’t depend on an online search engine to fill your group. Personal invitations are more likely to stick with the group over an extended period of time.

- Integrate new people into the group. By creating a welcoming environment that seamlessly integrates someone who is visiting for the first time, you are more likely to see your new people return after their first visit.

Final Prep

- The idea of “sound teaching” has the potential to warrant excellent discussion. Start your discussion time by reading Matthew 16:5-12 to introduce the importance of holding onto the sound teaching of Jesus.

- Before your group meets, make a list of the five most influential voices in your life. Encourage your group to process the voices that shape their lives in a similar fashion.
Discussion

Identify the direction you want to lead your eGroup in during this session and use the questions below as needed to facilitate your group’s discussion time.

Open The Discussion
1. What do you think Paul meant by “sound teaching?”
2. Why is the ability to filter through the voices around us to find God’s voice so important?

Dig Deeper
3. Read Matthew 16:5-12. Why was Jesus so adamant in warning His disciples about the Pharisees?
4. In that same passage, Jesus compared the teaching of the Pharisees to yeast, which spreads throughout an entire loaf of bread. What does this say about the way false teaching has the potential to affect our faith in Jesus?
5. In what ways can the Bible help us to discern whether or not the voices that lead us are leading us towards God?

Make It Personal
6. What voices do you hear on a regular basis? What “teachings” surround you?
7. Who has the most influence over your life? Why do you choose to follow their advice over the advice of others?
8. How would you describe the way you hear God’s voice? How do you do this amidst the noise of so many outside thoughts, opinions, and ideas? Ask several people in your eGroup to share their own unique approaches to discerning God’s voice.

Make It Stick
9. How are you currently filtering through the voices in your life to hear God’s voice? How does this process look different for everyone?
10. How can your eGroup hold each other accountable as you strive to hold onto the “sound teaching” of Jesus? How can you practically filter your discussion time in such a way that you can discern God’s voice?
I Don’t Know What I Believe

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HOW CAN I POSSIBLY KNOW THAT WE ARE RIGHT ABOUT JESUS BEING THE MESSIAH?
Every belief requires a degree of faith. The Bible itself says that Jesus did much more than was actually recorded in the Bible, all of which was designed to reveal Him as the Son of God. Yet, because these events happened over 2,000 years ago, it is impossible to recount every fact about Jesus’ life. We do, however, stand on the reliability of the New Testament, with thousands of manuscripts still in existence from 50-150 years after Jesus’ death.


IF JESUS IS THE ONLY TRUE TEACHING, IS EVERYONE ELSE WRONG?
Jesus asserted Himself as “the way, the truth, and the life.” As the Son of God, He is the definitive source for all truth. Still, Jesus’ message was not one of exclusion. He didn’t intend for those who believe in Him to condemn those that don’t, but rather to extend the grace and truth He makes freely available to all.


HOW DO I HOLD ONTO JESUS’ TEACHING WITHOUT SEEMING ARROGANT?
Holding onto the faith and love we have for Jesus is vital. That same faith and love is intended to overflow as an outward expression of the love Jesus desires to extend to others. Some believers inadvertently distort this love by holding the depth of their knowledge of Jesus to a higher standard than the intimacy of their relationship with Jesus. Pursue Jesus not for the sole purpose of expanding your knowledge, but for the active faith and love He wants to reveal to you.

Also see: 1 Peter 3:15-16, Philippians 2:3-11, 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, Colossians 4:5-6
What’s Next?

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP:
In addition to praying for the specific prayer requests in your group, use the following as a guide to pray for your group as a whole throughout the week:

Jesus, you are the way, the truth, and the life. Your very character is the truth I want to build my life around. I pray that you will guide me as I move towards you in faith. In the process, show me how I can find your voice in the midst of the noise of everyday life. I pray the same for my eGroup so that we may find ways to hold each other accountable to our individual pursuits of your voice in our lives. We know you are our guide and we believe you will bring us the peace and confidence of knowing we are following you.

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Notes
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I Don't Know
What I Believe
Session Six: Spirit
Session Six:
Spirit

WHO YOU BELIEVE IN shows me WHO YOU WILL FOLLOW.

KEY SCRIPTURE:
2 Timothy 1:14 “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

WHAT YOU’RE WATCHING: FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT
When we believe in Jesus, He promises us the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. His role is multifaceted in our lives, and will ultimately act as the guide who leads and helps us access the abundant life God has for us. The video from this session will illustrate how John and Heather Bishop, one of the original families who started Elevation Church, were able to sense the Holy Spirit leading them to move to Toronto, Canada, where they would launch Elevation GTA.

GOAL FOR THIS SESSION: APPLICATION
Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit to act as a guide for the remainder of our lives on Earth. Studying who Jesus is and discussing what we believe is ultimately fruitless until we convert it into action through the help of the Holy Spirit. Encourage your eGroup to use this session as a time to reflect on what they’ve learned throughout this study and to find a practical way to respond to this study.

TWEETABLES:
“I just felt God’s Spirit speak to me, ‘You’ve got to trust me. You have to let go of your comforts and trust me.” – Heather Bishop (@heatherbishop3)

“We’re always going to have negative circumstances, but ultimately, those don’t really matter. We believe God has called us, so we endure.” – John Bishop (@elevationbishop)

“The greatest clue to what God is doing and where He’s leading is in what He’s doing already.”
– John Bishop (@elevationbishop)
Leadership 101

So That...
The words “so that” are more than a grammatical conjunction, but an expression that directly reinforces the motives of anything we do. As people, we can either react to life and do things because we are reacting to something, or we can live proactively, acting so that we may enable a greater purpose in our lives.

Elevation Church exists so that people far from God will be raised to life in Christ. Everything we do as a church is done so that people can experience the true life that is found only through Jesus.

eGroups exist so that we can build community and empower leaders. As believers in Jesus, we harness the power of connecting with fellow believers so that we can begin to realize the life Jesus intends for us.

As you wrap up this study and your group continues into the future, ask yourself this question:

What’s your “so that?”

Share Your “That”
• Share your personal takeaways from this series with the group. Lead the way by expressing how God is in the process of changing you, specifically within the context of the “I Don’t Know What I Believe” eGroups study. This will allow your group members to begin visualizing the “so that” behind this study.

• Share your “so that” with us. There is nothing like celebrating the change God facilitates in someone’s life. Tweet us (@eGroups) or e-mail us at eGroups@elevationchurch.org with how God is revealing the “so that” in your group.

Final Prep
• Don’t assume everyone in your eGroup knows who the Holy Spirit is and why He is relevant to us today. You don’t need to give an exhaustive overview of the Holy Spirit, but introduce the Scriptures on the next page to your group as a foundational understanding.

• To help you prepare, visit www.elevationchurch.org/sermons/ghoststories to review “Ghost Stories,” a series Pastor Steven preached on the Holy Spirit.
Discussion

Identify the direction you want to lead your eGroup in during this session and use the questions below as needed to facilitate your group’s discussion time.

Open The Discussion
1. What typically comes to your mind when you think of the Holy Spirit?
2. How often do you typically think of or refer to the Holy Spirit in your own life? Why?

Dig Deeper
4. Read Isaiah 9:6. How does this prophecy about Jesus also relate to the role the Holy Spirit plays in our lives today?

Make It Personal
5. How do personally sense the Holy Spirit’s guidance? How do you know that it is the Holy Spirit leading you and not your own desires?
6. When you sense the Holy Spirit leading you, how do you typically respond? How do you convert a feeling the Holy Spirit may give you into action?
7. What decisions in your life can you now confidently point to as moments when you followed the Holy Spirit’s guidance? What benefit do you see to following the Holy Spirit over your own feelings and desires?

Make It Stick
8. Where is the Holy Spirit leading you next in your life? What does it look like for you to follow Him?
9. As you conclude this study, discuss what you have learned over the course of this study. Ask each of your eGroup members to identify one specific way this series has changed the way they live out their faith in Jesus. Take a picture with your group at the end of your meeting and tweet us your takeaways (@eGroups). You can also e-mail us at eGroups@elevationchurch.org.
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WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?
The Holy Spirit is more about “who” than “what.” The Holy Spirit is an active, living manifestation of both God and His son, Jesus. The Holy Spirit, always existent but manifested to Jesus’ followers at Pentecost, is promised to live within all believers in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is responsible for gifting us with talents and passions God wants to develop for use in His Kingdom. He also convicts us and guides us into all truth and direction for our lives.


WHAT IF I CAN’T TELL WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TRYING TO LEAD ME?
In the Old Testament, God is often portrayed as audibly speaking to His people. God is not incapable of doing the same today, but our access to God is no longer external. Internally, through the Holy Spirit Jesus promised us, we have direct access to the presence of God. Therefore, we should not grow discouraged if we do not hear God’s voice booming clearly from the Heavens. God is close to us, often whispering His direction into our hearts. This in turn affords us the opportunity to rely on the peace and comfort only He can give us as we earnestly seek Him in every decision.


WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HAVE TO DO WITH EVERYDAY LIFE?
The Holy Spirit acts as the guiding force behind our relationship with Jesus. Jesus is no longer living on Earth, but we need not wait for eternity to access Him. We rely on the Holy Spirit as a guide, a comforter, and corrector each and every day. He is our access to Jesus and therefore our foundation for building a living, active faith.

Also see: John 15:26, John 16:13-14, James 2:17
What’s Next?

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP:
In addition to praying for the specific prayer requests in your group, use the following as a guide to pray for your group as a whole throughout the week:

Jesus, I thank you for the way you lead me every day. Your Spirit who lives within me is the reason I am able to grow closer to the person you created me to be. Thank you for the way you have used this study to change me. I pray that your Spirit will enable me to take what I am learning about you with my eGroup and use it to grow the way I live out my faith. I pray the same for my eGroup. Continue to guide us as we complete this study and move forward in pursuit of you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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MOVING FORWARD
As you conclude this series, celebrate the growth you’ve seen over the last six weeks and look ahead to where your group is going next. If you wish to continue with a similarly-structured DVD study, we recommend “eGroups Essentials,” an eight-week study based on some of the most popular teachings at Elevation Church. E-mail us at eGroups@elevationchurch.org to request a copy of the Men’s, Women’s, or Married Couples eGroups Essentials study.
Notes

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I Don't Know
What I Believe
Notes

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