

Believe Into

Believing that something is true about Jesus is not the same as believing into him; saving faith moves your weight onto him.

FROM THE BOOK: CHAPTERS 3 AND 6

BEFORE YOU MEET

- Read Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 of *The Weight of God*. Chapter 6 is the most confronting chapter in the series, so read it with your own group in mind.
- Read John 3:16, Acts 16:31 and James 2:14–19 beforehand.
- Be ready for the question “So can you lose your salvation?” The book says plainly that this isn’t the point it’s making (see the leader note on question 4), so you can park it kindly rather than debate it.
- Bring spare Bibles, pens and a copy of the participant sheet for each person.
- Time plan for 75 minutes: 5 min to settle in and ask how the Amen practice went, Open 10, The idea 15, Read together 10, Talk about it 25, This week 5, Pray 5.

OPEN

10 min

What’s a bus, train, car, tradie or friend you’d say you “believe in”: something that has come through for you so often you don’t even think about it any more?

THE IDEA

15 min

Think about the phrase “I believe in you”. When the author says it to one of his daughters before something she’s nervous about, he doesn’t mean “I accept that you exist”. He means: my confidence is resting on you.

Now compare two sentences. “I believe that the bus will come.” And “I believe in the bus.”

The first is a forecast. You’ve checked the timetable, the traffic looks fine, it’ll probably turn up. If it doesn’t, you shrug and call a taxi. The second is different. It says you’ve got history with this bus. It’s come through before. You rely on it, and you’ve built your plans on top of it.

The New Testament makes the same distinction. In Greek, “believe that” is the verb *pisteuo* followed by *hoti*: you look at a claim and decide whether it’s true. Your weight doesn’t go anywhere. “Believe in” is often *pisteuo* followed by *eis*, which literally means “into”. *Eis* is a direction word. It’s about moving: off where you’re standing, and onto someone else.

The author knows the gap between those two first-hand. He grew up in a medical family and could explain keto, fasting and insulin in detail. Over the years he lost a lot of weight and put it back on, five times over. His own verdict: “I had a perfect but inert knowledge.” Knowing was never his problem.

James makes the same point with a confronting example:

“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.” (James 2:19, NIV)

The demons’ theology is better than ours. They don’t need faith; they’ve seen. They give an accurate verdict about God, and it doesn’t move their weight an inch. As the book puts it, the real question isn’t whether your theology is correct or whether you’re sincere. “The question is whether your weight has moved.”

Then there’s John 3:16. Most English Bibles say “whoever believes in him”. The Greek is *eis*: whoever believes *into* him. And the verb is in a continuous form, describing someone who keeps on believing. The book’s restored version reads: “everyone who is continuously repositioning their weight into Him will not perish but have eternal life.” Acts 16:31 says it again with another word: believe *upon* the Lord Jesus. Stand on him.

One caution the book itself gives. Believing true things about Jesus isn’t the problem; knowing who he is matters. The problem is knowing and never leaning.

So tonight’s question isn’t “What do you believe about Jesus?” Most of us could tick every box on that. It’s this: is your weight on him?

READ TOGETHER

10 min

John 3:16; Acts 16:31; James 2:14–19. Notice the small words: believe *in* (literally “into”) and believe *upon* in John and Acts, compared with believe *that* in James 2:19. Ask what each one asks of the person believing.

- 1 Who's someone you'd say "I believe in you" to, and what do you actually mean when you say it?

LEADER NOTE Listen for words like backing, confidence, relying on, being on their side. Nobody ever means "I think you exist", and that's the point.

- 2 Think about the bus. Is there something in your life you believe *that* about, but wouldn't actually put your weight on?

LEADER NOTE Examples might be knowing exercise is good but not doing it, or knowing a friend is reliable but never asking them for help. The aim is to feel the gap between knowing and leaning.

- 3 James says even the demons believe there is one God, and shudder. Why do you think he picked such a confronting example?

LEADER NOTE He wants to show that correct belief on its own isn't what saves. Keep the focus on us rather than on demons; if the conversation drifts into speculation about the spiritual realm, bring it gently back.

- 4 Try reading John 3:16 as "whoever keeps putting their weight into him". What does that add or change for you?

LEADER NOTE Some will find it freeing (it's about where your weight is, not about getting everything right); some may feel unsettled. If someone raises "can you lose your salvation?"; say the book is clear this isn't a debate about once saved, always saved, and offer to talk about it afterwards.

- 5 Where is there a gap for you between what you believe about Jesus and where your weight actually goes on an ordinary Tuesday?

LEADER NOTE Allow some silence, and let people answer privately on their sheet if they'd rather. Someone newer to faith may say they're not sure their weight is on Jesus at all. That's an honest and good place to be, not a problem to fix tonight.

THIS WEEK

5 min

Read John 3:16 each morning, and read "whoever believes in him" as "whoever keeps putting their weight into him". Then ask yourself: is that what I'm doing today? At the end of the day, notice one moment when your weight shifted back onto yourself, and one moment when you leaned on him.

PRAY

5 min

Thank God that he is someone you can put your full weight on. Make room for honesty about the places where we know the right answers but haven't leaned. Ask for help to shift weight one step at a time, and pray for anyone in the group who is still working out whether they want to put their weight on Jesus at all.