

What Do You Believe?

Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Did you believe in any fictional beings as a child? Explain.
2. Generally speaking, are you an optimistic person? On a scale of 1-10, how optimistic would you say you are?

Read the following passage: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

The apostle Paul understood that our beliefs profoundly affect our attitudes and behaviors. For this reason, Paul regularly addressed not just the outward behaviors of the men and women in his churches, but their core beliefs.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What are some ways our beliefs affect our behaviors? Can you think of any beliefs that are negatively affecting your behavior? What about beliefs that are positively affecting your attitude or behavior? Explain.
2. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Paul quotes very early material that had already taken on a fixed form — something like a creedal confession. This “creed” contains four key components: 1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 2) Christ was buried; 3) Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; 4) Christ appeared to Cephas (i.e. Peter), to the Twelve, and to many others. All throughout his letters, Paul teases out implications of these core beliefs. (See, for example, Romans 5:6-8; 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:32; Ephesians 1:18-23.) What are some ways each element of this creed might impact our attitudes or behaviors?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-25. The Corinthians were overly impressed with wisdom and rhetoric, and this was becoming a basis for associating themselves with various leaders in the church: “I follow Paul”; “I follow Apollos”; “I follow Cephas.” What does a healthy view of leadership look like? What roles should leaders play in our lives and what roles shouldn’t they play?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:12. What was the Corinthian view of freedom and how does Paul qualify it? What’s wrong with the “freedom with no limits” perspective? How should followers of Jesus understand freedom? What did Paul choose to do with his freedom? (See 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.)
5. Read Ephesians 4:1-6. What is the foundation of our unity as followers of Jesus? How do we maintain this unity? What should we do when we find ourselves disagreeing with a brother or sister on something that matters to us?

6. Read 2 Corinthians 1:20. Are there any promises of God that you are holding to and which are fueling your hope for the future? Explain.

Pray