



“WHY HE WON’T GO AWAY”

9.21.2014



STUDY QUESTIONS

Use these questions in your community group or personal study time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today’s message to everyday life.

context:

Belief is one of the most _____ on earth.

Misplaced belief is the most _____ kind of force.

Two Framework Statements for “The Belief Project:”

Christianity is a faith based on _____, not just teaching.

The question is: Are the New Testament documents a reliable record of

_____?

looking at the texts:

1 Timothy 3:14-15 (NIV)

When drawing conclusions about historical evidence, _____ takes

precedence over _____.

1 Timothy 3:14-16 (NIV)

Something has happened that is so _____, it has changed

what it _____.

application:

1 Corinthians 1:21 (NIV)

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... 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

For further reading on this topic:

Why God Won't Go Away: Is the New Atheism Running on Empty? By Alistar McGarth

INTRODUCTION

The beliefs of Christian faith often seem random and far-fetched. However, at closer scrutiny there is a twist in that logic. Christianity is like any other belief system, such as a scientific approach or a method of doing history. It's a matter of *evidence* not *proof*. No one has proof of things that can't be observed over and over.

Frankly any of us can *feel* as deeply as we choose about our belief-systems, but that doesn't get us any closer to the truth. Assumptions and jumping to conclusions that feel right won't prove anything. In fact, that's the thing much of what is called "atheism" today misses.

As Christians we can have confidence of knowing that our belief is based on a historical event that is so extraordinary as to make claims to the contrary seem implausible. Is that proof? No. But the evidence of what happened back there sure is compelling...And that's why God just won't go away.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What assumptions/beliefs do you hold about God?
 - From what authorities do you get those beliefs? (New Testament documents, parents, church)
 - On a scale of 1 to 10 ("10" being "slam-dunk" confidence) how confident would you say you are about your belief about God? *It's OK, you're among friends.*
- Read 1 Timothy 3:14-16 together.** What do you think Paul is trying to say? Where is he going with the quote of the early Christian creed or prayer in v. 16? Would he consider that a description of an actual happening, or more of an expression of an idea?
- In the message, Dwain said the New Testament writers believed that, *Something has happened that is so powerful, it has changed what it plausible.* How does that statement relate to the verses in 1 Timothy?
- Read together 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 in one shot.** How does that encourage you in your faith?
- As we begin this series, talk for a moment about how comfortable you are explaining why you're a Jesus-follower. What would you hope to get out of this series?

MOVING FORWARD

Be encouraged! There is a lot of noise today about what Christians believe. But volume really means nothing. As one who saw first hand, and still struggled with doubt, said: *And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...*(2 Peter 1:19, ESV). Besides, we are called to give an answer and be gentle and respectful in our conversations about our faith. That can only happen when we know what we believe and aren't threatened by the questions of others.

Devotional reading suggestion: Read all of 1 Timothy 3

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect..." 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

1 TIMOTHY 3:14-16