



FAITH

7

CHAPTER SUMMARY

WEEKLY WIN

Participants understand that Christianity is founded on a person and an event supported by historical evidence.

BOTTOM LINES

- Faith is one of the most powerful tools at humanity's disposal.
- The thing that makes Jesus different from other religious leaders isn't something he taught; it's something he did. He died and came back to life.
- Christianity requires faith in a person. This is why for anyone investigating Christianity, the first question that must be answered is, *Who is Jesus?*

BEFORE THE MEETING

PRAY

Keep praying for your group members individually. Pray they'll continue to allow God to work in their lives as they process last week's discussion about grace.

LEADER DEBRIEF

Address the following:

- Evaluate the previous meeting with your co-leaders.
- Decide who will facilitate each part of the discussion for the next week.
- Clarify who will follow up with any group members that need individual attention.
- Encourage one another about the growth you've seen in the group members and each other.

CONTACT GROUP MEMBERS

Engage in a conversation with your group members individually by email, phone, or text about the right next step for them after Starting Point. If you're not sure what options are available, talk with church staff. Joining a small group or serving on a team at church is a great step for most group members.

You can use the email template provided for Week Seven at startingpoint.com/leaders.

SCHEDULE SOCIAL GATHERING

Schedule your second social gathering. The gathering will be about encouraging your group members and recapping the Starting Point experience.

DISCUSS SECTION ONE: **EVERYDAY FAITH**

SECTION WIN

Participants understand the definition of faith as well as the challenges associated with contemplating new or different beliefs.

LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Question 1: How is everyday faith or belief similar or dissimilar to religious faith?

Having faith in an event we did not personally witness, like the resurrection, or in a future eternal state, like heaven, can feel less tangible than everyday faith. Be prepared to share examples of faith in everyday life (e.g., faith in doctors, pilots, engineers who designed a bridge you may drive on).

Question 2: How do your environment, family, and friends impact what you believe?

Most people intuitively understand how much their environments influence their beliefs. For some participants, this can be a significant emotional barrier to faith in Christ. If a participant grew up in a different religious context, choosing to become a Christian means believing many of your friends and family are wrong. It can be helpful to share from similar personal experiences if you have them.

Question 3: Have you ever changed your mind about something? What happened to make you think differently?

Get participants to talk about the steps and processes they've taken in the past when they changed what they believed about something. The more significant the belief, the harder it is to be open to change. But a reminder that they've changed in the past may help open up the possibility for changes in the future..

DISCUSS SECTION TWO: **BELIEF THAT VS. TRUST IN**

SECTION WIN

Participants understand the unique nature of Jesus's claims about himself and the significance of his disciples' dramatic turnaround.

LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Question 1: Page 52 says: "Jesus did not launch his movement around a new list of 'believe thats.' At the center of his teaching was a single 'believe in.' Jesus called upon his followers to believe in him." How does that make following Jesus different from other belief systems?

This question determines if participants picked up on the main point of the text: Jesus claimed to be equal with God and the solution to humanity's sin problem. His own testimony makes it impossible to embrace him as simply a moral teacher or model humanitarian.

Question 2: Why was Jesus's death particularly devastating for the continuation of his message?

Jesus's focus on himself meant the apparent end of his movement at his crucifixion. Be prepared to provide clarity if group members don't understand.

Question 3: Right after Jesus died, no one—not even his closest friends and family—believed he was the Son of God. Yet only days later they would share that very message with everyone, even though doing so put them in danger. What could have happened to explain this kind of change?

This question points the discussion back to the idea that something so undeniable happened that they completely upended their lives because of it.

DISCUSS SECTION THREE: FAITH ISN'T BLIND

SECTION WIN

Participants understand that the Christian faith is an informed faith, not a blind leap.

LEADING THE DISCUSSION

Question 1: What does the fact that the disciples were willing to die say about what they thought about Jesus?

This discussion is about how strong a belief has to be in order for someone to die for it. While it is possible that the disciples made up the resurrection story, is it likely? Many of them died because of this belief. People die for lies they sincerely believe to be true, but how likely is it that people would die knowing it was for a lie?

Question 2: How important is the validity of the resurrection for your own belief in Jesus?

This question allows participants to share their own thoughts about whether believing in the actual resurrection of Jesus is critical to the Christian faith. It also presents an opportunity for you to help them see its true importance.

Question 3: How has your view of Jesus been impacted over the past seven weeks?

This question gives you the opportunity to find out what changes may be taking place in group members. Remember that heart change is up to God, and this could be a much longer process for some.

WRAP-UP

REVIEW THE BOTTOM LINES

- Faith is one of the most powerful tools at humanity's disposal.
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PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read Chapter Eight in the Conversation Guide and complete the questions.
- Listen to Episode Eight of the Starting Point podcast which can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or startingpoint.com/podcast.

Some group members may be intimidated by the chapter title "Invitation." Let them know that next week's discussion is about church, not about pushing a decision.

SOCIAL GATHERING

Set a date for your social gathering. Communicate the details—location, food, time, and date. It will be a time of celebration and remembering the Starting Point experience.

PRAY

As you close in prayer, thank God that you can have doubts and still have faith in Jesus.