

# THE **crossing** **small groups**

## Why Don't You Believe? | John 8:46 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

**Purpose of Discussion:** Every person has at least one practical way they can submit to what Jesus teaches.

**Sermon Refresher:** Why do people believe or not believe in Christianity? Is it how intelligent they are? There are intelligent people on both sides of question. What Jesus says matters more to whether we believe or not is the spiritual condition of our heart. While there are all kinds of ways people twist Jesus into a caricature, the real Jesus is the I AM who made us and wants to free us.

**Icebreaker:** If this is the first time your group is getting together, have everyone share a highlight from their summer. Or, what is something irrational you find yourself doing?

**Transition:** Why do some believe in God and some don't? Is it intelligence? Or, is it something else?

### **Discussion:**

1. Who are intelligent people you know that don't believe in God? That do?
2. G.K. Chesterton wrote "Reject belief in God, and it's not that you'll believe in nothing, but that you'll believe in anything." Have there been any strange trends being practiced by people who think believe in God is irrational you have noticed lately? What does this tell us about the role rationality plays into what we believe?
3. What if we made the smartest person the authority for what we believe? What if we made our own hearts the authority? Think of a time when it was a mistake to follow your heart.
4. Read the following verses from John 8. Who does Jesus say that he is that we should make him our authority?

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## John 8:12

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

## John 8:23-24

<sup>23</sup> But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins."

## John 8:56-58

<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." <sup>57</sup> "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" <sup>58</sup> "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

5. Which of the intellectual reasons why astrophysicist Sarah Salviander was convinced by to become a Christian do you find convincing? Or, are there others you find convincing?
- The universe has a beginning, meaning it had to have a cause.
  - The universe seems too logical and intelligible to be the product of random chance.
  - If many variables in the universe were off by the smallest fraction, life on earth would never have existed.
  - How can life/consciousness/personhood come from a cold, indifferent universe?
  - The existence of God provides a more philosophically satisfying basis for objective morality and justice than does science.
  - Christianity gave the best explanation for evil and suffering in the world.
  - The New Testament account of the ministry, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus is credible and persuasive.

6. Read John 8:43-47. Why does Jesus say that people don't believe?

## John 8:43-47

<sup>43</sup> "Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. <sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> Yet because I tell the

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truth, you do not believe me! <sup>46</sup> Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? <sup>47</sup> Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

7. Have you seen any cultural scripts that make Christians seem like unintelligent, misguided, and maybe even bigoted?
8. In his sermon, Dave mentioned how Charles Manson twisted the Beatles' White Album to be a subliminal message of a bloody, apocalyptic race war which the Beatles never intended. How have you seen people twist the Bible and Jesus from the real thing?
9. Dave ended his sermon that we are given numerous opportunities every day to tilt toward Jesus or to tilt away from him. What would it look like for us personally to practically take advantage of those opportunities to tilt towards him?

## **Sharing and Prayer:**

Have everyone share how they would like to tilt toward Jesus in their everyday life. Have people pray for the person on their left.

Or, have everyone pray for someone who doesn't yet believe.