

Alpha: Session 4 – How can I have faith?

Big Idea

The big question this episode is exploring is, what does it mean to be a Christian? Or, in other words, what does it mean to have faith? Christianity is not a club someone joins or a set of ideas to add to your knowledge. It is a life-changing relationship with Jesus! And we enter into that relationship by faith – not blind faith, but a step of faith based on the truth about who Jesus is and what he has done.

Questions:

1. What do you think about Christianity being described in terms of a relationship with God?
 - What are some qualities or characteristics of a good relationship?
 - How would a relationship with God be different from a relationship with someone else?

Look at the picture of the characters at the pool from the end of the discussion guide.

2. If this pool represents a relationship with God, which character do you identify with the most?
 - What is it about that character that stands out to you the most?
 - If you've seen this picture before, has your choice of character changed from last time? If you could add another character to represent yourself, what would it be like?
3. Jason said, "The one who knows you the best, is the one who loves you the most."
 - What do you think about that statement? Or how do you feel about it?
4. What are some obstacles that might prevent you from having a relationship with God?
 - After four weeks of Alpha what are the big questions on your mind?
 - What are you hoping might come up in future weeks?
 - What does the idea 'a step of faith' mean to you? What does that have to do with Christianity?

A Christian is a *Christ*-ian: someone who follows and puts their faith in Jesus Christ.

How that happens varies enormously. For some there is a definite moment; for others it is a more gradual process.

- When you receive Christ, you become a child of God (John 1:12)
- God wants you to be sure of your faith

'I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life' (1 John 5:13)

Faith is not a blind leap, but a step based on evidence.

1. The Word Of God

We must not only trust our feelings, which can be changeable and may even be deceptive at times, but instead rely on God's promises.

- '... faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of God.' (Romans 10:17)
- 'I will come in' (Revelation 3:20)
- 'I am with you always' (Matthew 28:20)
- 'I give them eternal life' (John 10:28)

2. The Work Of Jesus

You come exactly as you are. It's not about what you do or what you can achieve; it's about what has been done for you by Jesus on the cross.

- Free gift of God(Romans6:23)
- It's free but not cheap: it cost Jesus his life
- We receive it through repentance (turning away from sin) and faith (trust)

3. The Witness Of The Holy Spirit

When someone becomes a Christian, God comes to live inside them by his Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9).

- He transforms us from within
 - Our characters (Galatians 5:22–23) - Our relationships
- He brings a deep personal conviction that we are God's children
 - Faith to knowledge (Romans 8:15–16)

Here is a very simple prayer that you can pray to open the door of you heart to Jesus Christ and invite him to come into your life by his Spirit:

Lord Jesus Christ, I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life (take a few moments to ask his forgiveness for anything particular that is on your conscience). Please forgive me. I now turn from everything that I know is wrong. Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free. Thank you that you offer me forgiveness and the gift of your Spirit. I now receive that gift. Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Key Quotes & Scriptures

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." Revelation 3:20.

"A great description of the word faith is *trust*. It's trusting someone (or something) enough to act on that trust."

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"To all who believed him (that's Jesus) and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12

Recommended Reading

The Reason for God
Tim Keller

Life Change
Mark Elsdon-Dew

