

**“WHEN EVERYTHING IS UNRAVELLING”  
I WANT TO BELIEVE  
20250427**

**LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Question 1:** *The theologian N.T. Wright would define faith as “**trust** and **loyalty** to Jesus as the risen Messiah and Lord”. Matthew Bates would say, “faith is **allegiance** to Jesus as King, involving **mental assent**, **public profession**, and embodied loyalty through ongoing **obedience**”. Talk about these definitions with your group. Try to come up with examples or expanded definitions of each bolded word.*

- Facilitation Tips: Start by reading the definitions aloud and explaining that both scholars see *faith* as a response to Jesus’ kingship, not just intellectual belief. Use the answer key below to define each term, inviting group members to share examples (e.g., “What’s an example of trusting Jesus in your life?”). If confusion arises, emphasize that faith involves heart, words, and actions, as seen in Abraham’s obedience (Gen. 12:1-4).
- Answer Key for Terms:
  - Trust: Relying on Jesus’ character and promises, even without seeing results.
    - Verse: Hebrews 11:1 – “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
    - Example: Trusting God to provide during a financial crisis, like the centurion trusting Jesus’ word (Matt. 8:5-13).
  - Loyalty: Faithful commitment to Jesus as Lord, prioritizing His kingdom over personal desires.
    - Verse: Colossians 2:6-7 – “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him.”
    - Example: Choosing to forgive someone because of Jesus’ command, despite personal hurt.
  - Allegiance: Giving ultimate loyalty to Jesus as King, aligning life with His rule.
    - Verse: Romans 1:5 – “...to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name.”
    - Example: Publicly identifying as a Christian in a skeptical workplace, showing Jesus as your King.
  - Mental Assent: Intellectually agreeing that Jesus is Lord and Savior.
    - Verse: Romans 10:9 – “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart...”

- Example: Accepting the truth of Jesus' resurrection after studying evidence.
- Public Profession: Openly declaring faith in Jesus, often through words or baptism.
  - Verse: Matthew 10:32 – “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father.”
  - Example: Sharing your faith story at church or with a friend.
- Obedience: Living out faith through actions that align with Jesus' teachings.
  - Verse: James 2:17 – “Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”
  - Example: Serving the poor because Jesus calls us to love others (Matt. 25:40).

**Question 2:** *Read Genesis 12:1-4. When have you felt called to take a step of faith without clarity on the destination (e.g., a job change, relationship, or spiritual decision)?*

- Facilitation Tip: Connect Abraham's faith (trusting God without knowing the outcome) to personal experiences, emphasizing faith preceding sight.

**Question 3:** *When have you struggled to trust God because of fear or obstacles? How can remembering God's past faithfulness help you move forward in faith today?*

- Facilitation Tip: You could look to Numbers 14:1-11 as an example. Contrast this story to Abraham's trust.

**Question 4:** *Read Ephesians 2:8-9. If faith is a gift of God, what do we say about people who have no faith?*

- Facilitation Tips: Ephesians 2:8-9 talks about faith as a divine gift. Clarify that God reaches out to everyone with His grace (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4), as seen in His desire for all to be saved. However, some harden their hearts (Heb. 3:12-13; Rom. 1:21), rejecting the gift, like the Israelites at Kadesh (Num. 13:25-33). If group members ask about specific people, focus on God's invitation and our role in sharing the gospel and avoiding judgment.

### **Questions 5-7: Ways to Strengthen and Build Your Faith**

5. *Read Romans 10:17. Share a time when a Bible verse or sermon sparked or deepened your trust in God. How does this shape your view of faith as a gift from Him?*

6. *How has a Christian friend, mentor, or small group strengthened your faith? What are some ways you can invest in community to grow your trust in God?*

7. *Trials and challenges can strengthen our faith. Share a trial that tested your faith but ultimately strengthened it.*

- Purpose: These questions are meant to explore three key ways to strengthen faith—Scripture (Q5), community (Q6), and trials (Q7)—showing how they build trust, loyalty, and allegiance to Jesus.
- Facilitation Tips:
  - Q5 (Scripture): Scripture reveals God’s character (Ps. 1:2-3). Share an example (e.g., Ps. 23 comforting you) and ask for specific verses or sermons that built faith. Suggest memorizing a verse (e.g., Rom. 8:28) as a step.
  - Q6 (Community): You could reference Hebrews 10:24-25.
  - Q7 (Trials): Trials can refine faith (Rom. 5:3-4). Create a safe space for stories. If someone is in a trial, pray together, affirming growth (Hab. 2:4). Be gentle with those sharing pain, affirming God’s presence (Ps. 34:18).