

## Large Group - Between Your Ears

### *What do You Believe About God?*

11.18.20 Middle School

11.25.20 High School

#### Lesson Overview

The Bible is clear that God is good, and He is for us. But how many of us actually live like we believe that's true? Tonight's lesson is meant to get students evaluating what they actually believe about God. Brittany covers a couple alternate beliefs, including the following:

1. *God is the tyrant/dictator in the sky, looking to kill my fun*
  - This theory suggests that God only cares about the rules and telling me what I can and cannot do.
  - If you believe this, you may live for perfectionism, trying to live up to God's standard, constantly feeling shameful for your failures. On the other hand, you may live recklessly, not caring about consequences, knowing that you can't be perfect, so why try.
  - The Biblical response to this - God sets boundaries for His children out of His love for them. It would be extremely unloving for any parent to allow their child to do whatever they want whenever they want, with no rules. Why? Because children don't know what's best for them. The same goes for us and God. Hebrews 12:6 says, "The Lord disciplines the ones he loves..."
    - John 10:10 says that Christ came to give us a "full" life, in this life and the life to come. If we live in the boundaries God sets for us, we can have a fulfilling life.
2. *God doesn't care about me (or He wouldn't have allowed...)*
  - This theory suggests that God couldn't possibly really care about me (or humanity), because of all the things he allows to happen in this world.
  - If you believe this, you may live with anger, bitterness, or loneliness. You may also have a lack of joy in your life.
  - The Biblical response to this - the cross. Because we live in a fallen world, we know that we will have pain, sickness, and death in this life. But God showed just how much he cares for his children by sending his Son to die for us.

#### Discussion Questions

*Each small group room should have some paper and pens. If your group uses journals, feel free to use those instead. Start by having each student take a few minutes and write out their response to the message. Challenge them to reflect on the message and write down their thoughts and feelings on what was taught. Make sure they write their name on the paper and turn it in to you. There will be a gospel response at the end of tonight's message, and it would be great to know who, if any, makes a first time commitment tonight!*

1. Is anyone willing to share something they wrote down?
2. Which belief about God can you most relate to? (i.e., God is good; God is a tyrant; God doesn't care) What makes you feel this way?
3. Read John 10:10. What is Jesus saying here? What does a "full" life look like? Do you believe that you need to live in God's boundaries (laws) in order to experience a "full" life?
  - Leaders - this is a great chance to stress that rules are for our good; however, the rules give us awareness of our sin problem (Romans 3:20). And without Jesus (the only perfect person), there is no way to salvation.
4. Do you **really** believe that your best, most enjoyable life is a life lived for Jesus? Remind students that they live what they actually believe, and if we're honest, most of us don't believe this all the time (which is shown by us continuing to sin).
5. Describe a time in your life when it felt like God didn't care. Do you still feel that way?

6. How does the cross display God's love for you?
7. Describe a time where you have felt God's love and care for you, when you were going through a hard time.

### Dive Deeper

1. Read Genesis 2:17. How many rules did God give Adam & Eve? Imagine living in a world with just 1 rule.
2. What do you think was God's purpose for creating this 1 rule for Adam & Eve?
  - There's not necessarily a right/wrong answer; however, you may want to talk about how without at least 1 rule, we are almost robots with no free will at all. We also have no way of actually displaying our trust in our Creator. The fact that there has always been at least one rule, means there has always been a right/wrong. This also means there has always been a constant reminder to people that God is in control, and not us.
3. Read Genesis 3. What led Adam & Eve to sin? Ultimately, they doubted that God's plan was better than their own.
  - When have you doubted God's plan in your own life?
4. Notice how breaking God's one rule ultimately led to there being many more rules. Why do you think this is?
  - Do you think God is a God of freedom? Read Galatians 5:1 and talk about what this means.

*“Once again, the bottom line is trust. Can we trust God knows what's best for us? Can we believe He really has our best interests in mind? Adam and Eve didn't. And they lost the very freedom they were convinced their sin would ensure them. What about you? Are you willing to accept that God is a God of freedom - that His laws are for your protection, given to ensure and not hamper your freedom? If so, take a few moments to surrender to God the areas over which you've maintained control. Confess your lack of faith, then rest in the assurance God will grant you the maximum amount of freedom available in this sinful world.” (Charles F. Stanley, Freedom in Christ)*