

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 7

### CONVERSATION STARTER

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What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail and money was no barrier to you?

### TWO KINDS OF BELIEF

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In this week's story, Jesus looks around at the crowds in Galilee and says, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." It's as if he's looking for someone who *will believe* without seeing. And then there's the official. He begs Jesus to heal his son, who is very sick with a fever. Jesus tells him, "Go; your son will live." And the official *believes* Jesus and leaves. Without seeing for himself that it is true, the official trusts that what Jesus says will be.

This first belief is one built on hope—the same kind of expectant belief that causes God's people today to take risks when they feel like God is calling them to do something that seems impossible or implausible. The kind that believes God is good and will keep God's promises, even when our circumstances might cause us to think otherwise.

Later, the official finds out that his son will in fact live. That Jesus has indeed healed him. And we're told he believes again. This time, his belief isn't an *expectant* belief, it's a belief of confirmation. A belief that knows deep down in his bones that God is good, that Jesus is who he says he is. It's a belief that prompts one to build their entire life around Jesus.

Which of these two kinds of beliefs do you identify with more? Are there times in your life when you felt like you were stepping out in *expectant belief*? What about moments that you looked back on and just *knew* that only God could make it possible? Spend some time discussing with your group.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?

2. Jesus heals the official's son. Have you experienced Jesus' healing anything in your own life? Or providing for you in a place of scarcity? How did it change your relationship with him?
3. Have you ever been disappointed by a prayer for healing that went unanswered? What did you do with your disappointment? Why do you think these prayers sometimes go unanswered?
4. Do you think more people today would believe in Jesus if they saw the same kinds of signs and wonders as in John's Gospel? Why or why not?

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

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The Psalms make for great prayers. Some were written out of grief, others from an abundance of joy, fear, or even sadness. When we speak these words back to God, it's like we're joining the prayers of countless others who came before us and prayed the same things, who were going through similar challenges.

This week, find some time to read Psalm 34 from start to finish. Then, read it a second time and think about how the words speak to you.

- What stands out to you?
- What feelings does the psalm evoke?
- What situations or circumstances in your present reality are being drawn to the front of your mind?

Now read the psalm again a third time. This time, don't just read the words—pray them back to God! Change the language and add thoughts of your own. Summarize each verse as if you were talking directly with God.