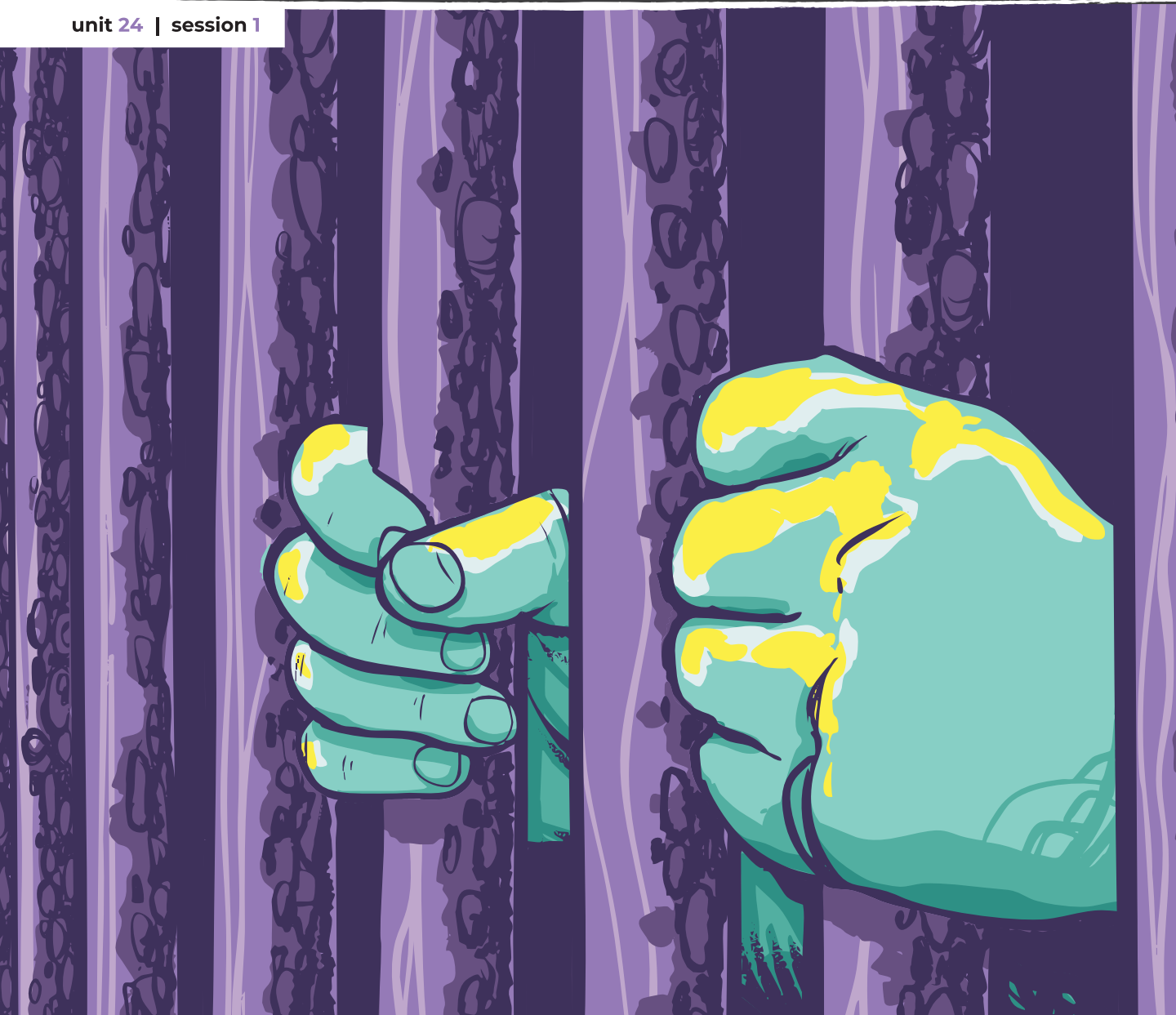


"THE ONE"

unit 24 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

When Jesus answered John the Baptist's question, He pointed to miracles only the Messiah would have authority to do. Jesus would later demonstrate His authority over sin and evil in a greater way through His crucifixion and resurrection. While many continue to reject Him, one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess He is Lord (Phil. 2:9-11).

FOR FAITH

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Matthew 11

JESUS GAVE US EVIDENCE

MATTHEW 11:1-10

1 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. 2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." 7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'"

JESUS CALLS US TO FAITH

MATTHEW 11:11-19

11 "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear. 16 But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, 17 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

MAIN POINT.

We can look to Jesus's works to settle our doubts.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

ILLUMINATION OF SCRIPTURE

Because of the vast difference between God's wisdom and ours and because of humanity's sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through the process of illumination. When it comes to applying the meaning of God's Word, Christians do not rely ultimately on human reason in the process of interpretation, nor do we rely solely on an institution or body of scholars. Instead, a Christian's ultimate reliance is on the work of the Holy Spirit who illuminates the Scriptures in the heart and mind (John 14:15-18; 16:7-15).

DISCUSSION

JESUS GAVE US EVIDENCE

MATTHEW 11:1-10

- John prophesied about Jesus as the One who would take away sin, so what do you think made him doubt?
-  • What evidence did Jesus give John to prove He is who He claims to be?
-  • When is it difficult to battle doubt? How does it comfort you to know Jesus meets us where we are, even when we doubt?

JESUS CALLS US TO FAITH

MATTHEW 11:11-19

- What advantages do we have now to strengthen our faith that John didn't have?
-  • What does it mean that Jesus was "a friend of . . . sinners" (v. 19)? How does that compare to the way people think of Jesus today?
-  • What's the difference in John's doubt and the Jews' unbelief Jesus called out in verses 16-17?



JESUS IS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS. HOW CAN WE IMITATE HIM WHILE ALSO KEEPING OURSELVES FROM FALLING INTO SIN?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Where do you go with your doubts? When we scroll social media, we can find influencers for almost anything. If we aren't careful, reels and stories can convince us that these people have all the answers we could ever need. Sometimes, other people do have answers we need and can help us make wise choices. But unless we truly know the people behind the accounts, it's impossible to trust completely that they are exactly who they appear to be. That's not to say we can't be inspired by something they say or learn something new from them—we definitely can! However, when it comes to doubts about our faith, about Jesus, we need to make sure we're taking our questions to the right places and holding up the answers against the truth of God's Word. While going to godly, trustworthy people with our doubts or questions isn't wrong, Jesus should always be our starting point—just like He was for John the Baptist.



DAY ONE

GENESIS 3:1-7



Have you ever heard something that sounded mostly good and right but just slightly off? We shrug off our doubt because we're busy, rushed, or pressured to go along with what the rest of our family or friends decide or to trust the person who's advising us. Doubt can be good for you, though: It's that little catch in your breath, stumbling step, glance over your shoulder, or check in your spirit that makes you pause and wonder if you're going the right way. Doubt makes us pause and ask, "Is what I'm feeling or experiencing actually real or true?"

The enemy would like nothing more than to make you doubt what God has said and to turn away from His Word toward something that sounds good and justifies your ideas or desires. We like to think that Satan's tactics are obvious, but it's not so simple. In fact, sin entered the world because the enemy is smart and sneaky and twists God's words so that we begin to wonder if we heard Him correctly. Whether his question to us is as plainly stated as it was to Eve, the enemy can tempt us to wonder, "Did God actually say . . . ?" (v. 1; emphasis added).

Faced with the serpent's question, Eve chose to allow doubt to drive a wedge between her and God. We easily do the same when our desires—or culture's opinions—don't line up with what God has actually said. But when we're faced with influencers' messages, friends' opinions, or even teachers' lessons that cause us to wonder what God has really said, we can let our questions be invitations to press deeper into our relationship with Jesus, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance as we look to God's Word to see what's true. Then, we walk toward that truth instead of falling for the enemy's same old schemes.

- **GOD WILL NEVER ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T LINE UP WITH HIS WORD. HOW CAN THIS HELP YOU TELL WHAT'S TRUE?**
- **WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN BUILD SPIRITUAL DEFENSES NOW SO YOU CAN STAND AGAINST THE ENEMY'S LIES WHEN THEY COME?**

PRAY

LORD JESUS, SOMETIMES I STRUGGLE TO KNOW WHAT'S FROM YOU AND WHAT'S FROM THE WORLD AND JUST SOUNDS RIGHT. HELP ME TO LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REMEMBER YOUR WORD SO I CAN KNOW YOUR WAY IN ALL THINGS.



DAY TWO

ISAIAH 55:8-9

Maybe you've heard of "The Five Ws" (and One H) of writing. They break down like this: "Who" points to the people involved. "What" tells us about the plot or events. "When" alerts us to the time. "Where" indicates location. "Why" explains the reason behind an action. "How" describes the process. Asking all of these questions gives us a clear picture, a full story. They help us learn and discover, and they can also help us settle our doubts.

In faith, like in writing, we start with the first question to help us settle our doubts: who. God ultimately holds all the answers. When we ask what we know about Him, we can answer that He is holy, righteous, good, loving, just, and merciful—just to name a few of His attributes. When and where tell us that He always has been and always will be everywhere across all times and with all people. But the hows and whys of faith are far more mysterious to us. We can only know what God decides to reveal when He decides to reveal it because the way He thinks and works in the world is so far beyond our ability to understand.

This is why faith, trusting what we can't see or understand, is necessary in our relationship with God. When we don't understand, we can trust God does. When we have doubts, we can trust that He is sure and steady. When we have questions, we can trust that He has answers, even if they aren't what we hoped for. Though God never promises that we will understand everything He does or the reasons behind those actions, He promises that when we search for Him, we will find Him (Jer. 29:13). And ultimately, He is the answer we need.

- **WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW THAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND? WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR GOD?**
- **HOW DO YOU THINK GOING TO GOD WITH YOUR QUESTIONS COULD STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TO TRUST YOU EVEN THOUGH I WON'T ALWAYS BE ABLE TO SEE OR UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE DOING OR WHY YOU ALLOW CERTAIN THINGS TO HAPPEN. GUIDE ME TO ASK QUESTIONS THAT GROW MY FAITH, NOT INCREASE MY DOUBT.



DAY THREE

MARK 9:17-27

We all have friends or people in our lives who are our “go-tos” for certain things. Maybe your artsy friend helps you decorate for another friend’s birthday party. Maybe you ask your mom for help with homework because she’s really good at math. Maybe your older brother plays guitar, so you ask him to help you write and perform a song. Beyond your everyday needs, though, you probably trust specific people to help you meet specialized needs, like a dentist who helps you with a toothache or a tutor who helps you prepare for the SAT. We all need help sometimes, and who we turn to matters.

The Gospels make it clear that Jesus is the go-to for people in need. He healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead. His work had caught the attention of a desperate father who wanted help for his demon-possessed son. This man sought Jesus with confidence, but doubt crept in when the disciples failed to help. When Jesus arrived and said He could help if the man believed, the man cried out with a desperate plea many of us can identify with: “I believe; help my unbelief” (v. 24).

It’s like saying, “Jesus, I trust you, and deep down, I know you can help. But nothing else has worked, and everyone else failed, so I’m also struggling with doubt. Help me to trust you completely.” When you do this, you’re not saying you don’t believe in Jesus’s power to heal or help you; you’re admitting that you’re human, flawed, and in need of your perfect Savior to remind you once again that He is faithful to do what He has promised. So, when you’re struggling with doubt, ask Jesus for help.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU FELT THE TENSION OF KNOWING YOU CAN TRUST JESUS AND EXPERIENCING DOUBT BECAUSE YOUR SITUATION SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE?**
- **HOW CAN JESUS DOING WHAT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE IN THE PAST GIVE YOU CONFIDENCE THAT HE CAN DO THE IMPOSSIBLE NOW?**

PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR HEARING ME AND HELPING ME,
EVEN WHEN MY FAITH IS SMALL. I BELIEVE YOU CAN HELP
ME AND WILL DO ALL YOU’VE PROMISED. EVEN WHEN I
DOUBT, GIVE ME STRENGTH TO TRUST YOU FULLY.**



DAY FOUR

JOSHUA 4:1-9

Despite living in the age of social media and phones with amazing cameras, most of us have probably had that moment when we realized we should've taken more pictures. Not just any pictures though—not the aesthetic latte art, the beautiful sunset, or the new car. No, the moments we want to hold on to most are milestone events and the people who make our lives so amazing. But pictures aren't the only way we remember. We remember through stories, souvenirs, and monuments too. Remembering is an important part of life. Memories help us learn new information, organize ideas, and even make plans for the future. Basically, looking back helps us look forward.

God encouraged His people toward specific ways of remembering because they were forgetful. So, they celebrated through feasts and festivals, gifts and sacrifices, songs and Scripture readings—and even through stones. When God's people finally crossed the Jordan River before entering the promised land, the priests carried the ark of the covenant to the middle of the river as God had commanded, and God held back the waters so the people could cross. Here, God instructed Joshua to choose one man from each tribe to gather stones from the riverbed. Then, Joshua commanded the men to carry the stones and to set them down where they spent the night. These stones were meant to serve as a memorial to God's faithfulness (v. 7).

Like the Israelites, we need to remember—and keep remembering—how God has been faithful to us. In our moments of doubt, these memorials can settle our hearts. When we remember the works God has done, we can rest, knowing He will do everything He said He would do. We can look back at God's faithfulness to look ahead in faith.

- **WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS YOU REMEMBER IMPORTANT MOMENTS OR PEOPLE?**
- **HOW CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU?
HOW CAN YOU CREATE YOUR OWN STONES OF REMEMBRANCE?**

PRAY

HEAVENLY FATHER, I KNOW I'M FORGETFUL. BRING TO MIND THE TIMES YOU'VE SHOWN ME WHO YOU ARE AND HOW YOU LOVE ME. TEACH ME HOW TO CREATE MY OWN MEMORIALS OF YOUR FAITHFULNESS TO KEEP ME FROM FORGETTING.





DAY FIVE

EPHESIANS 2:1-10; HEBREWS 11:1-2,32-40

Think about the most unbelievable story you've ever heard or the most unbelievable story you've lived through. No matter the teller, the more unbelievable the story, the more likely those listening will want proof. Sometimes, we can easily see a photo or a scar, pull up a news story, or ask family members or friends to act as witnesses to the truth of their tales. Sometimes, we see evidence in the way people's thoughts, words, and behaviors change. Other times, we have to believe what they say is true because we know and trust their character.

Before Jesus came, people like Abraham, Moses, and King David had faith that God would one day send the King He had promised and establish His eternal kingdom, but they died without seeing that promise fulfilled. They were approved by this belief, this complete trust, in what God would do, despite not seeing the total fulfillment of the promise (Heb. 11:2,39). They believed because they saw God work miraculously in and through His people—including themselves—to conquer kingdoms, build temples, stand firm in their faith despite persecution, wander the wilderness, see the dead raised to life (Heb. 11:35), and countless other acts throughout their history.

Unlike these heroes of the faith, we know Jesus came and have the privilege of looking back at God's promises fulfilled. Believers are assured of this reality through Scripture and the presence of the Holy Spirit living within us as a holy, eternal promise. And yet, when we struggle with doubt, like those heroes of the faith, we can also see the way God has worked in the lives of others—and worked within us—as evidence that He is who He says He is and will do what He has promised.

- **WHOSE LIFE SHOWS EVIDENCE THAT GOD HAS CHANGED HIM OR HER? WHAT EVIDENCE DO YOU SEE?**
- **DOES YOUR LIFE GIVE ENOUGH EVIDENCE FOR PEOPLE AROUND YOU TO BELIEVE JESUS IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS? EXPLAIN.**

PRAY

**LORD JESUS, I WANT TO LIVE LIFE YOUR WAY SO
THAT PEOPLE SEE EVIDENCE OF YOUR PRESENCE IN
MY WORDS AND ACTIONS. HELP ME TO VIEW GOOD
WORKS AS EVIDENCE TO HELP OTHERS KNOW YOU,
NOT AS ACTS TO MAKE MYSELF LOOK GOOD.**