

# GoLife100 | Lesson 17

## Why Do We Believe What We Believe?



BY DUDLEY HALL



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**THIS LESSON FOCUSES ON** how people come to believe what they believe. It will examine the different types of things that people put their faith in and what the consequences of our beliefs are.

**THIS LESSON IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE** we must be aware of why people think and believe as they do and how to challenge those thoughts and beliefs in a way that will position them for a revelation of the truth of Jesus Christ.

### ***CASE STUDY:***

*As you're talking with a friend about your beliefs, he states, "I guess I'm just not the type of person who can have faith. If I haven't experienced it, I just don't believe it's true."*

### ***CASE STUDY REFLECTIONS:***

*What would you say to your friend and what would your goal be in a conversation like this? Why?*

### **MAKE YOUR CASE:**

Did you explain to your friend that everyone lives by faith?

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### I. Why do we believe what we believe?

- A. The greatest sin of this culture is any form of exclusion.
- B. What makes us believe and commit our lives to our ideas of truth? Refer to the example of Paul in [Acts 17:1-3](#).

### II. All explanations of reality are based on faith. Diagram One:

#### DIAGRAM 1:

##### THE DECISION TREE

something	nothing
personal	impersonal
polytheist monotheist	naturalist pantheist

### III. The mind justifies the heart:

- A. Our minds find a way to justify whatever our hearts embrace ([Romans 1:18-21](#))
- B. Every man must make a decision about what he knows of God from creation ([Romans 1:21](#)).
- C. The choice to reject God breaks down the distinctions He has built into the creation ([Romans 1:22-25](#)).
- D. Every philosophy and system of man justifies a lifestyle consistent with what the rebellion in his heart has chosen.
- E. We all look for ways to remove God from our reasoning.

### IV. The panel of experts:

- A. Logic: Unless God and His ways can stand up to the criteria of pure logic, He deserves no serious consideration.
- B. Experience: Only what a person has experienced himself will he validate as true (empiricism).
- C. Tradition: Every issue must pass the test of conforming to precedent. Denominational distinctives often supersede biblical truth in determining belief.

**Christianity is based upon the assumption of an absolute God who makes absolute distinctions.**

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## *Define a Term:*

**JUSTIFY:** to prove or show to be just, or conformable to law, right, justice, propriety or duty; to defend or maintain; to vindicate as right. (Webster's 1828)

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### **V. Popular lies:**

- A. You can do anything you want to.
- B. A person can be whatever they want to be.
- C. You can know anything you want to know.

### **VI. Experts transformed by revelation and a life yielded to God:**

- A. Receives revelation that enlightens reason.
- B. Interprets experience.
- C. Judges traditions.

### **VII. The common crises of conversion:**

- A. God demands His place as the definer and boundary-setter in each one's life.
- B. We must resign as the arbiter of what is best for ourselves.

### **VIII. A new panel of experts.**

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**No matter what  
a man believes,  
he believes  
it as a result  
of expressing  
faith.**

## *Memory Verse:*

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,"*

*—[Romans 1:18-20](#)*

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### *Homework:*

1. Describe something in your life that you perceived as true, but have now come to realize was actually a reflection of a choice you made in your heart.
2. Which of the “panel of experts” do you feel exercises the most influence in our culture today? Why?
3. What do the three popular lies Dudley referred to reveal about the presuppositions that are prevalent in our culture today?
4. Why is it hard to explain “ethics” if you do not believe in a personal God?

### *Listening Test:*

1. According to God, human life is more valuable than animal life.
  - a. True
  - b. False
2. Two things God requires: That you \_\_\_\_\_ and thank Him as the source of all life.
  - a. believe in Jesus
  - b. live by His boundaries
  - c. have a consistent devotional life
3. When you \_\_\_\_\_, He gives you a revelation that enlightens your reason, interprets your experience, and judges your tradition.
  - a. yield yourself to God
  - b. read the Bible
  - c. go to church
4. Your \_\_\_\_\_ are the ultimate deciders of what you are going to do with reality.
  - a. best intentions
  - b. feelings
  - c. “panel of experts”