

A **BELIEVE** BIBLE STUDY GUIDE | 8 SESSIONS

THINK LIKE JESUS



*What Do I Believe and
Why Does It Matter?*

RANDY FRAZEE

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Why Does It Matter?*

STUDY GUIDE | EIGHT SESSIONS

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Think Like Jesus Study Guide

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Scope and Sequence

The goal of every follower of Jesus Christ is to become more like him, but how do you know where to start? What does it really mean to be a disciple of Jesus? The objective of *Think Like Jesus*—the first in a series of three small-group studies—is to start the process toward renewing your mind so that your thoughts will more closely match the thoughts of Christ. This study guide (and the related video) will help you assess your spiritual life, pinpoint areas that need special attention, and give you tools to help you grow. The eight sessions in this study will focus on the core beliefs of the Christian faith. The next study in this series, *Act Like Jesus*, will focus on foundational practices of the Christian life. The final study, *Be Like Jesus*, will focus on Christlike virtues. May God bless you as you seek him through this experience!

Session Outline

Each session is divided into two parts. In the group section, you and your group will begin by watching a short video teaching from Randy Frazee and follow along with the

note-taking outline that has been provided. You will then recite the key verse, the key idea, and engage in some guided group discussion through the questions provided. At the end of the group time, you will be given real-life scenarios of people who struggle with their faith. Using the key applications from your study guide, your group will be challenged to think of ways to encourage the people within these case studies. Finally, you will close the group with a time of prayer.

Personal Study

At the end of the group section, you will find a series of readings and study questions for you to go through on your own during the week. Each of these sections will challenge you to consider a key question about the topic, think through a key idea, and then consider a key application regarding the difference it should make in your life. You will also be given four statements to help you evaluate the alignment of your life with the key idea and asked to take action by memorizing each session's key idea and key verse. **The personal study is a critical component in helping you see how the beliefs you are studying are reflected in the pages of the Bible, so be sure to complete this study during the week before your next group meeting.**

Group Size

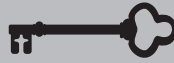
Think Like Jesus is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any small-group gathering. To ensure everyone has enough time to participate in discussions, it is recommended that large groups watch the video together and then break up into smaller groups of four to six people for discussion.

Materials Needed

Each participant should have his or her own study guide. Although the course can be fully experienced with just the video and study guide, participants are also encouraged to have a copy of *Believe: Living the Story of the Bible to Become Like Jesus*, which includes selections from the *New International Version* that relate to each week's session. Reading *Believe* as you go through the study will provide even deeper insights and make the journey even richer and more meaningful.

Facilitation

Each group should appoint a leader who is responsible for starting the video and for keeping track of time during discussions and activities. Leaders may also read questions aloud and monitor discussions, prompting participants to respond and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate. (For more thorough instructions, see the Leader's Guide included at the back of this guide.)



Session 1

WHO IS GOD?

WELCOME

A little girl in kindergarten was drawing a picture when her teacher walked up to her desk to take a look. She asked the child, “What are you drawing?” The bright-eyed girl quickly responded, “God.” The teacher smiled and then said, “Well, honey, no one actually knows what God looks like.” The child looked up from her work and confidently quipped, “Well then, they’re about to!” This little girl had no doubts at all as to whether God exists—rather, she was now going to show the world what he looked like to her. This is exactly where we must begin in examining our belief in God—not with, “Does he exist?” but with, “Who is he?”

VIDEO TEACHING NOTES

Welcome to session one of *Think Like Jesus*. If this is your first time together as a group, take a moment to introduce yourselves to each other. As you watch the video, use the following outline to record some of the main points. (The answer key is found at the end of the session.)

- A. W. Tozer wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” Why? Because this mindset—or absence of it—will drive all we _____ and all we _____.
- **Key Question:** Who is _____ ?
- “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are _____ ” (Romans 1:20).
- **Key Idea:** I believe the God of the Bible is the one _____—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- God is three persons who _____ a being.
- **Key Verse:** “May the grace of the Lord _____, and the love of _____, and the fellowship of the _____ be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

- **(Key Application #1):** Because God is God . . . I am _____; He is in _____ and in control; I want to know and follow his _____ for my life.
- **(Key Application #2):** Because I was created in the image of God and for community . . . I recognize others' full _____ and respect boundaries; I look out for the rights, preferences, and _____ of others; I _____ and enjoy others.

GETTING STARTED

Begin your discussion by reciting the key verse and key idea together as a group. On your first attempt, use your notes if you need help. On your second attempt, try to state them completely from memory.



KEY VERSE: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

KEY IDEA: I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



GROUP DISCUSSION

As a group, discuss your thoughts and feelings about the following declarations. Which statements are easy to declare with certainty? Which are more challenging? Why?

- I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God.
- I believe the God of the Bible is one in essence but distinct in person—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- I believe Jesus is God in flesh—who died and rose bodily from the dead.
- I believe the Holy Spirit is God and dwells in Christians to empower them to live the Christian life.

Based on your group's dynamics and spiritual maturity, choose the two to three questions that will lead to the best discussion about this week's key idea.

1. If you only had two minutes to answer the question, "Who is God?" how would you respond?

2. How does your understanding of God impact your day-to-day decisions?

3. What are the most common reasons people struggle to believe that the God of the Bible is the one true God? What helped you get past these obstacles? Or, what obstacles are you still facing?

Read Luke 3:1-22 and choose one to two questions that will lead to the greatest discussion in your group.

1. In what ways is the Trinity a challenging concept for people to comprehend?

2. If God (the Trinity) is a community within himself, and if you are made in his image, then what does that tell you about yourself?

3. How does today's culture help or hinder you from experiencing the community for which you were created?

4. What specific actions can this group undertake to create healthy community?

CASE STUDY

Use the following case study as a model for a real-life situation where you might put this week's key idea into practice.

Mike is one of your favorite coworkers. He is funny, hardworking, and passionate about life. As a new Christian, he comes to you seeking help, because he and his wife are struggling. They are constantly butting heads, arguing, and simply not getting along. Mike thinks it is just easier to walk away but really wants to know what you think.

Using the following key applications from this session, what gentle advice would you give Mike?



KEY APPLICATION #1: Because God is God, I am not. He is in charge and in control. I want to know and follow his will for my life.

KEY APPLICATION #2: Because I was created in the image of God and for community, I recognize others' full personhood and respect boundaries. I look out for the rights, preferences, and comforts of others. I value and enjoy others.



CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together with prayer. Share your prayer requests with one another. Ask God to help you put this week's key idea into practice.

FOR NEXT WEEK

Before your next group meeting, be sure to read through the following personal study and complete the exercises.

VIDEO NOTES ANSWER KEY

are, do / God / without excuse / true God / share / Jesus Christ, God, Holy Spirit / not, charge, will / personhood, comforts, value

PERSONAL STUDY



Every session in this guide contains a personal study to help you make meaningful connections between your life and what you are learning each week. Take some time after your group meeting each week to read through this section and complete the personal study. In total, the personal study should take about one hour to complete. Some people like to spread it out, devoting about ten to fifteen minutes a day. Others choose one larger block of time during the week to work through the entire personal study in one sitting. There is no right or wrong way to do this! Just choose a plan that best fits your needs and schedule from week to week, and then allow the Scripture to take root in your heart.

KEY QUESTION

WHO IS GOD?

Any discussion regarding this big idea will have to start with the question, “Who is God?” The Bible’s first words are, “In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1). Our very lives, as a part of this story, also begin with God as our Creator.

The story of the world’s beginning has no hint of defense. No language flirting with a desire to prove. No attempt to allow for anything other than this overarching truth being true. The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is written

on the assumption there is a God—the constant focal character of each story.

The apostle Paul writes, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). So, our central question here is not, “Is there a God?” but, “Who is the one true God?”

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
(Genesis 1:1).*

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun
(Psalm 19:1–4).*

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse (Romans 1:20).

1. What is significant about the way the Bible begins?

2. How has God revealed his invisible qualities since the creation of the world?

KEY IDEA

ONE TRUE GOD IN THREE PERSONS

Throughout the Old Testament, the clarion call is for belief in the oneness of God. The *Shema* (Hebrew for “hear”) forms the belief without mincing words: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Yet, as we turn the page to the New Testament, the names of what seem to be three deities emerge—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are mentioned and appear throughout the Old Testament era, but their distinctive identity and presence invade the life and times of the New Testament.

To reconcile this mathematical equation of $3 = 1$, theologians invented the word *Trinity* (a word not used in the Bible) to capture God’s essence—three persons who share a being, or fundamental nature. Throughout the centuries, students of the Bible have come up with analogies to get at the heart of the nature of God as a Trinity and to make it a more accessible and practical concept. The following has helped me in developing a practical concept for the nature of God and in understanding what it means to be made in God’s image.

The one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—created humans in their image as a community (see Genesis 1:26–27).

And we are told the two have become one (see Genesis 2:24). Our true nature is like God. We were not only created *for* community but we *are* a community. When we enter a relationship with God through Christ, we are placed in the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:27). We, though we are many, become one (see Romans 12:4–5). In this way, Christ restores our reflection of the nature of God that was lost in the Garden of Eden. Now you can understand why relationships are so important to God!

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh (Genesis 2:19–24).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing

was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:1-5).

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21-22).

1. How do you personally wrap your mind around the idea of the Trinity?

2. In what ways have you experienced God as Father? As Jesus the Son? As the Holy Spirit?

KEY APPLICATION

WHAT DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES

If we embrace the God of the Bible as the one true God, we will realize that we are *not* God and that he is in charge and in control. We will want to know and follow his will for our lives.

Likewise, if we embrace the “three-ness” of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we will observe how they treat each other and seek to emulate these principles in our relationships with each other. We will recognize the full personhood of others and respect boundaries, look out for their rights and preferences, and learn to value and enjoy them.

For any situation, relationship, or decision that we face, we can resolutely apply these principles to guide us. The results, over time, will lead to blessing in our own souls in the form of fruit such as joy and peace, and we will express our actions outwardly for others to enjoy in the form of fruit such as love and kindness.

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:22–31).

1. What is meant by the phrase Paul quoted: “For in him we live and move and have our being”?

2. How does your understanding of who God is affect your character?

EVALUATE

As you conclude this personal study, use a scale of 1–6 to rate how strongly you believe the following statements (1 = no belief at all, 6 = complete confidence):

- ___ I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God.
- ___ I believe the God of the Bible is one in essence but distinct in person—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ___ I believe Jesus is God in the flesh—who died and rose bodily from the dead.
- ___ I believe the Holy Spirit is God and dwells in Christians to empower them to live the Christian life.

TAKE ACTION

Memorizing Scripture is a valuable discipline for all believers to exercise. Spend a few minutes each day committing this week’s key verse to memory.



KEY VERSE: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Recite this week’s key idea out loud. As you do, ask yourself, *Does my life reflect this statement?*

KEY IDEA: I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



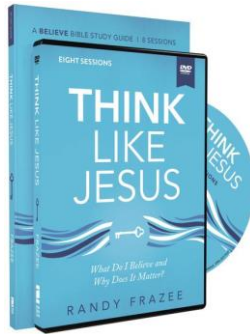
Answer the following questions to help you apply this week’s key idea to your own life.

Who Is God?

1. What behaviors help you recognize someone who believes the God of the Bible is the one true God?

2. What, if anything, hinders you from putting your faith solely in the God of the Bible?

3. What is something you can do this week to demonstrate your belief in the one true God?



THINK LIKE JESUS

by RANDY FRAZEE

What You Believe Drives Everything

God's desire is for you to *think* like Jesus so you can *act* like Jesus and ultimately *be* like Jesus. This process begins with the transformation of your thoughts—for the way you behave, the habits you form, and the character that defines you are all driven by what you believe.

Think Like Jesus will help you understand the key beliefs of Christianity that, when embraced in your own mind and your heart, will create true change in your life, in the church, and in the world.

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