When You Believe in God but Don’t Think He’s Fair
Week 1

The statement “life isn’t fair” is something we start saying during childhood…and sometimes never stop. The reality is that our lives are all different and none of them are “fair” when comparing them to the ideal life, but we must learn that our lives are in the hands of God. We would do good to look at our life in reference to what God’s plan is for us, and not our own.

- Do we determine what is fair by comparing our lives to those around us? If not how do we determine what fair is?
- What makes you think that God does or does not care?
- When God does something we consider unfair, how could it change our view of God?

“For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.” Isaiah 49:13

- Does this verse seem true in your life?
- Is it hard to find comfort in God who is present but at times chooses not to intervene or change our circumstances?

Craig shares, “He is just, but He is not fair.” He then follows this statement with Psalm 103:10-12 “(God) does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

- How would you define grace?
- What does the fact that God gives us grace in all areas of our life have to do with life being fair or not?

Craig challenges that we don’t have to understand to believe.

- Why do we seemingly have to have an answer for everything that happens?
- Do you see people casting blame when there is no other explainable answer for a situation?
- Do you think that God disciplining His children is fair?
- In your own words what is the distinction between God allowing pain but not causing it?
• Do you believe that God truly uses what we go through in life for His purposes?

• Do you still trust that God is good, loving, and wise in everything even if you don’t understand why things happen?

Next Steps:

• How does this change your view of wanting fairness in your life?

• What must you do so that even when you don’t understand, you can still believe in God?

If you are willing, identify how many times you compare yourself to others instead of focusing on what God wants for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of those moments.
When You Believe in God but Aren’t Sure He Loves You
Week 2

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

• What is your understanding of God’s love for you? (e.g. conditional, temporary, required)

• What prevents you from knowing and accepting that God loves you? Past guilt, present sin, insignificance?

• Do you find yourself comparing your lifestyle to others?

• How does comparing ourselves destroy the truth of God’s love for us?

• How can God love people who say they love Him but still lie, steal and cheat?

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” 1 John 4:8

• What does Craig mean when he says, “Love is not something God does. It’s who God is?”

• How is God’s love the only love that can make each of us significant?

• Does the fact that God’s love covers our bad choices give us an excuse to knowingly choose the wrong path? Why?

• If you really walked in the reality that God loves you, what would it do to you?

Next Steps:

Reread John 3:16.

Write John 3:16 on an index card with your name inserted. Take time to read it every day for the next week, letting the truth and depth of God’s love penetrate your mind, heart and soul.
When You Believe in God but Trust More in Money  
Week 3

• What is the one thing you would describe as your most valuable possession? Why is it so valuable to you?

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Luke 12:34

• What are some of the “treasures” or possessions in your life currently distracting you from focusing on God? What specific things can you do to remove these distractions?

• Have you ever known anyone who was completely satisfied because of the “riches” they obtained? What does chasing wealth typically lead to for people you’ve known (or yourself)?

• If we cannot take anything with us when we die, why do you think we work so hard to acquire things in our lives?

• When you grow in your relationship with Christ, it often results in becoming unexplainably content with what we have. Are you more content today than you were last year? How has your relationship with Christ in the last year affected your level of contentment?

• Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. Describe a time you gave sacrificially and the affect it had on you. Is there any way you could give even more sacrificially? If so, what would it be?

Read the following passages and discuss how they should affect our giving.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices...But you have neglected the more important matters of the law...You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.” Matthew 23:23

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it’.” Malachi 3:10

“But the king replied to Araunah, ‘No, I insist on paying for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing’.” 2 Samuel 24:24

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19
Discussion Leader’s Note:

The purpose of this discussion/study is not to debate the theology of tithing for today. Some people view the “tithe” as part of the Old Testament law, whereas others see it as a command for today. Here are some things to consider as you guide people.

1. The tithe was established before the Mosaic law.  
2. Jesus tithed.  
3. Jesus affirmed the tithe to His disciples (Matthew 23:23).  
4. The tithe is the starting point, not the end.  

Next Steps:

With your group and during your personal prayer time this week pray for God to help you focus more on Him rather than money or possessions. Pray that He will help you obtain true contentment through Him.

- What is one thing you can change today in your life that will help shift your focus away from money and possessions and back towards God?  
- What can you do this week to accept and better appreciate the things God has given to you?
When You Believe in God but Pursue Happiness at Any Cost

Week 4

• Besides your faith in Christ, what are some of the things in your life that give you happiness?

• Why do most people want more than they already have?

• Describe a time when you have put your immediate happiness above doing what was right.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” Proverbs 14:12

• Why is it so easy to get distracted in life and focus on temporary living and happiness?

Craig talks about a “polluted theology”. He says, “I tried religion, but it didn’t make me happy. I went to church and it didn’t make my life any better. God didn’t help me have a better life, so either he failed me or he’s not real. Either way, I’m not interested.”

• What’s wrong with this line of thinking?

• What is the difference between God wanting us to be happy and making happiness an idol in our lives?

Read Matthew 5:1-12.

• How do you think a person might behave if he or she were hungering and thirsting after righteousness?

• How (if at all) does the promise of future blessing affect us in the present?

“Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.” Psalm 97:12

“Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands.” Psalm 112:1

• What does it mean to you to be truly happy?

• How can you begin a greater pursuit of happiness this week to align your beliefs and actions?
Next Steps:

With your group pray that God will help you strip away the false beliefs you have regarding true happiness in your life. Ask God to help you seek happiness through Him only. Thank Him for the blessings he has given you in your life so that you can truly appreciate the comfort and happiness that comes through His blessings.