

towards belief

I don't know if I came to a decision that Christianity was the right religion but I came to the decision that Jesus was the only way; that every other religion seemed to tell me how I could hopefully access God's acceptance and love. And the message of Jesus was that there was no way to earn God's love and earn his favour but to simply accept a favour and a love that was already coming my way. And that's the beautiful thing to me about Jesus. Every religion was me chasing after God and the message of Jesus was God chasing after me.

ERWIN
McMANUS

MICHAEL
RAMSDEN

I can remember sitting on this mountain top looking out over a field, thinking this (Christianity) is true and this is real. And that means that therefore I should become a Christian but if I become a Christian I'll stop enjoying myself. And so I felt I had this choice between truth and happiness....My second fear was I don't think I'm good enough to be a Christian. In other words, I think I'll be advocating a standard I can't meet and I didn't want to lead a lifestyle that wasn't true to my own convictions. And I said 'I'm not good enough to do this.' They looked at me and they said, 'You still don't understand this. It's not a question of are you good enough. It's a question of are you willing to be forgiven or not.'

What you're describing is post-modern nonsense...they don't believe in truth so every one is relatively true but of course you can't fly an airplane at 30,000 feet on that sort of post-modern nonsense. Truth matters!

OS
GUINNESS

JOHN
LENNOX

Every one of us knows that for trust and loyalty to be worthwhile they must be based on evidence...The Gospel of John ends with the statement of its purpose. "Many other things Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written in order that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that believing you might have life in his Name." In other words, John said, 'Look, I've selected this material. This forms the basis in order that you might believe.' So belief here is central in the OED definition of faith, that is, trusting where there's evidence.

I was studying philosophy at the time so I began to be attracted to this Christian faith but it was really important to me not to throw my mind out the door and just take a step of blind faith. So at that point I started to search. That took a lot of different forms. It took looking into the evidence and finding myself really impressed with some of it. I started to read the New Testament for the first time in my life...Over time I just found myself really impressed with the integrity with which Jesus lived. I thought that the life He lived was the most beautiful life that had been lived and that He was worth following.

VINCE
VITALE

towards belief

I probably picked up a lot of faith from my parents and also from the African Christians around me. So I would say my own faith was very deeply influenced by what I saw growing up as a child...many people's lives dramatically changed. Obviously a child's faith is different than an adult's faith. So as I grew up, in my teenage years I had to really discover this for myself.

▶ **ARD
LOUIS**

**AMY
ORR-EWING** ◀

My parents were not believers at all and in fact my father had been raised very strongly in an atheist home. His father was a scientist and had escaped from East Germany, from that whole sort of nightmare of the war. He got to a point in his life in his mid 30s where he had found a measure of success and happiness...and he began to think, 'What's life about? Is there more than this?' and one day really quite out of the blue he was marking some exam papers in his study and he had an extraordinary vision of Jesus when his whole life flashed before him from childhood right through to the present day and he just knew that he needed forgiveness.

I had to overcome the idea that God was something we talked about, that it was stories, and He was someone someone else needed and that He was someone who loved me when I performed right. John 3:16, that verse that I knew from such a young age, it was a message on that verse, the verse that everyone knows, that I heard just before Uni again. I probably could have preached the message myself and suddenly the words, 'God so loved the world,' I understood as it was for me. It wasn't just the world. It wasn't who I was talking to all the time. It wasn't who my parents were talking to all the time, who the church was presenting. The world meant me, and the magnitude of how much God loved me, the sacrifice He made for me – it surpassed the struggles I was going through at the time. It surpassed the loneliness, the darkness and I suddenly went, 'God loves me!' And it's really simple but it became personal; it became real.

▶ **MICHELLE
TEPPER**

**KARL
FAASE** ◀

My hope for anybody that watches this series is they come to a place of belief and recognise that they can be confident in what they believe. It's not a flaky idea, it's not kind of weak resignation to something that's intellectually fragile. This is firm foundations of belief that you can be confident in, that you can hold your head up in any community, in any space and say, 'Yes, this is what I believe,' and we trust that the whole series of Towards Belief has been people coming to a place where they're firm in their faith, firm in their belief and sure of their future. That's my hope.

▶ **NOTES**