

Believing God vs. Belief in God vs. Trusting God

"Moving from Intellectual Faith to Complete Dependence"

Key Scripture

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Proverbs 3:5–6

Introduction

Many Christians say they believe in God, but fewer actually believe God, and even fewer fully trust God.

These are three different levels of faith.

Think of them as a progression:

Belief in God → Believing God → Trusting God

One concerns His existence.

One concerns His Word.

One concerns surrendering your life.

Part I: Belief in God

"I believe God exists."

Definition

Belief in God is acknowledging that God is real.

This is the beginning of faith—not the fullness of it.

Many people believe there is a God without ever submitting to Him.

Scripture

James 2:19

"You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder."

Notice:

Even demons know God exists.

Knowledge alone does not produce salvation or transformation.

Examples

Many people

- Believe God created the universe.
- Believe Jesus lived.
- Believe heaven exists.
- Believe miracles happened.

Yet their lives remain unchanged.

Their belief is intellectual.

It never reaches the heart.

Characteristics

Someone with belief in God:

- Knows about God
- May attend church
- Knows Bible stories
- Agrees with Scripture

Yet still

- Lives independently
 - Makes decisions without God
 - Doesn't obey consistently
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Reflection

Can someone believe in God and still live like He doesn't matter?

Absolutely.

Part II: Believing God

"I believe what God says."

This is a deeper level.

Believing God means accepting His Word as absolute truth.

Not just believing He exists...

but believing everything He says.

Scripture

Romans 4:20–21

Speaking of Abraham:

"He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God...being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised."

Abraham believed God's promise.

He believed God before he saw evidence.

Another Example

Luke 1:45

Elizabeth told Mary:

"Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her."

Mary believed God's Word.

She trusted His promise over her circumstances.

Characteristics

Believing God means

- Believing His promises
- Believing His warnings
- Believing His commands
- Believing His timing
- Believing His character

Examples

Believing God says

"I believe God will provide."

"I believe God forgives."

"I believe God's Word is true."

"I believe God hears my prayers."

The Danger

You can believe God's promises...

yet still worry constantly.

Why?

Because believing God's Word is different than trusting Him with your life.

Part III: Trusting God

"I surrender my life to Him."

Trust is faith in action.

Trust means placing your weight upon God.

Imagine a chair.

Belief in the chair says:

"I think it can hold me."

Trust is actually sitting down.

Biblical Definition

Trust means complete reliance upon God's

- Character

- Wisdom
- Timing
- Provision
- Sovereignty

Even when circumstances make no sense.

Scripture

Proverbs 3:5–6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart..."

Notice:

Not half your heart.

Not most.

ALL.

Psalms 37:5

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will act."

Commitment comes before intervention.

Isaiah 26:3–4

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You."

Peace is the fruit of trust.

Biblical Examples

Abraham

God asked him to sacrifice Isaac.

He obeyed.

Why?

Because he trusted God's character.

(Hebrews 11:17–19)

Peter

Peter stepped out of the boat.

He trusted Jesus enough to walk.

(Matthew 14:28–31)

Job

Job lost everything.

Yet said:

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

(Job 13:15)

Jesus

In Gethsemane

"Not My will, but Yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

Perfect trust.

Comparison Chart

Belief in God

Believing God

Trusting God

God exists	God's Word is true	God controls my life
Intellectual	Conviction	Surrender
Agreement	Confidence	Dependence
Head	Heart	Lifestyle
Knowledge	Faith	Obedience
Observation	Acceptance	Submission

What Does Complete Trust Look Like?

Complete trust means...

1. Obeying Before Understanding

Noah built the ark before rain existed.

(Hebrews 11:7)

Trust obeys first.

2. Waiting Without Complaining

David waited years to become king.

Trust doesn't rush God.

Psalms 27:14

3. Giving God Control

Luke 9:23

"Take up your cross daily."

Trust relinquishes control.

4. Depending on God's Strength

Proverbs 3:5

Stop leaning on your own understanding.

Trust says,

"I don't have to figure everything out."

5. Resting in God's Character

God cannot lie.

(Titus 1:2)

God never changes.

(Malachi 3:6)

God is faithful.

(Lamentations 3:22–23)

Trust is rooted in who God is, not in how life feels.

Barriers to Trust

Fear

"What if God doesn't come through?"

Isaiah 41:10

Pride

"I'll handle it myself."

James 4:6

Past Hurt

Many struggle trusting God because they've been disappointed by people.

God is not people.

Psalms 118:8

Need for Control

Trust requires surrender.

Control produces anxiety.

Philippians 4:6–7

How to Completely Trust God

Step 1

Know God's Character

Study who God is.

Faith grows through knowing Him.

Daniel 11:32

"The people who know their God shall be strong."

Step 2

Know His Word

Romans 10:17

Faith comes by hearing God's Word.

You cannot trust promises you don't know.

Step 3

Remember His Faithfulness

David remembered the lion and bear before facing Goliath.

Past victories build present trust.

(Psalm 77:11–12)

Step 4

Choose Obedience Daily

Trust grows through practice.

Every act of obedience strengthens faith.

John 14:15

Step 5

Pray Honestly

Tell God your fears.

Mark 9:24

"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

God honors honest faith.

Step 6

Release the Outcome

Trust does not demand a specific result.

It believes that God's will is good, even when it differs from our expectations.

Romans 8:28

Step 7

Walk by Faith, Not by Sight

Faith moves before proof arrives.

Signs You Are Growing in Trust

- You pray before you panic.
 - Peace replaces constant worry.
 - You obey quickly.
 - Waiting becomes easier.
 - Your identity rests in God rather than circumstances.
 - Gratitude remains even in difficulty.
 - You seek God's will more than your own.
 - Fear no longer controls your decisions.
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Questions for Reflection

1. Do I merely believe that God exists, or do I actively believe what He says?
 2. What promise of God am I struggling to believe today?
 3. Where am I relying more on my own understanding than on God's wisdom?
 4. What area of my life have I not fully surrendered to God?
 5. What fear is keeping me from trusting Him completely?
 6. How has God proven His faithfulness in my past?
 7. What step of obedience is God asking me to take now?
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Practical Exercise

This week, identify one area where you have been holding tightly to control (finances, relationships, health, ministry, career, or your future).

Each day:

- Read **Proverbs 3:5–6** aloud.
 - Write down one promise from Scripture related to that area.
 - Pray, specifically surrendering that concern to God.
 - Take one practical step of obedience that aligns with His Word.
 - End the day by thanking God for His faithfulness, regardless of what you see.
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Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that You are not only real, but You are true and trustworthy. Forgive me for the times I have believed in You without believing Your Word, and for believing Your Word without fully entrusting my life to You. Teach me to rely on Your wisdom instead of my own understanding, to obey even when I cannot see the outcome, and to rest in the certainty of Your character. Increase my faith, strengthen my obedience, and help me surrender every area of my life into Your hands. May my peace come from trusting You rather than from controlling my circumstances. In Jesus' name, Amen.