

ALISTER McGRATH

# APOSTLES' CREED



LifeGuide®  
BIBLE STUDIES



Over  
15 Million  
LifeGuides  
Sold



6 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS



InterVarsity Press  
ivpress.com

Taken from *Apostles' Creed* by Alister McGrath

Copyright ©2016 by Alister McGrath

Published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL

[www.ivpress.com](http://www.ivpress.com)

# 1

## I Believe

*Genesis 12:1-8; 15:1-6*

*I believe in God . . .*

The Apostles' Creed in Latin opens with the words *Credo in Deum*, traditionally translated into English as "I believe in God." While "I believe in God" could mean "I am of the opinion that there is a God," in fact, it is a much stronger statement. Faith begins, however, with the acknowledgment that there is a God. *Faith means assent.*

Christians don't just believe—we believe in *someone*. More accurate translations of "I believe in God" would be "I have confidence in God," "I put my trust in God" or simply "I trust in God." Faith is not merely believing that God exists; it is anchoring ourselves to that God and resting secure in doing so. Faith is the response of our whole person to the person of God. It is saying yes to God. *Faith means trust.*

Time and again, Scripture encourages us to think of our faith as a personal relationship with God. God has publicly demonstrated his commitment to us and love for us in the cross of Jesus Christ; he will not abandon us. Faith is our commitment to God, a joyful and willing self-surrender to God. *Faith means commitment.*

Faith and good works in no way exclude each other. We do not come to faith by doing good works, as if we could buy our way into the kingdom of God. But real faith naturally gives rise to good works. Faith is active, seeking to express itself in the way we live. *Faith means obedience.*

GROUP DISCUSSION. What do you think of when you see the word *believe*?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Perhaps you have always been able to say “I believe in God,” perhaps you have recently affirmed or reaffirmed that statement, or perhaps you cannot honestly make that statement. If your ideas about believing in God have changed, how and why did they change? If your ideas have stayed consistent, what has kept them consistent?

In both the Old and New Testaments, Abraham is a model of faith—that is, of believing. God called Abraham to go to a strange land to receive his inheritance, and Abraham trusted God and went. He believed, even in apparently hopeless circumstances. *Read Genesis 12:1-8.*

---

1. What took place between God and Abram (later renamed Abraham)?

---

2. *Faith means assent.* Abraham apparently knew very little about God when God called him. Why do you think Abraham chose to believe in this God?

---

3. What do you think most people in your culture mean when they say “I believe in God”?

---

4. Has it always been easy for you to say “I believe in God,” or have you struggled with that statement? Why?

**5. Faith means trust.** Which of Abraham's actions indicate that he said yes to God when God took the initiative to speak to him?

---

**6.** What are some ways you have said yes to God?

---

**7. Faith means commitment.** What were some radical consequences of Abraham's trust in God, for himself and for his household?

---

*Read Genesis 15:1-6.*

---

**8.** About ten years had passed since God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's offspring (Genesis 12:7). At that point, why might Abraham have had reason to lose his trust in God?

---

**9.** How did God promise to show himself trustworthy?

---

**10.** For Abraham, what was the relationship between faith and righteousness?

---

**11. Faith means obedience.** In these two passages from Genesis, how do you see Abraham being obedient to God?

---

**12.** What would you say to someone who would like to believe in God but has difficulty overcoming doubts?

---

**13.** How would you like your belief in God to mature and deepen during this study and beyond?

*Pray about specific areas of life where you need to deepen your trust, commitment and obedience to the Lord.*

#### **Now or Later**

- In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul built a case for how God counts a person as righteous. Study Romans 4:1-5, in which Paul referred to Abraham and quoted Genesis 15:6.
- Abraham showed his belief in God through radical obedience. Consider ways that God might be challenging you to express your faith in some life-altering way.
- Faith is like an anchor, linking us with the object of faith. Just as an anchor secures a ship to the ocean floor, so our faith links us securely with God. Sketch an anchor fixed firmly in the ocean floor, with the anchor rope extending up to a boat riding on boisterous waves. Label the waves with difficulties in which the Lord has held you fast and kept you from drifting away or being shipwrecked. Above the waves write a prayer of thanks for the Lord's steadfastness and faithfulness.

**BUY THE BOOK!**

[ivpress.com/apostles-creed-lbs](http://ivpress.com/apostles-creed-lbs)