



Am I Crazy For Believing In Jesus? | Shawn Johnson | 03.08.2026

Weekly Study

## SHARE

As group members settle in, take a few minutes to check in with everyone and see how their lives are going. Share an exciting story from this week, your highs and lows, an answered prayer, or something you're struggling with. If someone is really struggling, rally the group around them and take a few moments to pray over them.

**Share a high, a low, and something interesting from this week.**

## GROW

This week, Shawn tackled one of the most fundamental questions we face in our faith journey: Are we crazy for believing in Jesus? We're reminded that our faith isn't built on blind acceptance or generational tradition, but on solid historical evidence and personal experience. Jesus is unique among all religious founders because He didn't just claim to hear from God; He claimed to BE God, and then proved it by predicting and accomplishing His own resurrection. We discover that even skeptical historians outside the Bible confirm Jesus lived, performed miracles, was crucified, and that His tomb was empty three days later. Shawn also shared five common arguments skeptics use to explain away the resurrection—maybe Jesus never died, maybe guards stole the body, maybe disciples took it, maybe everyone hallucinated—and shows why none of these hold up to scrutiny. The most powerful evidence? Over 500

eyewitnesses saw the risen Jesus, and His disciples were so convinced that they died brutal deaths rather than deny what they'd seen. But beyond the intellectual arguments, we're invited to remember our own encounters with Jesus.

Why is this important? Because scripture says that the enemy is defeated by the blood of the lamb (Christ's sacrificial work on the cross) and the word of our testimony (the personal, intimate encounter we had with Jesus that changed our lives). And if that's true, the enemy can't be defeated by facts and proof alone. The historical and scientific evidence of the existence of Jesus must be accompanied by a life-changing encounter.

Tim Kell summarizes this beautifully: "You can know the historical, archaeological, and philosophical evidence for Jesus, and still not believe. It is only when He meets you—when His love touches you personally—that faith is awakened."

No one lived this out more than the apostle Paul. From hostile and violent to humble and servant-hearted, Saul became Paul—a persecutor turned pastor, an enemy of Christ transformed into a teacher of the Way and author of the majority of the New Testament. Paul's story stands as one of the most vivid reminders that no one is too far gone, too broken, or too lost to be transformed by the saving work of Christ.

Saul was a young man likely alive during Jesus' ministry and certainly active in persecuting the early church after Jesus' death. He had access to firsthand and secondhand accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection: the claims that Jesus was God, the miracles, the crucifixion, the empty tomb, appearances to hundreds over forty days, and the ascension into heaven. And yet, Saul did not believe—until he **encountered Jesus personally**.

**Read 1 Timothy 1:13-16, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

- How did this week's message speak to you?**
  
- How do you personally respond when life circumstances make you question your faith, and what truths do you return to in those moments?**

- What role does personal experience with Jesus play in your faith compared to historical evidence and intellectual arguments?**
  
- Why do you think God welcomes our questions and doubts rather than being threatened by them?**
  
- What caught your attention from the verses above?**

## M O V E

Having a well-rounded understanding of the historical and scientific evidence for our faith is helpful for two main reasons.

First, it strengthens our own confidence in Jesus. Knowing why we believe what we believe builds a deeper foundation for our faith. Following Jesus ultimately requires trusting what we cannot see—otherwise it wouldn't be faith. But the evidence we do have removes many of the intellectual barriers that can stand in the way and creates more space for Jesus to work in our hearts.

Second, it prepares us to talk with others about our faith just as Peter suggests: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." — 1 Peter 3:15

Notice Peter doesn't say, "Make sure you know more facts than the other person so you can win the argument." Our goal isn't to overpower people intellectually—it's to share our hope in a way that reflects the heart of Jesus.

Knowing evidence about Jesus is only helpful if we can also recognize why someone is struggling to believe. People raise all kinds of questions about faith, but most of them fall into three main categories:

1. Head Issues (Intellectual Barriers)

- These are belief-level objections where someone feels Christianity doesn't make logical or rational sense.
  - Common examples include science vs. faith, doubts about miracles, the historical reliability of scripture, and too many religions to choose from.
2. Heart Issues (Emotional Wounds)
- This is a rejection of God, not because of logic but because of pain, disappointment, betrayal, or abandonment.
  - Examples include church hurt or spiritual abuse, hypocrisy among Christians, unanswered prayers, tragedy or suffering, and feeling abandoned by God and/or someone they were supposed to be able to trust.
3. Habit Issues (Moral Resistance)
- In some cases, belief in Jesus challenges the life someone wants to live.
  - Examples include a desire for moral autonomy, lifestyle choices that conflict with Christian teaching, cultural pressure, and identity tied to a certain way of living.

Understanding this Head–Heart–Habits framework helps us respond with wisdom and compassion. Before responding to someone's question or criticism about Jesus, it helps to pause and ask:

“Why might they be asking this?”

That simple question allows us to address what their soul may really be searching for—rather than simply firing back evidence to defeat their argument. It also helps us come alongside people in a way that makes room for Jesus to do what only He can do. This is exactly how Jesus approached people throughout the Gospels:

- Head issues → Jesus used reason, truth, and thoughtful conversation.
- Heart issues → Jesus showed compassion, comfort, and healing.
- Habit issues → Jesus spoke loving truth and called people into transformation and a better life.

When we follow His example, we stop trying to win arguments and start winning hearts. And that's how we help make heaven more crowded.

- Why do you think understanding historical and scientific evidence for faith can strengthen someone's confidence in Jesus? How has learning evidence helped (or not helped) your own faith?
- Faith still requires trusting what we cannot see. How do you personally balance evidence and faith in your relationship with Jesus?
- Think about someone in your life who struggles with faith. Do their questions seem more like a Head issue, Heart issue, or Habits issue? What clues help you recognize that?
- Which of the three areas—Head, Heart, or Habits—do you personally find hardest to respond to? Why?

**Read Acts 9:1-19**

- Before his conversion, Paul knew the Scriptures, Jewish history, and the claims about Jesus. Why do you think knowledge alone wasn't enough to convince him?
- What risks did Ananias take in going to Saul? What does that tell us about his faith and obedience?
- When Ananias meets Saul, he calls him "Brother Saul." Why is that significant, especially considering Saul's past?
- Ananias didn't debate Saul or try to convince him intellectually—he drew near and cared for him. What does this teach us about how people often come to faith?
- How can we make sure our conversations about Jesus feel more like walking with someone rather than arguing with them?

PRAY

Take a few minutes to hear prayer requests from your group, then pray over them.