

## WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR BELIEFS?

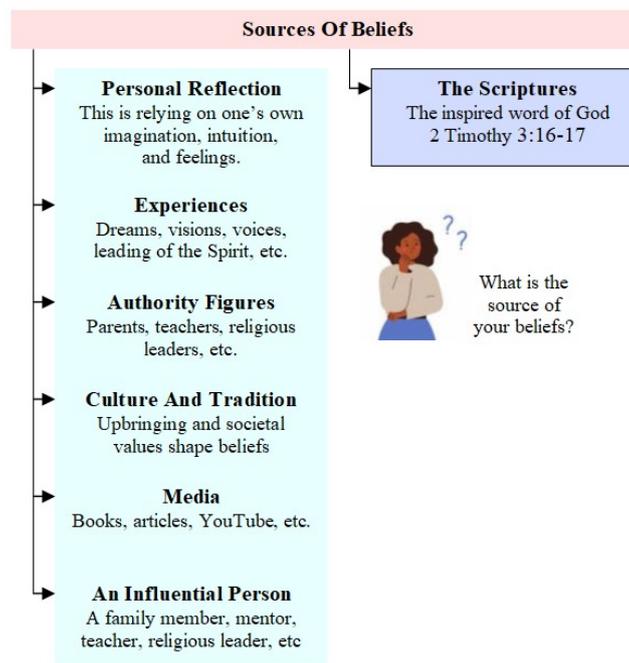
### Introduction:

#### The Hidden Tapestry Of Our Beliefs

1. Have you ever stopped to consider the foundation of your beliefs? We all hold certain things to be true, but from where do those beliefs come? This lesson will explore the surprising variety of sources that shape our beliefs, often in ways we might not even realize.
2. We will begin by examining some of the common wellsprings of belief, then delve into how people react when those sources are questioned. Finally, we will discuss the importance of critically examining the origins of what we hold true. By understanding the landscape of our own beliefs, we can embark on a journey of personal growth and deeper understanding.
3. Here is what we will cover:
  - a. Unveiling the sources of our beliefs.
  - b. Exploring reactions to examining belief sources.
  - c. The importance of examining your belief system.
  - d. Practical tools for strengthening your beliefs.
4. This lesson is designed to be an open and honest exploration. So, grab your thinking cap and get ready to delve into the fascinating world of from where our beliefs truly come!

### Body:

1. In my experience, whenever I ask someone, “What is the source of your beliefs?” they often reply with a confident “The Bible!” or “Studying the scriptures!” However, as the conversation progresses, it often becomes apparent that this might not be entirely accurate!
2. From where do our beliefs come? This lesson explores the surprising variety of sources that shape our beliefs, often in ways we might not even realize. Here are some of the major categories:



3. How do people react when the source of their beliefs is questioned? Let us explore some common responses I have encountered:
  - ▶ **Uncertainty:** Many people do not have a clear answer about the source of their beliefs. They might hold beliefs formed from various experiences and influences without consciously analyzing them.
  - ▶ **Denial:** Some people strongly reject the idea that their beliefs come from anything other than the scriptures. They feel defensive and have viewed my questioning as an attack on their identity or values.
  - ▶ **Defense:** Others have been willing to discuss it but become defensive as the conversation progresses. They often try to justify their beliefs or downplay the influence of outside sources.
  - ▶ **Openness:** Some people have been curious and open to exploring the origins of their beliefs. They see it as an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their worldview.
4. Undergoing a critical examination of one's beliefs requires a willingness to be open, honest, and humble. However, the most important quality is a genuine desire for truth. This desire is the driving force behind introspection and self-evaluation (2 Corinthians 13:5).
5. Are there any indicators that a person's beliefs might originate from sources beyond scripture? Here are some examples to consider:
  - a. Indicators:
    - ▶ **Not Found In Scripture:** Unable to show from the scriptures where a belief or doctrine can be found. Can offer no proof (e.g., notes) that a scriptural study has been made.
    - ▶ **Personal Reflection:** "I have been doing a lot of thinking lately, and I have come to the conclusion that..." These phrases might suggest a focus on personal reasoning or external sources rather than a scriptural basis for beliefs.
    - ▶ **Experiences:** "God spoke to me...", "I had a dream...". Such phrases strongly indicate beliefs formed outside of scripture.
    - ▶ **Media:** "I have been doing a lot of research lately, and..." (which normally means, "I have been reading articles and books, and watching YouTube videos). This suggests a dependence on non-scriptural sources for beliefs.
    - ▶ **An Influential Person:** "I spoke to my pastor and he says...", "Joe has been teaching for years that...". This suggests a dependence on a person as the source of one's beliefs.
  - b. The use of these phrases might indicate a dependence on sources outside of the scriptures for beliefs and doctrines.
  - c. The phrases discussed above can serve as indicators during conversations that someone's beliefs might be influenced by sources beyond scripture. Someone who asks "What is the source of your beliefs?" might have noticed these phrases in your own speech or in the speech of others they quote.
6. Four learning objectives:
  - ☞ **Self-Reflection:** This lesson encourages you to examine the foundation of your beliefs. Ask yourself: "What truly shapes my beliefs? Are they based on scripture, or are there other influences?"
  - ☞ **Scriptural Exploration:** We will explore the importance of studying the scriptures to ensure your beliefs align with their teachings. Regular reading and in-depth study are essential for a strong foundation in scripture.
  - ☞ **Supporting Your Beliefs:** When someone asks about the source of your beliefs, be prepared to explain them with confidence. The best way to do this is to demonstrate scriptural backing for your convictions. Having notes or references readily available can be helpful.
  - ☞ **Openness To Discussion:** The question "What is the source of your beliefs?" is an opportunity for open and honest dialogue. Embrace the opportunity to learn and grow in your understanding.

## **Conclusion:**

### **The Power Of Knowing Your Why**

1. Throughout this lesson, we have explored the diverse tapestry of influences that weave together to form our beliefs. We discovered that our internal compass (intuition, emotions, and self-reflection), external sources (media, influential individuals, and culture), and even personal experiences all play a role in shaping what we hold true.
2. We also examined the spectrum of reactions people might have when their beliefs are questioned. While some may be defensive or unsure, others might embrace the opportunity for self-discovery. Ultimately, the goal is to approach this process with openness and a genuine desire for truth.
3. The key takeaways are:
  - ▶ Question the source: Do not take your beliefs for granted. Examine their origin and be open to the possibility of different perspectives.
  - ▶ Become a scripture scholar: Diligently study the scriptures to ensure your beliefs align with its teachings.
  - ▶ Be prepared to defend your beliefs: If challenged, use scripture as your primary source of evidence.
  - ▶ Embrace the journey: Examining your beliefs is an ongoing quest for knowledge and personal growth.
4. By embarking on this journey of self-discovery, you strengthen your convictions and gain a deeper understanding of yourself and the world around you.

The power of knowing “why” you believe what you believe is a powerful tool for navigating life's complexities. So, keep questioning, keep exploring, and keep growing!

## **Applications:**

### **1: Personal Reflection:**

**Self-Inventory:** Take some time for introspection. Consider the questions raised in the lesson: What are the core beliefs you hold? Where do you think these beliefs originated? Did they come primarily from scripture, or were there other influences?

**Analyze Your Sources:** Reflect on the different categories of belief sources mentioned in the lesson (internal compass, external influences, experiences). Can you identify specific examples of how each category has shaped your beliefs?

**Openness To Growth:** The lesson highlights the importance of a genuine desire for truth. Are you open to the possibility that your beliefs might have been influenced by sources beyond scripture? If so, are you willing to explore these influences further?

### **2: Group Discussion:**

**Choose A Safe Space:** Find someone who is comfortable engaging in open and honest discussions about beliefs.

**Facilitate The Discussion:** Use the lesson as a starting point for a conversation. Encourage the other person to share their own experiences and perspectives on the source of beliefs. Discuss the different reactions people might have when their beliefs are questioned.

**Focus On Understanding:** The goal of the discussion is not to debate or challenge anyone's beliefs, but rather to promote understanding and open-mindedness.

### **3: Critical Thinking In Daily Life**

**Be Mindful of Language:** Pay attention to the language you use when discussing your beliefs. Do you find yourself using any of the phrases mentioned in the lesson that might indicate a dependence on non-scriptural sources?

**Evaluate Information Sources:** When encountering new information, be critical about its source. Is it based on scripture, personal experience, or some other source? Evaluate the credibility of the source before accepting the information as truth.

**Seek Diverse Perspectives:** Do not limit yourself to information that confirms your existing beliefs. Actively seek out different perspectives, even if they challenge your own views. This will help you develop a more well-rounded understanding of complex issues.

Remember, the goal of this lesson is not to promote a particular belief system, but rather to encourage critical thinking and self-reflection. By understanding the sources of your beliefs, you can make more informed decisions and navigate the world with greater confidence.

**Questions:**

1. What is the main idea explored in the lesson “What Is The Source Of Your Beliefs?”
2. What are some of the categories of belief sources mentioned in the lesson?
3. How might the lesson be helpful for someone who says their beliefs are based solely on scripture?
4. What are some common reactions people might have when their beliefs are challenged?
5. According to the lesson, what is the most important quality for examining your beliefs?
6. What are some phrases that might indicate a dependence on non-scriptural sources for beliefs?
7. What are some of the learning objectives outlined in the lesson?
8. What is the key takeaway regarding the source of beliefs?
9. How can the lesson be applied to group discussions?
10. How can the concepts in the lesson be used in daily life?

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## Questions & Answers

1. What is the main idea explored in the lesson “What Is The Source Of Your Beliefs?”

Answer: The lesson explores the various sources that shape our beliefs, often in ways we might not even realize, and emphasizes the importance of critically examining the foundation of our beliefs.

2. What are some of the categories of belief sources mentioned in the lesson?

Answer: The lesson mentions three main categories: internal compass (intuition, emotions, self-reflection), external influences (media, influential individuals, culture), and personal experiences.

3. How might the lesson be helpful for someone who says their beliefs are based solely on scripture?

Answer: The lesson can encourage them to consider the possibility of unconscious influences from other sources. It can also highlight the importance of studying scripture to ensure a deep understanding of its teachings.

4. What are some common reactions people might have when their beliefs are challenged?

Answer: The lesson discusses a range of reactions, including uncertainty, denial, defensiveness, and openness.

5. According to the lesson, what is the most important quality for examining your beliefs?

Answer: The lesson emphasizes a genuine desire for truth as the driving force behind introspection and self-evaluation.

6. What are some phrases that might indicate a dependence on non-scriptural sources for beliefs?

Answer: The lesson mentions phrases like “I have been doing a lot of thinking lately...” (personal reasoning), “God spoke to me...” (personal experiences), or relying solely on the teachings of others (“Pastor Jones teaches that...”).

7. What are some of the learning objectives outlined in the lesson?

Answer: The lesson encourages self-reflection, scriptural exploration, being prepared to support your beliefs with scripture, and openness to discussions about the source of beliefs.

8. What is the key takeaway regarding the source of beliefs?

Answer: Do not take your beliefs for granted. Be open to questioning their origin and considering different perspectives.

9. How can the lesson be applied to group discussions?

Answer: The lesson can be a starting point for open and honest conversations about the source of beliefs within a safe and respectful setting. The focus should be on understanding each one another’s perspectives rather than debate.

10. How can the concepts in the lesson be used in daily life?

Answer: By being mindful of the language you use when discussing beliefs, critically evaluating information sources, and seeking diverse perspectives, you can develop a more well-rounded understanding of the world and your place in it.