

Spoken Theology, Lived Theology, and the Gap of Unbelief

We all believe something. We are constantly interpreting our circumstances because God has wired us to search for meaning in all of life. If we find our hearts drifting away from God, it's not because we've stopped believing. It's because we've stopped believing the truth and we've started believing a lie. Left long enough, that struggle in our heart – and the fruit it bears in our life – will expose a chasm between our “spoken theology” (what we say we believe) and our lived theology (the way we live). We call this chasm “the gap of unbelief.”

As a way of taking care and examining your heart (see Hebrews 3:12), consider the following exercise. Complete these sentences to help uncover the gaps of unbelief in your heart.

I BELIEVE: (insert a truth about God here)

BUT SO OFTEN I LIVE LIKE: (what's really going on in my heart?)

THIS EXPOSES A LACK OF FAITH IN: (a truth about God, a certain aspect of God's character, a promise of God, a truth about yourself as defined by God, etc.)

BIBLE VERSES THAT AFFIRM THIS TRUTH: _____

Here's an example:

I BELIEVE: that God is in complete control of every circumstance I experience, no matter how big or small (*this is my “spoken theology”*)

BUT SO OFTEN I LIVE LIKE: it's up to me to fix things that go wrong in my life (*this is my “lived theology”*)

THIS EXPOSES A LACK OF FAITH IN: the loving providence of God over my life (*this is my “gap of unbelief”*)

BIBLE VERSES THAT AFFIRM THIS TRUTH: Romans 8:28: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

Special Note: When God exposes these gaps of unbelief in your heart, this is an extraordinary gift of his grace to you. This is evidence not that God is against you, but rather that God is for you (Romans 8:31). This is God calling to you amid your struggle to true repentance and to believe that he really is all you need.