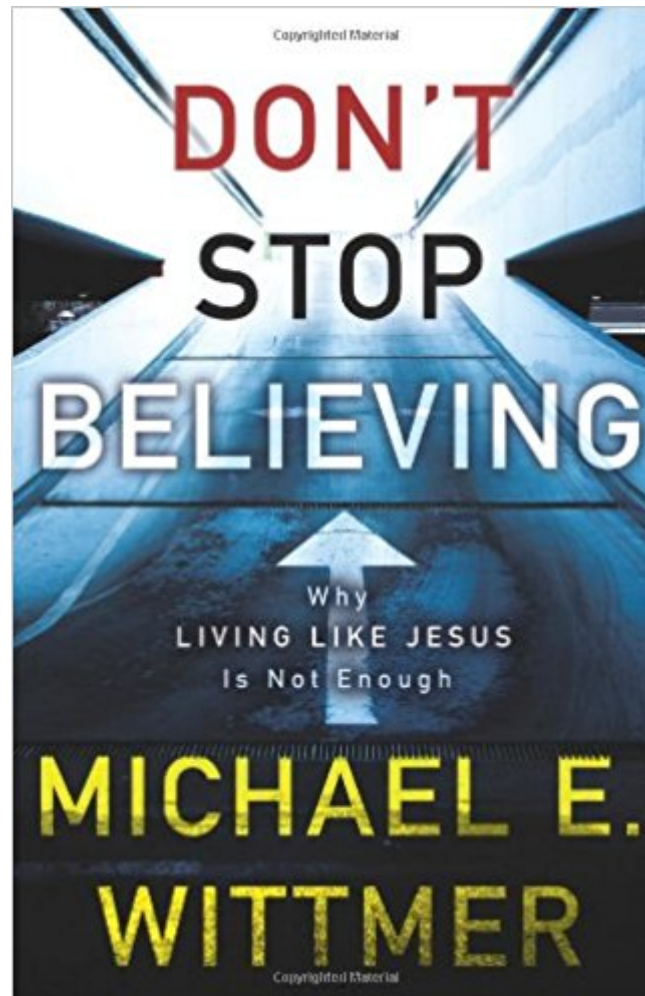




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Don't Stop Believing: Why Living Like Jesus Is Not Enough



Synopsis

Must you believe something to be saved? Does the kingdom of God include non-Christians? Is hell for real and forever? These are big questions. Hard questions. Questions that divide Christians along conservative and liberal lines. Conservatives love their beliefs and liberals believe in their love. Each pushes the other to opposite extremes. Fundamentalists imply that it doesn't matter how we live as long as we believe in Jesus, while some Emergent Christians respond that it doesn't matter what we believe as long as we live like him. Theologian Michael Wittmer calls both sides out of bounds and crafts a third way that retains the insights of each. He examines ten key questions that confront contemporary Christians and shows why both right belief and right practice are necessary for authentic Christianity. Here is an urgent reminder that best practices can only arise from true beliefs. Genuine Christians never stop serving because they never stop loving, and they never stop loving because they never stop believing.

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Customer Reviews

Must you believe something to be saved? Does the kingdom of God include non-Christians? Is hell for real and forever? These are big questions. Hard questions. Questions that divide Christians along conservative and liberal lines. Conservatives love their beliefs and liberals believe in their love. Each pushes the other to opposite extremes. Fundamentalists imply that it doesn't matter how we live as long as we believe in Jesus, while some Emergent Christians respond that it doesn't matter what we believe as long as we live like him. Theologian Michael Wittmer calls both sides out

of bounds and crafts a third way that retains the insights of each. He examines ten key questions that confront contemporary Christians and shows why both right belief and right practice are necessary for authentic Christianity. Here is an urgent reminder that best practices can only arise from true beliefs. Genuine Christians never stop serving because they never stop loving, and they never stop loving because they never stop believing.

Michael Wittmer is currently Professor of Systematic Theology at GRTS in Grand Rapids, MI. He is the author of *Heaven Is a Place on Earth*, *Don't Stop Believing*, *The Last Enemy*, and *Despite Doubt*. He and his wife, Julie, live in Grand Rapids, Michigan with their three children: Avery, Landon, and Alayna.

Don't Stop Believing is a rare blend of academic insight and lively conversation. The text flows easily from humorous examples to meaty theological and philosophical discussions to impactful applications. Mike Wittmer really pours himself into the writing, making you feel at times as though you are sitting in his living room, eating pizza and discussing what it means to have faith in 21st century America. The true genius of *Don't Stop Believing* - which I missed the first couple of times I read this book - is the way in which each chapter flows out of and builds upon the previous chapter. Not only does Mike highlight the interdependence of belief and action, he also demonstrates the inter-relatedness of one's complete system of belief. As one reads through DSB it becomes clear that one's faith - whatever it may be - is complicated and dynamic and provides the foundational framework for how one interacts with the world. Whether or not you agree with Mike's Christian theology is actually irrelevant to the challenge inherent to the basic argument of the book: beliefs always precede and inform one's actions; what, then, are the beliefs that drive your actions? Mike does provide an effective apologetic for the coherence and consistency of the orthodox Christian faith, but his search for a "third way" of relating beliefs and actions reaches beyond the "liberal" and "conservative" caricatures to invite each reader to examine his or her own beliefs and engage in a process of serious self-reflection. After several reads, and engaging with Mike via his blog ([...]) I have come to the conclusion that this book is less about Mike defending his own Reformed theology and more about challenging the reader to critique his or her own presuppositions, a difficult and often-ignored component of spiritual and personal growth. DSB has riches far beyond what can be gleaned in one or two readings. I think it has depths even beyond what Mike intended, if one is willing to chew on the material carefully and repeatedly. DSB is not an attempt at indoctrination; it is an attempt to help the reader grow as an individual and develop a deeper, more personal

relationship with God.

Wittmer is an excellent writer. His ideas are clearly and concisely communicated, and his paragraphs and chapters progress logically. *Don't Stop Believing* specifically is a timely reminder to today's Church and a great read.

Much better than I was expecting, one of the few books that really do speak to liberals and conservatives with equal admonishment and praise.

Highly recommend! Great ship time!

I recomend this book and the service. the book was in great condition came in good time and had no problems. It ws a good transaction.

This book covers not only why faith (right beliefs/sound doctrine) is a central part of true biblical Christianity, but also seeks to clarify some of those core beliefs. Various chapters briefly address such issues as epistemology (how can we know truth?), the substitutionary atonement, the existence of eternal suffering, etc. I think that, in general, Dr. Wittmer expounds these doctrines with great clarity and Scriptural integrity. Dr. Wittmer phrases many of his comments as an attempt to find a middle path between those he refers to as "post-modern innovators" (i.e. the more anti-doctrine/dogma wing of the emergent-church as typified by Brian MacLaren, Rob Bell, etc.) and conservative churches that have become reactionary and isolationist. I appreciate the call to conservative churches to not overreact to liberal theology by neglecting good works, social justice, and Christ-like love for all people (cf. James 1:27, Galatians 6:10). However, the way he phrased much of this sounded to me more like an attempt to compromise with people whose doctrine is clearly heretical rather than a warning to those who are doctrinally sound to not over-correct and abandon the Scriptural things that the "post modern innovators" are doing well (sometimes better than the average conservative church) merely because some over-emphasizing them to the exclusion of the Gospel. Overall: an edifying thought-provoking book, but I felt like the author was a bit too weak in some of his phrasing. He avoided being insulting (which is great!), but I was expecting a bit more emphasis on how dangerous wrong belief is (like you see in biblical books such as Jude, Galatians, or the pastoral epistles).

This book does not seriously analyze any of the issues that it purports to address. Wittmer's book has chapter titles like "Is it possible to know anything?" "Is the Bible God's True Word?" With these titles, I expected serious scholarly analysis. Instead of rigorous analysis, Wittmer has the following facetious conclusions:(1) "As with God's existence, I cannot prove that the Bible is God's Word, but then again I do not have to. John Calvin wrote that Scripture is self authenticating, by which he meant that 'it carries with itself its own credibility in order to be received without contradiction, and is not submitted to proof or arguments'.... Just as snow is obviously white and sugar is undisputably sweet, so those who read the Scripture should recognize that it is the Word of God."(2) "Is my foundational belief in God a desperate stab in the dark? No, for I do not merely wish that God exists. I know it. AND SO DOES EVERYONE ELSE. Despite the arguments that skeptics raise about God's existence, the apostle Paul declares in Romans 1:18-20 that everyone knows there is a God, and any who claim ignorance "are without excuse." (emphasis supplied)(3) "My Christian structure of knowledge from the last chapter is an example of weak foundationalism, for although I cannot prove my belief in God or prove that Scripture is God's Word, I am permitted to start there."These are just a sampling of the gems that Wittmer has to offer. If this kind of circular nonsensical reasoning makes sense to you, buy this book. If you are looking for serious, scholarly, even-handed treatment of the issues, then look elsewhere.

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