

Do you believe that things exist that you cannot see?

1. Wind
2. Magnetism
3. Carbon monoxide
4. Cell phone signal
5. Germs

The story is told of a missionary whose children were called in for dinner, their mother said, "Be sure to wash your hands."

The little boy scowled and said, "Germs and Jesus. Germs and Jesus. That's all I hear, and I've never seen either one of them."

Believing in what you cannot see is what we call a "leap of faith."

In *World* magazine, interviewer Larry King said:

I can't make that leap that a lot of people around me have made into belief that there's some judge somewhere. I have a lot of respect for true people of faith.... I've done so many interviews on it. I've always searched. But as someone said, "Did you ever sit down and read the Bible cover to cover?" The answer's no, because I don't know who wrote it. I'm too in my head to be into faith. Faith is a wonderful thing. I envy people who have it. I just can't make the leap.

Larry King is not alone in his refusal to leap. Many hold these same thoughts.

Even the disciples struggled to believe. The most famous doubter of all time is a Disciple that walked with Jesus. The Disciple Thomas.

Jesus had appeared to the rest of the disciples but Thomas wasn't there. So when they told him about it, he said "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Funny thing though, about our stubbornness, is that even though we give up on God, God never gives up on us.

A minister was in Italy, and there he saw the grave of a man who had died centuries before who was an unbeliever and completely against Christianity, but a little afraid of it too. So the man had a huge stone slab put over his grave so he would not have to be raised from the dead in case there is a resurrection from the dead. He had inscriptions put all over the slab saying, "I do not want to be raised from the dead. I don't believe in it." Evidently, when he was buried, an acorn must have fallen into the grave. So a hundred years later the acorn had grown up through the grave and split that slab. It was now a tall towering oak tree.

God does not give up on us, even when we have a huge stone slab erected.

26 A week later Jesus' disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." **27** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."

I want you to notice a few things here:

1. Jesus did not reject Thomas because of his doubt. He was compassionate to guide him in his “unbelief”.
2. The relationship Thomas gained with Jesus here is what ultimately makes him one of the most fervent believers.
3. Thomas never actually places his fingers into the wounds of Jesus’ hands and side. Once Jesus had revealed himself to Thomas, the disciple no longer placed any demands before his faith; instead, his faith compelled him to drop all his objections and immediately profess Jesus as Savior and Lord. It was not because his demands had been met that Thomas decided that he was willing to believe. Instead, Christ’s personal self-disclosure overwhelmed the unbelief and drew Thomas to Christ as a servant and worshiper.

Do you have **conditions and demands**—things that you must see—before you will consider believing in and following Jesus?

Or maybe it’s not proof you are looking for. Maybe it’s what believing would require from you.

German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, (1928—2014)

The evidence for Jesus’ resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it

except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live.

The cost of your belief is to live your life differently.

A skeptical friend once asked pastor and author William Willimon, "Why do you need a supernaturally resurrected body of Jesus to make your faith work?"

Willimon replied:

I don't *need* a resurrected Jesus. Come to think of it, I'm not sure I *want* a resurrected Jesus. In fact, [in one sense] a resurrected Jesus is a real nuisance for me, personally. I've got a good life, I've figured out how to work the world, on the whole, to the advantage of me and my friends and family. My health is good, and everybody close to me is doing fine. I have the illusion that I'm in control, that I'm making a significant contribution to help Jesus ... on my own. No, I don't *need* a bodily resurrected Jesus. In fact, [once I truly embrace the resurrection of Jesus], my life would become much more difficult.

Source: William Willimon, The Collected Sermons of William Willimon (John Knox Press, 2010),

You see, the reason the world doesn't want to believe is so they can make their own rules.

Pick and choose their own morals.

Keep all that they have acquired to themselves.

Live up life without sacrifice.

Without service to others.

Without loving their enemies.

The reason the world doesn't want to believe is because it is easier than belief.

But we all know from experience that taking the easy road, has a cost further down the road.

Faith requires more than disbelief. You can easily dismiss things, but to believe that there is more to life than what you see takes work. Giving up when you face an obstacle in life is easy, but believing there is hope despite the odds takes work.

John 20:29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who **have not seen** and yet have come to believe."

Those who have to work on their faith, mull over it, chew on it and through that process it seeps into your fibers to become personal. As apposed to belief handed to you.

It allows someone to face concrete obstacles and odds, without losing hope in the possible.

Someone goes to the doctor and learns they have a terminal prognosis.

They can choose to believe in the odds or in a God who faces down the odds with the miraculous.

The need for proof is to deny the possibility of hope.

You know, the funny thing about only believing what you see, is that you can miss the...

a woman who looked out of her window and saw her German shepherd shaking the life out of a neighbor's rabbit. Her family did not get along well with these neighbors, so this was going to be like a disaster.

She grabbed a broom, pummeled the dog until it dropped the now extremely dead rabbit out of its mouth. She panicked. She did not know what else to do. She grabbed the rabbit, took it inside, gave it a bath, blow dried it to its original fluffiness, combed it until that rabbit was looking good, snuck into the neighbor's yard, and propped the rabbit back up in its cage. An hour later she heard screams coming from next door. She asked her neighbor, "What's going on?" "Our rabbit! Our rabbit!" her neighbor cried. "He died two weeks ago. We buried him, and now he's back!"

You can't always believe what you see.

1. You can't see the Wind, but you can see the result of it.
2. You can't see Magnetism, but you can see the result of it.
3. You can't see Carbon monoxide, but you can see the result of it.
4. You can't see Cell phone signal, but you can see the result of it.
5. You can't see Germs, but you can see the result of it.
6. You don't get the chance to see the resurrection, but you can see the result of it.

Lives have been transformed.

Sicknesses have been healed.

Unexplained miracles happen every single day.

And believers walk into the mire of life with confidence, resilience and peace, and walk out the other side even stronger.

Our lives are proof enough

Jesus “breathed on the disciples and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Jesus says, you have the power to change the world and the way they see. Change it!

John 20:19–31 (NRSV) — 19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. **21** Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." **22** When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." **26** A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." **27** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." **28** Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** **Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."** **30** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. **31** But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.