

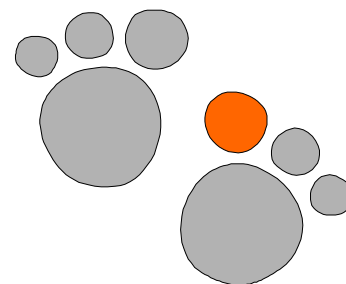
"Believe" in the Greek (πιστεω "pisteuo") is no more complicated than Puppiness; it is based on the trust-worthiness of God and his delight in our being related to Him. "Believe" has a precise focus in the Bible; it's object is God himself manifested in the indwelling person of Jesus Christ.

God's heart is that we be related to Him, that we come to him, present ourselves to Him, to say to Him "OK, I'm available.love me". We need to learn to snuggle down into His presence and actively give him permission to love us; seek Him in prayer and ask Him to teach you the simple skill of Puppiness.

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1213 Salem Street  
North Andover, MA 01845  
978 685-7844  
[larsonwillis@comcast.net](mailto:larsonwillis@comcast.net)

# *Puppy* *ness*



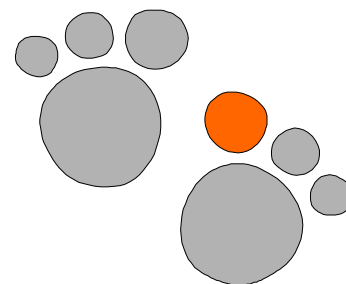
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## Puppiness

Question: Do you believe? Do you really, really believe?

Answer: Yes, I believe. I am a believer.

Question: What do you believe?

Answer: Well... I believe in God and in Jesus Christ. I believe Jesus was a real historic person and lived 2000 years ago. I believe in heaven and hell.

Question: Excellent, but do you believe the really difficult things? - Do you believe that Jesus is God come in the flesh?

Answer: Yes

Question: Well then, do you believe in the virgin birth?

Answer: Well, I'm not sure about that, but I do believe...etc.

This hypothetical exchange is familiar to most Christians, a typical discussion about believing. Many Christians are of the opinion that believing is about doctrine; that the subject of belief is a doctrinal statement consisting of a long litany of truths; and within that list of truths are certain critical core doctrines which determine your stature as a "true believer", a Christian.

In the New Testament "Believe" (πιστεω "pisteuo") is a very important word, used more than 90 times in the Gospel of John alone! But in the New Testament, the object of the verb "pisteuo" is a person, not a doctrine. The sense of the word in the Greek is reliance upon... not mere credence. Here "Believe" points to a trusting relationship with a person - Jesus Christ, rather than an just an understanding about something or an agreement about something.

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I have a small puppy named Obadiah, a golden-white cockapoo. My puppy doesn't know anything about me; he doesn't know any of my history, who I am, what I have done, where I came from, what I do for a living, where I go to church, who my parents are, how I voted in the last elections... etc. In fact my puppy doesn't know any "doctrine" about me. But he has an attitude about me. Whenever we are in the same room, I am the center of his attention - his eyes follow me wherever I go.. He follows me from



room to room just to be in my presence. When I sit down in my chair he comes to me, sits at my feet and begs to be allowed up onto my lap. When given permission he leaps up onto my lap and actively presents himself for my attention. Then, after I rub him behind the ears and speak to

him softly, assuring him that I really care about him, he gives a big sigh and then settles down on my lap, just resting there. He is perfectly content to just rest in my presence. The message is clear, "OK, I'm available... love me".

This attitude is not based on a litany of doctrine or a list of principles, but on a relationship, on trust. He knows that I am trustworthy, that I care for him and enjoy having a relationship with him. My puppy actively seeks out that relationship and actively presents himself to be loved. He makes himself available for that relationship. This is what I call "Puppiness".

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