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# MICHAEL TODD



IT'S ONLY CRAZY UNTIL IT HAPPENS

STUDY GUIDE | FIVE SESSIONS



#### Crasp Jaith Study Guide

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# INTRODUCTION

"That's crazy!" "Don't be crazy." "You're crazy."

I'm sure we've all made statements like these in the past. Most of the time, we're not implying the person we're talking with is *actually* crazy. (Emphasis on "most.") Rather, we use the word to show we're feeling a bit uncomfortable about the situation or the topic of discussion. We're concerned the person we're addressing has stepped too far away from what we would consider *normal*, and we want them to come back a little closer to reality.

Well, buckle up, because it's actually my hope that this study will make you feel a little uncomfortable—or maybe even a *lot* uncomfortable. I'm going to ask you to forget what you've always thought about spiritual reality. And I'm definitely going to push you to stay far away from what many Christians believe to be *normal* when it comes to matters of faith.

I'm going to ask you to get a little crazy.

Over the course of this study, you and I are going to work together to wrap our minds around a way of thinking and doing that I call Crazy Jaith. This is the kind of faith we see demonstrated on every page of our Bibles. The kind of faith that gets a person to walk on the water. The kind of faith that places the fate of an army into the palm of an old man's hand. The kind of faith that raises the dead.

That's Crazy Faith.

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Are you feeling a little nervous? Even a little freaked out? Trust me, that's good. After all, when you think about it, when has anyone accomplished anything worthwhile when they were consistently comfortable and complacent in their normal, non-crazy lives?

You and I want something bigger. We want the abundant life that Jesus promised to all who follow him. We want to experience meaning, purpose, fulfillment, and joy.

Are you ready to grab those dreams? Good. Let's get a little crazy.

- Michael Todd

# **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

The Crasy faith video study is designed to be experienced both in group settings (such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or small group gatherings) as well as in your individual study time. Each session, which covers material from two chapters in the book, begins with an introduction, two questions to inspire thought about the topic, and brief passages from the Bible. You will then watch a video featuring Michael Todd, which is available via streaming and can be accessed using the instructions on the inside front cover.

If you are doing this study with a group, you will be prompted to engage in targeted discussions and close with a time of personal reflection and prayer. Each person in the group should have his or her own copy of this study guide, and you are also encouraged to have a copy of the Cray faith book, as reading it alongside the curriculum will provide you with deeper insights. The "For Next Session" section details the chapters in the book that correspond to the material you will be discussing during your next group time.

To get the most out of your group experience, keep the following points in mind:

 The real growth in this study will happen during your small-group time. This is where you will process the teaching content of the session, ask questions, and learn from others as you hear what God is doing in their lives. For this reason, be fully committed to the group and attend each session so you can build trust and rapport with the other members. Your decision to go "all in" will increase your chances of getting more out of this study.

- 2. The goal of your small group is to serve as a place where people can share, learn about God, and build intimacy and friendship. Seek to make your group a safe place, which means being honest about your thoughts and feelings and listening to everyone else's opinion. (If you are a group leader, there are additional instructions in the back for leading a productive discussion group.)
- 3. Resist the temptation to fix a problem someone might be having or correct his or her theology. Also, keep everything your group shares confidential. This will foster a rewarding sense of community in your group and create a place where people can heal, be challenged, and grow spiritually.

Following your group time, you can reflect on the material that you've covered by engaging in the between-sessions activities. For each session, you may wish to complete the personal study all in one sitting or spread it out over a few days. If you are unable to start or finish your between-sessions personal study, you are still welcome to attend the group time. You'll never be excluded from the group, even if you don't have your "homework" done.

#### How to Use This Guide

Remember, the videos, discussion questions, and activities are simply meant to kick-start your imagination. They will help you to be open to what God wants you to hear and how he wants you to apply it. As you go through this study, listen to what he is saying to you and consider your own journey in light of what you learn about living in Crasy Jaith.

Sound good? Then let's get started!



(BABY FAITH AND MAYBE FAITH)

CHAPTER 2

Everything is possible for one who believes.

**MARK 9:23** 



#### WELCOME

As I write these words, scientists at NASA are working on a three-month plan to align eighteen different hexagonal mirrors that make up the James Webb Space Telescope. It's an ambitious project. In fact, it's the kind of project that many people would call crazy.

One of the things that makes the James Webb Space Telescope so impressive is its location. While the familiar Hubble Telescope takes pictures from orbit around our own planet, the James Webb Space Telescope is in orbit around the sun. In fact, it's out there doing its thing all by itself in deep space—more than a million miles away from the earth. Something else that sets the telescope apart is its heat shield. The telescope's delicate instruments are designed to pick up the smallest heat or infrared signature out in the farthest reaches of the universe. For that reason, it has to be kept incredibly cold . . . which is a problem because it is directly exposed to the rays of the sun.

So, scientists constructed a heat shield on the back of the telescope to block out that solar energy. As NASA has said, "The temperature difference between the hot and cold sides of the telescope is huge. You could almost boil water on the hot side, and you could freeze nitrogen on the cold side!" 1

Once it is fully operational, the telescope will be able to look pretty much anywhere in the vast expanse of space—including the dust-filled heart of nebulae where new exoplanets are forming. The telescope's highly specialized instruments will also be on the lookout for water and other signs of life currently hidden among distant solar systems. And the telescope might even be able to assist in dating the age of stars.<sup>2</sup>

Now, it's crazy to think about a group of scientists here on earth accessing such a complicated telescope from a million

#### Starting Out

miles away—and then using it to seek out answers to our biggest questions about space and life and what might exist in this universe other than ourselves. Yet it's happening. Right now. Right this moment.

But of course . . . it didn't happen *overnight*. The plans that led to the James Webb Telescope didn't materialize out of thin air. They were not the product of anyone's spontaneous idea. Rather, scientists took baby steps and set small goals to reach their larger crazy goals. They didn't always have the information they needed to guarantee their next step would lead to success. Sometimes, they had to take "maybe" steps.

We're going to take the same approach when it comes to learning about Cray faith. In this session, we're starting where the scientists did by exploring the important steps of baby faith and maybe faith. In other words, we're going to start small together before we go big.

#### SHARE

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to kick things off, discuss one of the following questions:

 When have you seen something happen in your life or reached a goal that at first you thought was too crazy to achieve?

- or -

 What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about the concept of faith?

## Crazy Jaith Study Guide

#### READ

Invite someone to read aloud the following passage. Listen for fresh insights as you hear the verses being read, and then discuss the questions that follow.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

HEBREWS II:I-3

How does this passage add to your understanding of what faith is and why it's important?

What are some ways that each of us demonstrate faith in our everyday lives?

#### Starting Out

#### WATCH

Watch the video segment for session one. (Play the DVD or see the instructions on the inside front cover on how to access the sessions through streaming.) As you and your group watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

God wants you to have **Crazy faith**—to not just be one who sits on the sidelines but who steps out in **Crazy faith**, against all odds, and does what may not make complete sense but will make a miracle.

The faith journey starts with baby faith. Now, most of us don't like to do anything small. But the truth is that baby faith is perhaps the most important step in starting your journey of faith.

Your imagination unlocked could start a Crasy Jaith journey that will change your family, your ideas, and who you are and how you impact others forever. Unlocking your imagination is the beginning of taking baby steps of faith.

## Crazy Jaith Study Guide

A mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds in the world. But God says with that little bit of small faith, you can have mountainmoving faith. So take a baby step and see what God can do with something small.

God is trying to get you out of your comfort zone into what could be called the "gray zone," "crazy zone," or—most commonly known to people of Crazy faith—the "grace zone." This journey you are on has some maybes attached to it. You will not always be 100% sure of what will happen if you make a move, but all you need is 51% to take that first step.

You don't have to understand everything to be obedient. You can step out in maybe faith. Faith begins where understanding ends. It may not always make sense to you, but it can always make a miracle.

#### Starting Out

Here is the faith formula: "intellectual agreement + trust = faith." Intellectual agreement is the knowledge that something is true as acquired through teaching and experience. Trust, however, is reliance on what you know is true. Unless you have both . . . you don't have faith.

Everything you want to see in your life can happen as you step out in baby faith and maybe faith. So don't stop now! Keep moving forward and allow God to show you who you can be. He knows exactly what is best for you, and he knows what you need.

#### DISCUSS

As you consider what you just watched, use the following questions to discuss these ideas, their basis in Scripture, and their application in your life with your group members.

1. Think about the statement, "It's only crazy until it happens." What are some examples from your life that support that claim? When has God called you to do something crazy?

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2.	Read Ephesians 3:14–21. What would you like God to accomplish in your life that is "immeasurably more" than you feel comfortable asking or imagining?
3.	Cray faith is "having thoughts and actions that lack reason but trusting fully in what you cannot explicitly prove." Who have you seen demonstrate that kind of faith?
4.	How would you summarize the concept of baby faith? What are some baby steps of faith that you have taken in the past few months?
5.	How would you summarize the concept of maybe faith? When are times you stepped out in faith even though you

were not 100% sure of the outcome?

## Starting Out

**6**■ Read Genesis 12:1–9. What are some ways that Abram demonstrated the different kinds of faith that we have discussed in this session?

#### RESPOND

Briefly review the outline for the video teaching and any notes you took. Write down your responses to these two questions: (1) What can I do this week that would show baby faith? (2) What can I do this week that would show maybe faith?

#### PRAY

One of the most important things you can do together in community is to pray for one another. This is not simply a closing prayer to end your group time but a portion of time to share prayer requests, review how God has answered past prayers, and actually pray for one another. So, as you close your time together, thank God for his gift of faith—for the gift of being able to act and trust him enough to move forward even when you don't have everything figured out. Express your desire to act in baby faith and maybe faith. Finally, use the space below to write down any specific prayer requests or praises that you have for the group.

Name	Request/Praise



# PERSONAL STUDY

You are on a journey toward living out Crazy Jaith in your everyday life. But you won't be making that journey in one leap! Growing in Crazy Jaith starts with baby faith and maybe faith. And a key part of that growth, regardless of where you are spiritually, involves studying God's Word. This is the goal of these personal studies—to help you explore what the Bible has to say about faith and how to apply it to your life. For this opening session, you may want to begin by reviewing chapters 1–3 in Crazy Jaith. As you work through this content, be sure to read the reflection questions and make a few notes in your guide about the experience. At the start of the next session, you will have a few minutes to share any insights you learned.

#### A PICTURE OF BABY FAITH

It must have been a truly chaotic scene. If you were to stumble across that moment in history, the first thing you would

notice is the boy—the demon-possessed boy. Picture him there on the ground, rolling around and frothing at the mouth. He has no control over his own body.

Right above the boy—with a terrified look on his face and hands stretched out in a gesture of protection—is his father. Surrounding those two are nine out of Jesus' disciples. Out beyond the disciples, always watching and waiting to see what will happen next, is the crowd.

You have to feel sorry for Jesus' disciples in that moment. It's clear they wanted to help. They had likely spent hours in a spiritual battle against the demonic forces at play. They had prayed. They had claimed the name of Jesus. They had laid their hands on the child and done everything they could think of to free him from the torment of the demon.

But it wasn't working. Not at all. And everyone around was watching them fail.

But then came the miracle. Jesus appeared on the scene, trailed by Peter and James and John. The disciples probably saw him making his way down the mountain, and you can just picture them gesturing frantically for him to come and help. "Lord! Master! Over here, please!"

Let's have Mark take it from here:

"You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

"'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

MARK 9:19-27

Notice that moment between Jesus and the boy's father. "But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." Jesus noticed that littlest of words: "if." It's a word filled with doubt, and Jesus was quick to call it out. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

Now back to the father. He's just been rebuked—corrected in public—by Jesus the Miracle Worker. He is the one whom some are saying could actually be the Messiah. But the father didn't pay that rebuke any mind. The only thing he cared about was his son rolling on the ground beneath him. "I do believe," the father cried out. "Help me overcome my unbelief!"

Now, *that's* baby faith. A little step in the right direction. The father was saying, "Lord, I don't have what it takes to heal my son, and I just admitted that I'm not sure if you can heal him either. But please help me remove that fear and doubt.

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Please help me get over this uncertainty. Please help me have the kind of faith that I need to see my boy become well."

Can you pray that kind of prayer today? "Lord, help me take a little step closer to you." If so, you already have everything you need to walk in baby faith as a follower of Christ.

In what ways do you relate to the father of the boy in this story?

What are some obstacles that consistently get in the way of your ability to believe that "everything is possible" with God?

What is one step that you could take to start to remove those obstacles?

#### A PICTURE OF MAYBE FAITH

There's no doubt that Joshua has to be considered one of the baddest dudes in the Bible. He was a skilled warrior. He was a born leader who had been mentored by Moses himself. And

he had just been appointed to direct the armies of God's chosen people, the Israelites.

Still, even Joshua had to be scratching his head when he looked up at the walls of Jericho. They were *huge* walls. Big enough to have rooms and apartments set into the stone. And yet, somehow, Joshua was supposed to knock them down. Now, he was probably thinking "somehow," though the instructions he had received from God were clear enough:

"See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in."

Joshua 6:2-5

Yes, the instructions were clear . . . but it wasn't clear how something as silly as marching around the city could knock down stone walls. You can almost see the other generals stopping by Joshua's tent for a little chat. "Hey, Josh, are you sure this is going to work?"

Here's the reality: Joshua *wasn't* sure. He *wasn't* certain. The Bible doesn't say that, but we can go out on a limb here and say there is no way that Joshua felt 100% convinced that gathering Israel's army and marching around the walls of Jericho was really and truly enough to cause those walls to fall. Maybe he felt 67% sure. Or maybe it was closer to 51%. Regardless, he

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had the courage to take God at his word, even though he didn't fully understand how God planned to come through and fulfill His promises.

In other words, Joshua operated in maybe faith. He obeyed God and led that march. Here's what happened next:

On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. . . ." When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city.

JOSHUA 6:15-17, 20

What stands out the most to you about Joshua's actions in this story? Why?

Try to put yourself in the shoes of one of Israel's soldiers. What emotions would you have experienced during that final march? What questions would have been in your mind?

What does this story reveal about the power of acting in maybe faith?

# WALKING IN Crazy Faith

Have you ever tried to return something at a store but then realized that you forgot the receipt? Most retailers won't take returns if you can't present a receipt as proof that you actually purchased an item. If you're attempting to return something expensive from a high-end department store and don't have a receipt, the experience can get even more awkward.

A receipt is evidence that a transaction has occurred. But when it comes to your faith, God accepts *invisible* evidence. Imagine for a moment that God is the owner of the highest-end department store in your city. You walk in to purchase a few items, and when you go to the counter to check out, the clerk tells you that someone has already paid for everything. All you have to do is show your receipt to leave the store with the items you've chosen.

What is that receipt? It's simply your faith—trusting in something that you cannot explicitly prove. Faith is your

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receipt . . . your invisible evidence that you can claim those items that God said you could take. You can't see it, but you can believe it. You can believe for things that seem impossible, things that are currently intangible, things that are so big that they seem immeasurable. God simply requires you to have faith for him to take care of the end result.

Faith is having confidence in who God is—and he responds to that kind of confidence! After all, what father doesn't like when his kids brag about him? Even a small amount of confidence opens the door for you to begin believing that God can and will do even greater good for you, in you, and through you.

The Bible states, "Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). When you come to understand the authority that has been given to you as a believer in Christ, you begin to pray with a level of faith that brings about assurance. Not *insurance*... but *assurance*. Insurance is something you pay into to restore assets or supplement income in the event that you experience a loss. It can't always restore everything that has been damaged, and it gives back to you only according to what you put into it.

Assurance, however, is a reliable truth outside yourself on which you can confidently depend. It's already purchased and is freely given to you.<sup>3</sup>

When have you had an experience that you were certain was connected to faith—a moment when you knew you were demonstrating faith?

# Starting Out

What reasons do you have for feeling confide	nt in God?	

When have you seen God respond to your level of confidence in him?

For Next Session: Write down any insights or questions you want to discuss at the next group meeting. In preparation for the next session, review chapters 4 and 5 in Cray faith.