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# EQUIP

**A Speaking God – Small Group Session One  
Week beginning 18th April**



# Is the Bible God's word

Welcome to the final term of Equip! Towards the end of this term we will be bringing all the strands together, but first we need to lay some final foundations. So far we have asked: what is the gospel; what is a Christian and what is the church. Now, in this final section, we are going to spend four weeks thinking about the nature of the Bible. Then we will finish this question thinking about what it looks like to live for Jesus. Do have a look at the separate timetable for the journey ahead.

Now asking 'what is the Bible?' might seem obvious and simple, but in our current culture the traditional answer is really questioned today. Is the Bible really God's word? Can we really trust it? Is it all true? Can we even understand it? Isn't it all a matter of interpretation... In church these are common questions. It is not that people outwardly reject God's word, but that we have questions about its nature, especially when it comes to the bits that seem so controversial.

Now it turns out that having confidence in the Bible being the true word of God is pretty important. After all, if we can not trust God's word it raises all sorts of fundamental questions about life and faith - can we really know what is true in our world, can we really know what it looks like to follow Jesus? Ultimately, if we can not trust the Bible as God's word, we will end up questioning even if we can know salvation or if we can even know God!

So, first, we are going to lay some foundations about the nature of the Bible and see if it is really God's word. Then, next week, we are going to need to ask some questions about if (and how) we can understand God's word ourselves. Then, finally, we are going to need to ask how we can listen to God's word in practice. So let's start with our first question... is the Bible really God's word?

In fact, why not begin your session by praying for the session now. Then imagine a non-Christian friend asked you the question, how can you be sure the Bible is God's word? If you could say two things to begin your answer, what two things might you want to say?

" All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

# God Speaks

## 1 The answer is Jesus

The place to start thinking about the nature of the Bible (as in many things) is with Jesus. What did Jesus think about the Bible? If he is the Son of God then his view should be definitive. First, let's have a look at what Jesus says about the Old Testament. Read Mark 7:11-13 and then John 10:34-36, Luke 24:25-27 & 44, then Matthew 5:17-18. What three or four main things does Jesus say about the Old Testament?

Jesus is familiar with the Old Testament, affirms it is God's word in its entirety and stands on its authority. But Jesus doesn't just confirm the Old Testament, he also guarantees the New Testament. Before his death, Jesus promises the apostles in the upper room that the Spirit will come to them. Read John 14:25-26 and 16:12-13. What is it that Jesus promises the Spirit will do in the lives of the apostles?

Ever wondered how the apostles could remember all that Jesus has done and said. Jesus guarantees the Spirit will come to the apostles and remind them of Jesus' words, speak what he hears from Jesus and lead them into truth. So when the apostles (including the 13th apostle Paul) write the New Testament, they know they are writing nothing less than Holy Scripture, the word of God. Read 2 Peter 3:16, 1 Corinthians 2:13 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13. How do the apostles understand their own words?

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## 2 Our writing God

Jesus is very clear, the Holy Scriptures (written by many people across hundreds of years) are all God's word, all about Jesus, all written for us! The implications of this truth is astounding. What does this suggest about the Bible's authority, perspicuity and inerrancy?

Now, you might be thinking, surely we have a problem here. We have just demonstrated that the Bible is God's word by looking at the Bible itself! Surely that is a circular argument? And you would be right. If you are interested in exploring that point - watch the additional video this week.

To draw things together, why not have a look at each of these final verses. 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Hebrews 4:12-13. Ephesians 6:17. How does each verse shape our response to the Bible?

Let's conclude. Summarise the big 'take home lesson' for you from this session. Then spend time praying these lessons for each other.

[We have seen that the Bible is God's word. Next session we will think about how we can 'interpret it' for ourselves.]

