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# EQUIP

**Time For Take Off – Small Group Session Four**  
**Week beginning 14th May**



# What do we really believe?

We are now staring to come towards the end of EQUIP. If you have made it this far, you will know EQUIP is about asking if we are willing to give the whole of our lives to Jesus' service. It is about working out what that means for each of us and being equipped to do it. Maybe the last few weeks have been the most significant weeks yet because we have seen one of the main ways God equips us - through His word.

His word comes to us with all His authority. We can understand His word by asking ourselves what did the Bible writers say, what did they mean and then how does that apply to us? Finally, we saw that this authoritative understandable word is God's means for "thoroughly equipping us for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16). If we want to be equipped then we need to be people of the word.

But here is the problem. We might have enjoyed the last few weeks, we might even believe these things are true. And yet.... Theologians sometimes speak the difference between 'espoused' theology and 'operant' theology. The first is what we say we believe or think we believe, the second is what our lives show we actually believe. We might espouse we believe one thing, but it is clear from the way we operate that we believe something completely different.

Can you think of some examples of where you might say you believe one thing, but where your life and lifestyle might suggest you maybe don't?

Now think about that in relation to God's word. We might say that God's word is authoritative, true, a gift to us so that we can be completely equipped - but can you think ways your life and lifestyle might suggest we maybe don't quite believe these truths?

Well this study is about turning belief into action. It is meant to be very practical. We are going to ask how we can 'turn' what we say we believe about God's word and start to live it out in our lives. So why not pray as a group and then we can begin.

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4:9

# Belief Into Action

## 1 Two Pictures

To help us take what we believe about God's word and actually live it out, we are going to look at two different pictures from the Bible. The first is a negative picture, a warning of what it looks like if we ignore God's word. The second is a positive picture, an image of the person who believes the truth about God's word. Spend some time with each picture. Ask yourselves (1) what does this picture tell me about what it looks like to put what I believe about God's word into practice? (2) What motivations are there in this picture to help me put my beliefs into practice? Don't race through the exercise. Take time to let the pictures sink in and take time to consider the implications.

First, the warning: read Matthew 7:21-29 and consider the questions above. This should take 7-8 mins.

Second, the encouragement: read Psalm 1 and consider the questions above. This should take 10-12 mins.

Now try to summarise your group reflections in no more than 20-30 words.

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## 2 Get Practical

Now it is time to paint a third picture. This time it is a picture of your life. Imagine what your life might look like if we really took to heart the truths we have seen (over the last few weeks) about the nature of God's word. You might like to draw an actual picture to summarise your thoughts or maybe generate a word cloud that captures your description.

Consider: How would your feelings be impacted? How would your time be impacted? How would it shape your personal time (if you were to have any)? How might it impact on family life or friendships? How would it impact church or small group life? How might it impact your character? How might it impact your desires?

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## 3 Prayer and Action

So what is going to change for you now. It would be the ultimate irony (and pretty foolish) to have thought through Matthew 7:26 and yet walk away from this session, back to life as normal. So for each person in the group - name one or two actions for you (that might be something to do, something you need to change your thinking on, something you need to think more about).

We can only change by the power of the Spirit through His word. So finally, finish by praying specifically for one another.

