

This midweek study will help students understand how God divinely influenced the human authors of the Bible so that what they wrote was the very Word of God. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Inspiration of Scripture

The inspiration of Scripture refers to God's direction of the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded His message to humankind in their original writings (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Occasionally, this inspiration was achieved through dictation, where God directly spoke to the original authors. Most of the time, however, this inspiration was achieved through the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit through the personalities of the authors so that their writings can be considered the very words of God.

1 God's Word was recorded by people inspired by the Holy Spirit. (2 Sam. 23:2; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-1:21; Rev. 2:1)

Read 2 Samuel 23:2.

- ▶ *David said that God was speaking through him. Sometimes we talk about God speaking through people today. What's the difference? What's the same?*

David's words were Scripture. (Note that the Spirit of God spoke through Old Testament saints, too.) Today when we say that God spoke through someone, we don't mean that what they said is on the level of Scripture, because the canon of Scripture is closed. We mean that what they said agrees with Scripture and was the right word at the right time.

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

- ▶ *What does this tell us about the whole Bible?*
That all of it is inspired and all of it is valuable, even the parts that are difficult to understand.
- ▶ *According to these verses, why are the Scriptures so valuable?*
The Scriptures point us to Jesus and they instruct us on how to live.

2 The actual words of the Bible are inspired, not just concepts or ideas. (Jer. 1:9; 26:2; Matt. 5:17-18)

Read Jeremiah 1:9.

- ▶ *What does that tell us about the nature of inspiration?*
That the writers of Scripture wrote down exactly what God wanted, down to the word. It wasn't just general concepts or ideas that God wanted them to communicate.

Read Matthew 5:17-18.

- ▶ *What's the significance of Jesus' statement?*
Again, that the Scriptures are accurate down to the word. He also pointed to their prophetic nature—they will be fulfilled.

3 God's Word is prophetic, transformative, and can only be understood with the Spirit's help. (Ps. 1; John 17:17; Acts 1:16; 1 Cor. 2:12-13)

Read John 17:17.

- ▶ *How is the truth of the Word connected to our growth in Christ?*
We are *sanctified*, or *made holy*, by the truth as it is in Jesus. He is the truth and the Word of God points to Him.

Read Acts 1:16.

- ▶ *How can this verse, and others like it, increase our confidence in the Word of God?*
It shows the prophetic nature of the Bible, which indicates that it truly is from God.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-13.

- ▶ *What do these verses tell us about the Spirit of God?*
They tell us that He enables us to understand spiritual truth. In other words, we can't understand the Bible on our own.

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *If you stop to think about it, the fact that the God of the universe has given us an inspired book telling us how to know Him and how to live is truly remarkable. Yet, we so often take the Bible for granted. It is so easily accessible to us. Most of us can even pull it up on our phone. As we conclude this study it would be good to remind ourselves what a gift we have in the Bible. The psalmist wrote: "Instruction from Your lips is better for me than thousands of gold and silver pieces" (Ps. 119:72). That's how valuable the Word of God ought to be to us.*