

This midweek study will explore what it means for Scripture to be inspired by 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 spoke directly 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 used human authors and written words to relay His divine revelation (2 Tim. 3:16).

- ▶ *If you could use any means of communication you wanted, what would you choose? Why?*
- ▶ *When have you thought God was speaking to you? How did you know? How did you respond?*

Read 2 Timothy 3:16.

- ▶ *According to this text, how has God spoken to us? What are the Scriptures good for?*
- ▶ *In other words, is there anything the Scriptures aren't good for?*
- ▶ *What other ways could God have chosen to reveal Himself to us definitively?*
- ▶ *How do other ways God might communicate with us (circumstances, signs, counsel) compare to the Bible itself?*
- ▶ *If God has spoken definitively through the words of human authors in the Bible, what are some implications for us, especially in Bible study?*

2 God worked in and through the natural personality and vocabulary of these writers to say exactly what He wanted said exactly how He wanted it said (1 John 4:6; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 1:21).

Option: Find a performance of a beautiful piece of music. As students listen, instruct them to compose a short poem. Then invite them to share their poems (if they're willing) with one another.

- ▶ *You all heard the same piece. Did you write the same words?*
- ▶ *How does each poem specifically reflect the author, even though we each heard the same song?*
- ▶ *What is inspiration?*
- ▶ *When people are inspired, how does what they produce reflect their individual personalities?*
- ▶ *Inspiration literally means to put a spirit in. What is similar between the inspiration of this music and the inspiration of the authors of Scripture? What is different?*

Read 2 Peter 1:21 and 1 Corinthians 14:37.

- ▶ *In what sense were the writers "carried along"? Did they still retain their individual personality, vocabulary, and mannerisms in their writing, like you did in your poems?*

Reread 1 Corinthians 14:37. Then, read 1 John 4:6.

- ▶ *Were Scripture's writers aware they were writing the very words of God?*

3 God so guided the writers that the original writings are perfect, without error, authoritative, and precisely what we need for all holiness (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

- ▶ *Imagine your job is to create a "care package chest" that will be air-dropped to a survivor on a deserted island. Right now, the authorities can't attempt a rescue, but they can drop the care package. The package needs to have supplies to keep the person alive for a month. What would you put in it?*
- ▶ *Imagine that your care package gets switched with another and gets air-dropped to a soldier stuck behind enemy lines. Would it still be helpful? What would you have changed in the contents? What would have stayed the same?*
- ▶ *To whom was the Book of Isaiah originally written? Who was Paul's audience in Ephesians? To whom did Moses write Exodus?*
- ▶ *Since these books were written to the specific people in specific situations, are they still relevant today? How are they like the care package chest?*

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4.

- ▶ *According to Peter, how much did the Scriptures give us?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *How has your view of the Bible changed since the start of this lesson? Share with the group one specific resolution you will make today (e.g., dedicated Bible study, memorization, sharing verses via social media, etc.).*