

Essentials of the Faith

1. The written word of God

- a. The scriptures are the inspired word of God
 - b. The scriptures are the inerrant word of God
 - c. The scriptures are sufficient to equip us for a life of faith and practice
 - d. The scriptures are authoritative for the life of the believer
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Four Tiers of “Theological Triage”

(Taken From Gavin Ortlund)

- 1. **Essential** (gospel, and things essential to it)
- 2. **Urgent** (to the health and practice of the church)
- 3. **Important** (but not enough to separate over)
- 4. **Unimportant** (to our gospel witness and ministry collaboration)

For Further Study and Reflection:

- *Finding the Right Hills to Die on* by Dr. Gavin Ortlund
- *Life's Biggest Questions* by Dr. Erik Thoennes
- *Scribes and Scripture, The Amazing Story of How We Got the Bible* by John D. Meade and Peter J. Gurry
- *The Origin of the Bible* by FF. Bruce, J.I. Packer, Philip Comfort, and Carl F.H. Henry
- *How We Got the Bible* by Neil R. Lightfoot
- *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* by Arthur W. Pink
- *Ancient Word, Changing Worlds* by Stephen J. Nichols, and Eric T. Brandt

Small Group Questions:

1. Have you ever heard somebody refer to the “closed-handed” matters of the faith, and the “open-handed” matters of the faith? What do you think they mean by this?
2. On what basis could we determine what is “closed-handed” or “open-handed?”
3. Read Rom. 14-15:6. What is the essence of Paul’s point here? Read 1 Cor. 15:3-4, how do these two passages relate to one another? What does Paul indicate are matters of “First Importance?” What principle might we draw from Paul’s list of what is of “first importance?”
4. Why is it important to know what the essentials of the faith are?
5. Why are the scriptures considered essential to the faith? (1 Cor. 15:3-4) What does “inspired” mean (2 Tim. 3:16) and why is it essential to the faith? What is lost if scripture is not inspired?
6. What is inerrancy? What is lost if the Bible is in error?
7. What questions do you have about how we got our Bible, and how trustworthy it is?