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**The Word of God**

**– Psalm 119:89-104**

**INTRODUCTION**

**As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.**

**ICE BREAKER QUESTION:** Who holds authority in your life? What does it mean to submit to his or her authority?

One of the pillars of our world today is relativism, the belief that all points of view are equally valid, and that truth is relative to the individual. Relativism essentially says that what is right for me might not be right for you, and what is wrong for you might not be wrong for me. With regards to Christianity, relativism denies the existence of one true God and the validity of His Word. For this reason, it is essential that we believe in the truthfulness of God and His Word, and that we seek to live in His truth and reflect it to the world around us.

**Read back through the passage before going through the questions.**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **What is your biggest takeaway? How was your experience with the Life Tool’s this past week?**
2. **Can we know God outside of scripture? What is the danger of having our own perception of God without using scripture?**

“We should distinguish, however, between two types of revelation. First, there is general revelation. It is called general because it (1) is given to everyone everywhere and (2) is broad (though far from empty) in what it says about God. General revelation, for example, does not communicate the mysteries of the Trinity or the person and work of Jesus Christ, but it does reveal God as Creator of the cosmos and manifests many of his divine attributes (transcendence, majesty, power, sovereignty, etc. (see Pss. 198:3–4; 29:4; 93:2; 104:24; [Acts 14:15–17; 17:24–27](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%2014%3A15%E2%80%9317%3B%2017%3A24%E2%80%9327/); Rom. 1:20, 32; 2:15–16). And it does so not to a specific people only but to all people in all times. The reason for its universal scope is found in the medium itself.

So, by what medium does a person receive this general revelation? There are two ways: (1) through man’s internal conscience, and (2) through the created order (e.g., nature). Man is created in God’s image ([Gen. 1:27](https://www.esv.org/verses/Gen.%201%3A27/)), which means the divine imprint marks him. In “our minds,” says Calvin in his Institutes (1.3.2), lie the “seeds of religion,” so much so that man is characterized by a sensus divinitatis, a sense of the divine. Man cannot escape, no matter how hard he tries, the morality embedded within his very makeup as a creature made to reflect his Creator ([Rom. 1:32; 2:14–16](https://www.esv.org/verses/Rom.%201%3A32%3B%202%3A14%E2%80%9316/)).”

* Barrett, Matthew. “Scripture As Divine Revelation”, Essay on Gospel Coalition.

“Because of the ways in which God has chosen to relate himself to Scripture, Scripture is sufficient as the means by which God continues to present himself to us such that we can know him, repeating through Scripture the covenant promise he has brought to fulfillment in Jesus Christ.”

* Ward, Timothy. Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God”, (p. 113)

“If we are to know God, it is important for us to seek knowledge in God’s own way. Many have tried to gain knowledge of God through their unaided reason, or through some kind of subjective intuition. But the God of the Bible has told us not only who he is but also how we should seek knowledge of him. That knowledge comes as we attend to his created world, not repressing the truth in unrighteousness, but accepting his own guidance, his special revelation in Scripture and in Jesus. Only through these appointed means can we come to know him as Lord and as our Savior from sin.”

* Frame, John M., “Divine Revelation: God Making Himself Known”; Essay on Gospel Coalition.
1. **Why do you think the Word of God is described as a “double-edged sword”?**
2. **READ Hebrews 4:12. How are the teachings of the Bible distinct from all other teachings we receive? Why is studying scripture important for the Christian?**

In this section of Hebrews, the writer was making the point that his readers needed to give close attention to obeying God’s Word. In these two verses he stated the reason.

The living God speaks His living Word. God’s Word is not confined to a distant past but comes to us now with freshness, power, and clarity. God’s Word judges the ideas and thoughts of the heart. It reaches into the center of a person’s being and correctly perceives motives and intentions. God’s Word lays bare any faithlessness, disobedience, and indifference or complacency in advancing toward spiritual maturity. Bible study is one of the main ways God speaks to Christians. It is the way we learn about God and His will for our lives. Bible study provides the spiritual food for growing believers into Christlikeness.

“Scripture is the written word of the living Word, God’s communicative act, and the Spirit who authored it chooses to continue to speak most directly through it. Therefore we are right to trust that God in Scripture has spoken and continues to speak sufficiently clearly for us to base our saving knowledge of him and of ourselves, and our beliefs and our actions, on the content of Scripture alone, without ultimately validating our understanding of these things or our confidence in them by appeal to any individual or institution”

* Grudem, Wayne. “Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine”, (pp. 126-127).

“In whatever Scripture asserts and affirms, it speaks truthfully and in a trustworthy manner.”

* Barret, Matthew. “The Authority and Inerrancy of Scripture”; Essay on Gospel Coalition.
	1. **What are three words you would use to describe your general attitude about the Bible?**
	2. **What is the purpose of the Bible?**
1. **READ 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17. What does it mean that Scripture is “God-breathed”? Why is it important that we “affirm all of Scripture, not just the easy parts”?**

Foundational to the study of Scripture is the belief that the Bible is inerrant, that it is the perfect, inspired Word of God. The apostle Paul encouraged the younger disciple Timothy with this truth in his second letter.

In his encouragement to Timothy, the pastor of the church at Ephesus, Paul instructed him to hold firmly to what he had learned in Scripture, which he had studied since he was young. The task which God had for Paul and Timothy was rooted in the authority of the Scriptures. Because the Bible is our primary tool for growing as Jesus’ disciples, it is crucial that we believe the Word of God is totally accurate, free of error, and inspired by God Himself. Paul reminded Timothy that Scripture instructs Christians on how to believe, grow, and serve the Christian community. Paul appealed to Timothy concerning the inspiration and usefulness of Scripture in daily life. He first noted to Timothy that Scripture is inspired by God. The complete contents bear God’s stamp of approval.

“When you encounter a present-day view of Holy Scripture, you encounter more than a view of Scripture. What you meet is a total view of God and the world, that is, a total theology, which is both an ontology, declaring what there is, and an epistemology, stating how we know what there is. This is necessarily so, for a theology is a seamless robe, a circle within which everything links up with everything else through its common grounding in God. Every view of Scripture, in particular, proves on analysis to be bound up with an overall view of God and man.”

J. I. Packer, “[Encountering Present-Day Views of Scripture](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_views_packer.html),” in [The Foundation of Biblical Authority](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0310215218/bettwowor-20), ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. 61.

“The truthfulness of the text reflects the truthfulness of its divine author”

* Barret, Matthew. “The Authority and Inerrancy of Scripture”; Essay on Gospel Coalition.
1. **What does it mean to submit to the authority of the Word of God? Do you do this? Why or why not?**

“The idea that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God…The phrase ‘the authority of Scripture’ must be understood to be shorthand for ‘the authority of God as he speaks through Scripture.’ . . . The authority of Scripture is a statement about what God did in authoring Scripture, and about how he continues to act in relation to Scripture”

* Grudem, Wayne. “Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine”, (p. 128).

“The gospel itself is proof that not one word of God has failed.”

* Barret, Matthew. “The Authority and Inerrancy of Scripture”; Essay on Gospel Coalition.
	1. **How does this shape the way you approach Scripture?**
	2. **In what ways has your view of the Bible changed based on our discussion?**
1. **READ PSALM 119:89-104. What does this passage say about God and His Word? What do you most need to remember from this passage?**

The Word of God is the central theme of these verses. God’s Word lasts forever, throughout all generations, and it is the primary way we learn about His truth and faithfulness. The Lord’s judgments that maintain order in the cosmos provide order for human life as well. The psalmist refers to God’s law as his “delight” and His means of survival (vv. 92-93). Without the truth of God’s Word, we would not have the promises and hope we need to help us endure the trials of life while we wait for eternity with Him.

1. **What do we lose if we choose to only study Scripture on our own, rather than being an active part of a biblical community where we can be taught the Word of God?**

“Believers’ lives were meant to be walking communal-reading events for everyone to examine and read.”

* Wright, Brian J. “Don’t Just Read Alone; Article. On Gospel Coalition

“Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire and that the chief end of preaching is to give men and women a sense of God and his presence.”

* Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. ([*Preaching and Preachers*](http://amzn.to/2oQ7UjB))

“Expository preaching grounds the message in the text so that all the sermon’s points are the points in the text, and it majors in the texts’s major ideas. It aligns the interpretation of the text with the doctrinal truths of the rest of the Bible (being sensitive to systematic theology). And it always situates the passage within the Bible’s narrative, showing how Christ is the final fulfillment of the text’s theme (being sensitive to biblical theology).”

* Keller, Tim. ([*Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*](http://amzn.to/2pvhLtc))
	1. **What do we lose if the opposite is true?**
1. **What can our group do to be a community deeply rooted in the teaching, studying, and memorizing of Scripture? How can you make it a habit to read your Bible daily?**

“Necessity sits right at the heart of the ways in which sola scriptura is explicated and defended. If Scripture alone is claimed to be the supreme authority in Christian thinking and living, that is because both its content (the verbal revelation) and its form (the written Scriptures) are indispensable”

* Ward, Timothy. Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God”, (p. 102).
	1. **What spiritual benefits might come from making time to study God’s Word with your family? How might doing so deepen your understanding and appreciation for God’s Word?**

**PRAYER**

Close in prayer, asking God to increase our appetite for His Word. Pray that our group will be better students of God’s Word, not just to increase our knowledge but to conform us to His image.

Pray for the strength and discipline to live in obedience to God’s truth this week, and to allow His truth to be the guiding force in your life.



**FURTHER STUDY**

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/scripture-divine-revelation/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/authority-inerrancy-scripture/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/divine-revelation-god-making-known/>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/essential-truths-of-the-christian-faith/the-authority-of-scripture>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/dont-just-read-alone/>