

Contents

The Sufficiency of Scripture—Jeramie.....2

Encouraging Preparation—Seth.....4

The Sufficiency of Scripture

Past Sessions

Session 1 – The Inspiration of Scripture

Session 2 – The Clarity of Scripture

Session 3 – **The Sufficiency of Scripture**

Is the Bible Enough?

1. Is the Bible enough? Enough for what?

- The Bible gives us everything we need to know for life, godliness and salvation
- The Bible does not comment on every topic of human knowledge (e.g. it's not enough for making a good casserole or for fixing your motorcycle engine)

2. How do we know the Bible is enough?

- 2 Timothy 3:15-17 – Notice that the Bible is both able to bring someone to salvation and to equip them for every good work!

SSBC Doctrinal Statement – The portion in italics indicates our understanding of the sufficiency of scripture.

1. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men uniquely inspired by God, and is a perfect collection of spiritual instruction. Its author is God, its aim is salvation and its content is pure truth without error. *The Bible reveals everything we need to learn from God for life, godliness and salvation.* Therefore it forever remains the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human behavior, belief, and opinion should be tested.

Other Viewpoints

Many belief systems affirm the importance of the Bible, but deny it's sufficiency by claiming the Bible must be supplemented in some way by additional teaching, writings, etc. Can you think of some examples?

1. Bible + Legalism – Manmade behavioral rules are also necessary to live a godly life
2. Bible + Tradition – Church teachings, creeds, liturgies or rituals are given an authority equal to scripture

3. Bible + Experience – Bible must be supplemented by charismatic or religious experiences in order to know God’s life-changing power
4. Bible + Culture – Bible must be read and re-interpreted through lens of current philosophies and trends in a given culture (theological liberalism)
5. Bible + Authoritative Leader – The cults are commonly identified by their faith in an authoritative leader to properly determine the Bible’s true meaning. This also happens to a lesser degree when evangelicals follow an evangelical leader’s views without questioning
6. Bible + Methodology – The Word of God isn’t sufficient to be the conduit for bringing unbelievers to repentance and faith. We also need techniques, technology, strategies and methods for saving people and making the Bible culturally relevant.

As you can see, in each of these examples the thing added to the Bible isn’t necessarily wrong. It’s not wrong to have religious experiences, to learn from a teacher or tradition, or to think through how most clearly to communicate the gospel to a particular culture. Rather, the problem is that our tendency is to stop viewing the Scripture itself as a sufficient guide for life and ministry and instead to put our faith in things that do not have the power to save!

Application

What difference should a belief in the sufficiency of Scripture make for you Bible study?

1. People come to a small group with different viewpoints. Use the Bible as your unifying focus. It is sufficient. When you face challenges in a discussion, keep asking your group, “What is the text saying?” Let the Word do its work.
2. The Bible really can change peoples lives! It really is used by God to save and to equip believers for life and godliness. So don’t feel discouraged or unworthy to lead a small group. It’s ultimately not about you, but about the power of God’s all-sufficient Word.
3. Don’t be afraid to invite an unbeliever to a Bible study, even if you’re studying a challenging part of Scripture (like Revelation) or even if everyone else in the study is a believer. God’s Word is sufficient to save.

evident and manifest and the Father, Son and Spirit are glorified.

Encouraging Preparation

(This list of benefits was developed during the discussion among small group leaders.)

WHY SHOULD PARTICIPANTS PREPARE?

Benefits of preparation:

- This is one way that God speaks to people
- It is valuable for people to practice the discipline of “feeding themselves” and “mining the Bible” so they can continue with this practice.
- This practice leads to better discussion:
 - The Holy Spirit speaks through participants out of God’s Word.
 - Better discussion leads to better relationships.
 - Preparation allows participants to experience bringing Gospel blessing to others which equips them for Kingdom effectiveness.
- Preparation increases joy.
- Preparation increases unity.
- Preparation leads to deeper learning:
 - Deeper understanding
 - Deeper Application
 - Deeper Fruitfulness
- Preparation results in a fuller experience of being “the body of Christ” as each member contributes. So Christ is made

HOW TO ENCOURAGE PREPARATION:

1. Discuss The Issue With The Group.
 - Don’t Push your own standard
 - Discuss the benefits (above).
 - Discuss the time cost.
2. Give Clear Assignments.
 - Perhaps distribute the schedule of assignments in advance. Remember people miss sometimes and then get confused or forget the preparation assignment.
 - Perhaps email with a reminder and look ahead.
 - Look through the material beforehand. Give a preview and try to anticipate questions/problems.
3. Begin Each Session With A Review Of The Preparation Material.
 - Warm up for discussion by starting with factual reports easy to talk about.
 - Then advance to thinking and sharing and applying questions.

- Don't make the review laborious, covering the entire assignment. This will undermine the value of working independently.

4. Adapt Assignments To Varying Participation Levels.

- Offer three levels:
 1. Those with less time: "Do this part if nothing else."
 2. The main stream: "Here is the assignment."
 3. More challenge: "Try this if you can."
 - Offer a special assignment—eg. Prepare a short presentation on a topic or issue.

5. Have Fun With Incentives.

- We can't really offer serious incentives with adults in a setting of learning and spiritual growth.
- This is an suggestion which depends on the tone of your group and the attitudes of participants.
- But. . . consider tossing or passing candy to those who answer a question or make a valuable contribution.

- Maybe announce that everyone should be extra prepared for next week because it will be "candy night."
- If there is a book or booklet to recommend or study you might offer a surprise free copy to someone who participates well.

6. Evaluate Periodically.

- We end where we began. Preparation is an issue of mutual commitment and a group should seek consensus.
- As you evaluate a study which is ending, remember to ask questions about the preparation assignments—were they helpful? How? What worked for you? What were some of the best things we got through our preparation? Did we encounter any "nightmares" in the preparation assignments?
- You can also take a little time each week to evaluate. This way the participants get to push back if they are feeling "put on the spot" or pressured.
- Evaluation makes participants part of the team.