

Hope Community Church

Week 1 - Statement of Faith: The Word of God

Leader's note: This study doesn't aim to provide rationale for why one can believe Hope's Statement of Faith: The Word of God, but rather provides a study of what to do because of the belief in the Word of God. If someone is looking for more support or rationale behind why Hope believes the statement of faith a talk with one of Hope's staff and/or study of systematic theology may be more helpful.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss why studying the Word of God is important at Hope Community Church.
- Consider ways we could expand personal engagement in the Word of God.

Ice breaker

(Leaders please choose the one you believe will better warm up your group for good discussion)

What is one of your favorite books? Why?

OR

When is a specific time God really used his word to speak to you?

The Word Of God

Statement of Faith: The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

Read aloud: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Read aloud: 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV)

²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

? Why is it important that scripture is "God-breathed" or "spoke from God?"

Possible Answers: God is eternal, omnipotent, and perfect, therefore scripture can be eternally relevant, applicable for all generations of humanity. Scripture, in its original manuscripts, wasn't tainted by human will. It's inerrant. We can learn about God's righteousness.

? Why do you think the author thought it important to specify "in righteousness" when talking about the usefulness of scripture in verse 16?

Possible Answers: God's goodness doesn't change but our social climates, cultures, world may change. Therefore, though scripture may not provide direct mandates for a continuously changing world, it can still speak into the world's situations and how believers are to conduct themselves in righteousness in a relevant way.

Leader's note: there could be some very practical follow up questions to this train of thought that may be discussed during the accountability time or individually via a follow up conversation: What does this look like? Where do you find this a current challenge? Is there a need to confess and pray for you this week in that struggle?

? Who and what is the teaching, rebuking, correcting and training for in the 2 Timothy passage? Why is this an important note?

Possible Answers: servants of God, so that they're thoroughly equipped for every good work. This is important because it includes you and me, called to be servants (Deut. 10:12, Micah 6:8, Phil. 2, Col. 3:23)

Read aloud: John 20:30-31 (NIV)

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

? Considering this passage and 2 Timothy 3:16-17, how can scripture be used well and used poorly, or misused?

Possible Answers: The Gospel of Jesus Christ should come first when sharing scripture. It is often however, used to tell people how to act or call people to abide by cultural norms. Historically, and even now, scripture is misused by trying to teach, rebuke, correct and train unbelievers in the way to behave before sharing the Gospel.

? How can you avoid misusing scripture?

Possible answers: Study the word and seek it for growth in righteousness. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you as you read. Understand the context. Determine if the passage is poetry, narrative, law, etc. as you read. Ask questions. Study in community.

Scripture Disciplines

Read aloud: Psalm 1 (NIV)

¹Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ²but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. ³That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers. ⁴Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

Psalm 1 highlights scripture as sustaining and fruitful. Below is a tool to help believer's keep the Word of God close to them. (<https://www.navigators.org/resource/the-word-hand/>)

? Which disciplines do you practice now? Which disciplines would you like your small group to encourage you to do more of?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary



Read aloud: Proverbs 30:5-6 (NIV)

⁵“Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. ⁶Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

? Why is it important that the word of God override people’s personal preferences for their behavior and beliefs?

Possible Answers: God is omniscient, omnipresent, good and loving. He wants only good things for us and has directed us with perfect scripture so that we can align ourselves with his will.

In John 6 some of the Jews that were previously following Jesus, stop doing so because they didn’t understand and were unable to accept his teaching. John 6:52b “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” In other passages, when the Pharisees brought questions to Jesus, it was often to challenge him and assert their already-established values and when they didn’t agree with a teaching, they abandoned the engagement and rejected Jesus as wrong.

We can take Peter’s example when engaging with scripture we don’t understand or find difficult to process – he continued to follow Jesus and sought understanding stating, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” John 6:68b-69

? What should we do with the teachings that we don’t like or agree with?

Possible Answers: Pray. Draw closer to God. Praise him for who he is. Pray for understanding and peace.

Application Questions

? What are some new ways that you’d like to use to engage with the Word of God?

? Are you submitting each area of your life to scriptural authority? If not, how might your small group encourage you to do so?