Secret Sauce
Can We Trust The Bible?
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Key Scripture:

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NLT)
16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

Luke 1:1–4 (NLT)
Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. 2 They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples. 3 Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus, 4 so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

James 1:22 (NLT)
22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

John 5:39 (NLT)
39 "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you ever read or heard a claim that made you question something you believed to be true? What was it, and how did you resolve your doubt?

Start sharing. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- **Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** What does this verse tell us about the nature of the Bible? How does this shape the way we approach Scripture?

- The sermon highlighted that there are over 24,000 copies of the New Testament manuscripts, compared to only 1,757 of Homer's Iliad and 250 of Plato's Dialogues. Why do people trust secular historical documents but question the Bible despite it having vastly superior manuscript evidence?

- **Read Luke 1:1-4.** Luke begins his Gospel by explaining that he carefully investigated everything. How does this support the reliability of the Bible? Why do historical and eyewitness accounts matter in defending Scripture?

- **Read John 5:39**. Jesus says that the Scriptures "testify about Him." If the Bible is historically accurate in everything we can verify, why should we also trust it when it speaks about salvation, eternity, and the character of God?

- How does historical and archaeological evidence strengthen your trust in the Bible? Are there other kinds of evidence that have helped you personally?

- **Read James 1:22.** How can we move from merely believing in the Bible's reliability to actively applying its teachings in our lives?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- This week, take one topic you've had doubts or questions about regarding the Bible's reliability. Spend time researching evidence, whether through Scripture, historical studies, or apologetics resources. Share what you learn with someone in your Small Group.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- "Lord, thank You for giving us Your Word as a trustworthy guide for life. Help us not only to believe in its reliability but to live by it. Strengthen our faith when we have doubts, and give us wisdom and courage to defend the truth of Scripture. May our confidence in Your Word lead us to greater obedience and deeper trust in You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Question: "Why is it important to believe in biblical inerrancy?"

Answer: We live in a time that tends to shrug its shoulders when confronted with error. Instead of asking, like Pilate, "What is truth?" postmodern man says, "Nothing is truth" or perhaps "There is truth, but we cannot know it." We have grown accustomed to being lied to, and many people seem comfortable with the false notion that the Bible, too, contains errors.

The doctrine of biblical inerrancy is an extremely important one because the truth does matter. This issue reflects on the character of God and is foundational to our understanding of everything the Bible teaches. Here are some reasons why we should absolutely believe in biblical inerrancy:

1. The Bible itself claims to be perfect. "And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Psalm 19:7). "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5 KJV). These claims of purity and perfection are absolute statements. Note that it doesn't say God's Word is "mostly" pure or scripture is "nearly" perfect. The Bible argues for complete perfection, leaving no room for "partial perfection" theories.

2. The Bible stands or falls as a whole. If a major newspaper were routinely discovered to contain errors, it would be quickly discredited. It would make no difference to say, "All the errors are confined to page three." For a paper to be reliable in any of its parts, it must be factual throughout. In the same way, if the Bible is inaccurate when it speaks of geology, why should its theology be trusted? It is either a trustworthy document, or it is not.

3. The Bible is a reflection of its Author. All books are. The Bible was written by God Himself as He worked through human authors in a process called "inspiration." "All scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). See also 2 Peter 1:21 and Jeremiah 1:12.

We believe that the God who created the universe is capable of writing a book. And the God who is perfect is capable of writing a perfect book. The issue is not simply "Does the Bible have a mistake?" but "Can God make a mistake?" If the Bible contains factual errors, then God is not omniscient and is capable of making errors Himself. If the Bible contains misinformation, then God is not truthful but is instead a liar. If the Bible contains contradictions, then God is the author of confusion. In other words, if biblical inerrancy is not true, then God is not God.

4. The Bible judges us, not vice versa. "For the word of God...judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Notice the relationship between "the heart" and "the Word." The Word examines; the heart is being examined. To discount parts of the Word for any reason is to reverse this process. We become the examiners, and the Word must submit to our "superior insight." Yet God says, "But who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" (Romans 9:20).

5. The Bible's message must be taken as a whole. It is not a mixture of doctrine that we are free to select from. Many people like the verses that say God loves them, but they dislike the verses that say God will judge sinners. But we simply cannot pick and choose what we like about the Bible and throw the rest away. If the Bible is wrong about hell, for example, then who is to say it is right about heaven—or about anything else? If the Bible cannot get the details right about creation, then maybe the details about salvation cannot be trusted either. If the story of Jonah is a myth, then perhaps so is the story of Jesus. On the contrary, God has said what He has said, and the Bible presents us a full picture of who God is. "Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens" (Psalm 119:89).

6. The Bible is our only rule for faith and practice. If it is not reliable, then on what do we base our beliefs? Jesus asks for our trust, and that includes trust in what He says in His Word. John 6:67-69 is a beautiful passage. Jesus had just witnessed the departure of many who had claimed to follow Him. Then He turns to the twelve apostles and asks, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" At this, Peter speaks for the rest when he says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." May we have the same trust in the Lord and in His words of life.

None of what we have presented here should be taken as a rejection of true scholarship. Biblical inerrancy does not mean that we are to stop using our minds or accept what the Bible says blindly. We are commanded to study the Word (2 Timothy 2:15), and those who search it out are commended (Acts 17:11). Also, we recognize that there are difficult passages in the Bible, as well as sincere disagreements over interpretation. Our goal is to approach Scripture reverently and prayerfully, and when we find something we do not understand, we pray harder, study more, and—if the answer still eludes us—humbly acknowledge our own limitations in the face of the perfect Word of God.

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