

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

For the first week of our new series - "@ our core" – Pastor Paul took us on an in-depth look at our first core value: We value **Biblical truth** and expect its power to challenge and change us. He helped us answer 3 important questions about the Bible:

1. **Why is the Bible different?** The Bible is unique in its circulation (the most published and read book in history), in its survival (it has outlasted all of its critics), and its continuity (written over a period of 1500 years by over 40 authors on 3 continents and yet it all agrees on one theme: Jesus! The Bible is the most reliable book we know. There are over 24,000 full or partial copies of the New Testament. The second most is Homer's *The Iliad* with 643. There is more manuscript evidence for the Bible than any 10 pieces of classic literature **combined**. Finally, the Bible is God's own word. It has been protected by God from men, written by God through men, and prophesied by God to men. It is the only holy book that contains prophecies about a coming Messiah, and Jesus fulfilled all 60 of them.
2. **Why is the Bible necessary?** In short, we have to ask what the purpose is of the Bible. The answer is that the Bible tells us about Jesus, it prepares us for salvation, and it tells us the truth about ourselves.
3. **Why is the Bible ignored?** Sometimes the Bible is ignored simply because we don't understand it, but usually we ignore the Bible because it challenges us. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, the Bible

Community Group Guide @ our core – Biblical Truth



The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

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Various Scriptures

corrects, rebukes and trains us, and neither of those 3 are very fun. Hebrews 4:12-13 goes even further and explains that the Bible is a sharp probe that cuts to the core of who we are and lays us bare before God. It is a hard, but rewarding, process.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- If someone walked into your Community Group tonight and said the Bible is just another book like any other ancient manuscript, how would your group respond? Use the facts that were shared about the uniqueness of the Bible in your answers.
- Read Luke 18:31 and Luke 24:25-27. What is the primary purpose of the Bible?
- Read John 1:1-2 and John 1:14 and then discuss the following statement: It is impossible to love Jesus and not love the Bible.
- Pastor Paul explained that much of what the Bible does in us is uncomfortable (see 2 Timothy 3:16 and Hebrew 4:12-13), but most people think of the Bible is just an inspirational book. What do you think?
- Jesus prayed in John 17:17 that we would be sanctified (set apart, marked) by truth. According to that same verse, where is the truth?
- As we value Biblical truth at The Gathering, how do you think it will set us apart?
- People often say that the Bible is a roadmap for life, but 2 Timothy 3:15 speaks of the Bible as a roadmap to Jesus. How does your view of the Bible change when you realize it's about Jesus and not about you or me?
- Have someone in your group read through Proverbs 2 and stop to highlight the promises and benefits that come from hearing and applying the wisdom of God's word.
- Commit yourself to the daily, consistent reading of the Bible. Tonight, visit YouVersion.com to pick out a reading plan to follow, or commit to reading the Gospel of John over the next 3 weeks (one chapter a day).

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.