



## DISCIPLESHIP AND BIBLICAL COUNSELING

**2023-2024**

### **Week Two: Inerrancy and Sufficiency of Scripture**

John 17:17

*Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

2 Peter 1:3-4

*Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*

#### **1. IABC Exam**

- a. *Demonstrate by using your Bible, its own claim to authority.*
- b. What is meant by the term "The Inspiration of Scripture"?
- c. Give your understanding of "Biblical Inerrancy."
- d. Explain your understanding of the "Sufficiency of Scripture."
- e. Explain the following statement: "As inerrancy speaks to the rule of faith, so sufficiency speaks to the rule of practice."

#### **2. Inerrancy of Scripture (Psalm 119:140-142, 160; Luke 24:44; John 17:17)**

We believe and teach the factual, verbal, historical inerrancy of the Bible. That is, the Bible, in its original documents, is free from error in what it says about geography, history and science as well as in what it says about God.

Even though the Bible is God's revelation, it must still be interpreted. Interpretation has to do with our reception and understanding of that which God revealed and recorded.

Revelation is a divine act. Interpretation is a human responsibility. Divine inspiration guarantees the truthfulness of God's word but not the accuracy of our interpretation.

2. The Bible is infallible in all it affirms to be true and therefore, absolutely reliable. We, however, may be fallible in our interpretation of the Bible.



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Infallibility means incapable of making a mistake, while inerrancy means the absence of any error.

Infallibility signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters.

Similarly, inerrant signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

### **3. Inerrancy**

Inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact. (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, page 90).

The Bible always tells the truth and it always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about.

Inerrancy does not mean blind literalism, but allows for figurative, poetic and experiential language, as long as it is accurate.

Perfect God moved human authors, by His Spirit, to perfectly transcribe what He wanted to communicate.

It is important to note that this definition does not apply to the transmission of Scripture through the ages and the translation into other languages. We affirm that only the original autographs are inerrant.

This is the clear teaching of Scripture, as well as the character of God. God is unable to lie and as He inspired Scripture, it must be completely consistent with fact at the moment of transcription.

### **4. What Inerrancy Is Not**

Inerrancy does not preclude the use of ordinary language. A clear example of this in the Bible is where it speaks of the sun rising. We know that the sun does not rise at all but that the earth rotates to bring the sun into view. However, we can be consistent in our belief in the inerrancy of Scripture despite this type of ordinary, human, geo-centric language.

Inerrancy does not preclude the use of loose and free quotations. Wayne Grudem makes a critical distinction between our culture and the New Testament Greek culture when it came to reporting the words of another person. In our culture we consider it a terrible sin to misquote another person so that precision in quoting a person's exact words is of tantamount importance. The Greek language, at the time the New Testament was written, had no quotation marks or similar

construct. What was considered of utmost importance was to accurately represent the content of what a person said. There was no expectation that a writer needed to transcribe the speaker's



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exact words when quoting him. Thus, the Bible is inerrant if it accurately and truthfully describes the content of what a speaker said. Whether the actual words Jesus spoke are "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," or "I am The Truth, the Way and the Life," the Bible is still inerrant in how it transcribed these words, for the content remains intact.

The Bible can be inerrant even if it contains unusual grammatical constructions. It is commonly known that there are various writing skills represented in the Scripture. Some authors were stylistically excellent while others were much more rough and common in their style. Sometimes this means the writers did not follow the accepted rules of grammar or used stylistic irregularities.

The issue of inerrancy is not precision but **truthfulness**.

### **5. 1978 Chicago Statement:**

I. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

II. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

III. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

IV. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

V. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

### **6. Objections to inerrancy.**

**a. Do Not Have The Original Manuscripts.** The first objection has to do with the transmission of Scripture. Many people argue that since we no longer possess any of the original



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manuscripts, it is irresponsible to speak of inerrancy. What is the purpose in affirming an important doctrine based on documents we no longer have? I answered this, in part, in the first article of this series, when I quoted John MacArthur. "We possess a wealth of biblical manuscripts in the original languages of Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. John MacArthur writes, "With this wealth of biblical manuscripts in the original languages and with the disciplined activity of textual critics to establish with almost perfect accuracy the content of the autographs, any errors which have been introduced and/or perpetuated by the thousands of translations over the centuries can be identified and corrected by comparing the translation or copy with the reassembled original. By this providential means, God has made good His promise to preserve the Scriptures. We can rest assured that there are translations available today which indeed are worthy of the title, The Word of God" (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Handbook*, page xxii). We can be certain that we have accurate copies of over 99% of the inerrant words as they were first transcribed. When we focus on the less than 1% of the text that contains errors, we must realize that these are human errors and that God is in no way responsible for them. The fact that there are some errors in Scripture as we have it today, does not negate inerrancy which speaks only of the original documents.

b. The Bible is Full of Errors and Contradictions. This is a common objection that has been levelled at the Bible too many times to count. It has been answered just as often. As often as not, this objection is made by people who really have no clear idea of where these errors can be found, as they are merely passing along what they have heard from others. For those who are honestly seeking information on the alleged contradictions, there is a wealth of resources available to prove that there are no errors or contradictions within the text of the Bible.

Many of the alleged errors within the Bible have to do with historical facts. Allow me to provide one example. Only a couple of generations ago, scholars pointed to the Bible's claim that there was a king of Assyria named Tiglath-Pileser as an obvious error, for archaeological evidence had not proven that any such king existed. But a few years later, archaeologists excavated Tiglath-Pileser's capital city and found his name carved into bricks which read, "I, Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria..." It is a fact that "the results of sound scholarship have not tended to uncover more and more problems...Rather they have tended to resolve problems and to show that what were once thought to be errors are not errors at all" (James Boice, *Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace*, page 70). R.C. Sproul writes, "The Christian has nothing to fear from rigorous historical research. Rather, we have everything to gain" (*Reason to Believe*, page 27).

c. Proving Inerrancy is a Circular Argument. Proving Inerrancy is a Circular Argument We can only prove Scripture's inerrancy by circular argumentation. After all, we say that the Bible is inerrant because the Bible tells us it is inerrant.

Circular argumentation reasoning proves the Bible's inerrancy. Consider the following premises and the subsequent conclusion:

Premise A--The Bible is a basically reliable and trustworthy document.

Premise B--On the basis of this reliable document we have sufficient evidence to believe confidently that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.



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Premise C--Jesus Christ being the Son of God is an inerrant authority.

Premise D--Jesus Christ teaches that the Bible is more than generally trustworthy; it is the very Word of God.

Premise E--The word, in that it comes from God, is utterly trustworthy because God is utterly trustworthy.

Conclusion--On the basis of the inerrant authority of Jesus Christ, the church believes the Bible to be utterly trustworthy; i.e., inerrant.

*In Reason to Believe* R.C. Sproul

### 6. Problems With Denying Inerrancy

Having answered some common objections, let's move on to our final section, which is problems that may arise as a result of denying inerrancy.

First, if we deny inerrancy, we make God a liar. If there are errors in the original manuscripts, that were breathed out by God, one of two things must be true: either God purposely lied or he mistakenly lied. This indicates that God is capable of making errors or of producing errors. We might conclude from this that we are likewise able to intentionally lie, even if only in small matters.

Second, if we deny inerrancy we lose trust in God. If there are errors in Scripture, even if in the smallest detail, and these were placed there intentionally by God, how are we to maintain trust that He did not lie in other matters? When we lose trust in the Scriptures, we lose trust in God Himself and we may consequently lose our desire to be obedient to Him.

Third, if we deny the clear testimony of Scripture that it is inerrant, we make our minds a higher standard of Truth than the Bible. At the outset of this series I indicated a concern I felt towards those who deny inerrancy is when they indicate that the doctrine does not "feel right." But nowhere does the Bible appeal to our feelings or our reason for its authority or inerrancy. We must submit to the Word, for it will not submit to us.

Fourth, if we deny inerrancy, and indicate that small details are incorrect, we cannot consistently argue that all the doctrine the Bible contains is correct. Admitting error in even the smallest historical detail is the thin edge of the wedge, for we then allow the possibility that there may be error in doctrine as well.

7. Reliability of the Bible - <https://carm.org/about-the-bible/manuscript-evidence-for-superior-new-testament-reliability/>

### **Sufficiency of Scripture** (2 Peter 1:3-11)

1.. *"The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God He intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly."*

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127



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The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith.

To say the Scriptures are sufficient means that the Bible is all we need to equip us for a life of faith and service. It provides a clear demonstration of God's intention to restore the broken relationship between Himself and humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior through the gift of faith. No other writings are necessary for this good news to be understood, nor are any other writings required to equip us for a life of faith.

2. The sufficiency of Scripture means that the words of Scripture are, and have been throughout salvation history, ample revelation from God for people to know him savingly, answer life's most important questions, and carry out his will in their lives. Scripture outfits humanity with everything they need to know and please God. Nothing is lacking from Scripture which man needs to know and do God's will in life. Whether through explicit commands or implicit principles, the Bible contains everything we need for any component of human life. We do not need additional revelation from God.

3. Article 1.6, the Westminster Confession of Faith states the sufficiency of Scripture as:

*The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary inference may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.*

4. Scripture is sufficient as it is:

Scripture Is Complete (Deuteronomy 29:29; 2 Peter 1:3)

Scripture Is Adequate (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Deut. 30:11-14)

Scripture Is Relevant (Psalm 19: 7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16)

Scripture Is Primary or Authoritative (1 Thess. 2:13)

Scripture Is Powerful (Hebrews 4:12; Isa. 55:8-11)

Scripture Is Exhaustive (Ps. 1:2-3; Romans 8:32; 2 Peter 1:3-4)

5. Psalm 19:7-14 is the most comprehensive statement regarding the sufficiency of Scripture. It is an inspired statement about Scripture as a qualified guide for every situation. (MacArthur)

6. Four Purposes of Scripture That Are Always Accomplished: (2 Timothy 3: 16-17).

Every time God's Word is taught, shared, counseled, proclaimed it is profitable for:

- Teaching, Reproof, Correction, and Training in Righteousness



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7. Every time God's Word is used it is profitable for (2 Timothy 3:16-17):

**Teaching:** The Bible teaches comprehensive truths about God, people, sin and its effects, and the hope that is found in Christ. Scripture equips people with an accurate and complete framework for rightly understanding all of human life before God. In a culture filled with competing truth claims and alternative narratives for understanding our lives, biblical counselors instruct counselees with God's Word so that they can know and believe what is true.

**Reproof:** God's Word is useful for exposing wrongly held beliefs in one's life. In response to the snare of wrongly-held beliefs in one's life, biblical counselors use Scripture to help their counselees through loving and gentle rebuke, so that they might repent of believing what is false and embrace what is true about God and His gospel.

**Correction:** Whereas the preceding purpose relates to wrongly held beliefs in our inner person, "to correct" refers to confronting and correcting sinful behavior expressed externally in one's life. Biblical counselors use Scripture to help rescue their counselees from wrong belief and to demonstrate how our actions reflect the true motivations of our hearts.

**Training in Righteousness:** Scripture's usefulness refers not only to growth in the knowledge of God but to the pursuit of godliness and a transformed life. God uses His Word to train us, teaching us what it is like to follow Jesus in daily life so that we will learn to observe all that He has commanded (Matt. 28:20). biblical counselors help their counselees move toward the goal of Christlikeness so that they will not only know what is true but that their lives would reflect this truth as well.

8. These four purposes of Scripture combine to produce one intended result: "*that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*" (2 Tim. 3:17)

The usefulness of God's Word is meant to produce maturity and godliness in the lives of those we counsel, but also a growing capacity for ministry in the lives of other people.

God speaks in His Word to instruct, to reprove, to confront, and to train so that those we counsel would bear fruit that leads to further disciple-making, for God's glory (2 Timothy 2:2).

9. IABC Theology Exam Question: 1E – Explain the following statement:

"As inerrancy speaks to the rule of faith, so sufficiency speaks to the rule of practice."

Based on what you've read and learned about the authority, inspiration, inerrancy/infallibility, and sufficiency of Scripture, provide a one page answer to the question above.

10. Resources for Inerrancy and Sufficiency of Scripture:





## **DISCIPLESHIP AND BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem.

Biblical Doctrine by John MacArthur

Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul Enns

A Theology of Christian Counseling by Jay Adams

<https://www.theopedia.com/inerrancy>

[https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart\\_don/faq/bible-difficulties/question5-difference-between-inerrancy-infallibility.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/faq/bible-difficulties/question5-difference-between-inerrancy-infallibility.cfm)

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/how-inerrant-is-the-bible.html>

<https://www.apuritansmind.com/creeds-and-confessions/the-chicago-statement-on-biblical-inerrancy/>

<https://carm.org/about-the-bible/manuscript-evidence-for-superior-new-testament-reliability/>

<https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2012/06/18/the-sufficiency-of-scripture/>

<https://thecripplegate.com/is-the-bible-enough-for-us-sufficiency/>

<https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2019/05/06/the-sufficiency-of-the-word-in-biblical-counseling/>

International Association of Biblical Counselors (IABC) <https://www.iabc.net/>

Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) <https://biblicalcounseling.com/>

Institute of Biblical Counseling and Discipleship (IBCD) <https://ibcd.org/>

Biblical Counseling Coalition (BCC) <https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/>

Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF) <https://www.ccef.org/>