

How Can the Bible Be Both God's Word and Human Words?

A Guided Reflection Worksheet for Seekers and Believers

Focus Truth

God communicated through real human authors without erasing their personalities, experiences, writing styles, or historical settings.

Before You Begin

This worksheet will help you define biblical inspiration, separate it from common misunderstandings, consider how God could work through real human processes, and reflect on how the Bible's humanity should shape your reading. Move slowly. You do not have to settle every question immediately.

① Define Inspiration Clearly

Biblical inspiration is the Christian belief that God guided human authors so that, through their own words, personalities, experiences, and writing styles, they communicated the message He intended.

What did you previously think Christians meant when they called the Bible inspired by God?

Which part of this definition is easiest for you to understand?

Which part of this definition raises the biggest question for you?

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② Define Inspiration Clearly

Biblical inspiration makes a stronger claim than saying a writer felt creative or spiritually encouraged. It concerns the source and guidance of Scripture while still recognizing that real people truly wrote its books.

How is biblical inspiration different from the way we commonly use the word inspired?

Why is it important to say that the human authors truly wrote, rather than treating them as passive machines?

Does human involvement automatically rule out divine involvement? Why or why not?

Finish the sentence: To consider biblical inspiration fairly, I need to...

Name one assumption to examine, question to explore, or attitude to bring.

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③ Correct Common Misunderstandings

The word "inspiration" can create the wrong impression if it is not explained carefully. Christians do not have to deny the Bible's human qualities to believe that God communicated through its writers.

What Inspiration Does Not Mean

- The writers did not become passive machines.
- Every book was not dictated in exactly the same way.
- The authors did not lose their personalities, vocabularies, experiences, or historical settings.
- Every biblical book does not sound alike.
- The Bible did not fall from heaven as one completed volume.

Which misunderstanding about biblical inspiration have you encountered most often?

Why would different personalities and writing styles not automatically count against inspiration?

What is the difference between God guiding a writer and God turning a writer into a passive machine?

Finish the sentence: Biblical inspiration does not require...

Think about personality, vocabulary, research, culture, or writing style.

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④ Consider Real Human Processes

The Bible shows its writers using ordinary human abilities. Christians believe God could accomplish His purpose through research, memory, eyewitness testimony, personal experience, and writing addressed to real situations.

Human Processes Seen in Scripture

- Research, investigation, and eyewitness testimony.
- Memory and personal experience.
- Earlier written sources and historical records.
- Poetry, emotion, storytelling, and reflection.
- Letters written to address real questions and problems.

Which human process in the list above surprises or interests you most? Why?

How could God guide Luke's research without erasing the fact that Luke researched and arranged his account?

How do real emotions, circumstances, and historical settings help make the biblical writings understandable?

What question remains for you about divine purpose working through a human process?

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⑤ Read Human Words Carefully

Calling the Bible God's Word should not make readers ignore its human setting. Inspiration concerns God's work through the original authors. Preservation concerns how their writings were copied. Translation concerns how those writings are expressed in another language.

Why is it helpful to distinguish inspiration from preservation and translation?

How should the Bible's human qualities affect the way we read it?

What questions should you ask about an author, audience, situation, and type of writing?

What question about biblical inspiration would you most like to explore next?

Name and describe the issue you most want to examine rather than avoiding it.

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⑥ Respond to the Claim Honestly

Understanding biblical inspiration does not require pretending that every question has been answered. It requires identifying what seems clear, naming what remains difficult, and deciding what you need to examine next.

Which part of the Christian understanding of inspiration seems most reasonable to you? Why?

Which part remains the hardest for you to understand or accept?

What evidence, question, or subject would help you examine the claim more fairly?

Finish the sentence: My next step in exploring biblical inspiration is...

One-Sentence Takeaway

Biblical inspiration is the Christian belief that God communicated through real human authors without erasing their personalities, experiences, writing styles, or historical settings.

Closing Prayer

Creator, give us wisdom as we consider how You may have spoken through human words. Help us avoid easy assumptions and careless conclusions. Teach us to examine the Bible honestly, understand its writers carefully, and remain open to the possibility that You have made Yourself known through them. If these words carry Your message, give us humility to listen and courage to respond. Amen.

Continue the Journey

Keep asking honest questions, keep reading carefully, and keep seeking the truth

You do not have to stop here.

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The goal is not to erase the Bible's humanity.
The goal is to understand how Christians believe God worked through it.

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