



What to Do When a Group Member is Making Theologically Inaccurate Statements

The Bible is a phenomenal resource, but it's also very complex and its words can sometimes be misunderstood or misinterpreted. You may have times when group members say things that you know aren't in line with what the Bible teaches. While you don't want to call out and potentially embarrass the member, you also don't want other members taking in misinformation. What do you do? Here are some tips:

1. **Remember your relationship.** As the group facilitator, you should have influence over your group members. They look up to and respect you, and ideally, they identify you as someone they trust. If these things are true, group members will listen to what you have to say if you calmly disagree with them. But if the group or the member is new and that relationship isn't strong yet, they may bristle or become angry if you disagree with their opinion. Consider your relationship with this person before you act.
2. **Identify where the person is on their spiritual journey.** Think about what God is doing in this person's life. Are they a new believer? Are they someone who believes in another religion? And how aware are other groups members of this person's status? Will they let this questionable statement go, or do you need to make a point of correction and lead the group back toward the truth?
3. **Determine the importance is the theological misstep.** Is the inaccurate statement a core tenant of the Christian faith, or is it a peripheral issue? Minor inaccuracies are easier to let slide; it may be worth saying nothing rather than distracting the conversation. However, if the statement may cause a negative effect for the group member, immediate correction is likely necessary.
4. **Consult the Bible.** There's no refuting something quoted in God's word. Double-check questionable statements by consulting the Bible.
5. **Consider confronting in private.** There are times when an incorrect statement could mislead other group members — these should be addressed in the moment with loving, calm correction. This runs the risk of causing the confused member to become embarrassed or defensive. It may be better to wait until after the meeting is over, then quietly approach them alone and ask them about the statement. Try to understand why they said it and where the perspective comes from, then kindly try to guide them back to the truth.
6. **Double check on gray areas.** If someone says something you believe may be inaccurate, but you're not quite sure, put a pin in the thought and consult others before correcting them. Talk with a pastor, mentor, about your coach about the statement in question.