



WHAT IS TOPGEAR ABOUT?



In case you're not aware of it TopGear is one of the great icons of modern media. There are now versions of TopGear in many countries, but the original British TV show is the real TopGear. TopGear is estimated to have around 350 million viewers per week in 170 different countries. That's 17 times the population of our entire country – watching this show. This is one of the most downloaded TV shows on the internet. It has now gone for seventeen series and is going strong.

Obviously TopGear seems to have tapped into the modern obsession for cars. Brits love cars, Americans love cars, Aussies love cars, and now Chinese TopGear reveals how the Chinese love cars too. It looks like a show about cars and the modern love for cars.

What is it about TopGear?

I mean I love cars too – there was a stage where I changed cars like some people change underwear. Like many young Australian men I was always working on my car and scheming to improve or replace it. So you can easily understand why a young 'revhead' loves TopGear. But even people who are not into cars love watching this show. In fact, a good number of the fans are not really car lovers at all – like my wife. She doesn't care about cars much at all but she loves TopGear. So what is TopGear really about?

[We discussed what TopGear is really about!

Immanuel attendees agreed that it's got a lot to do with mateship – the three blokes are mates. They saw that it's about fun and our relationship with each other and cars. The funny thing is that we agreed that TopGear is about RELATIONSHIPS which is funny!]

I suspect that one reason TopGear is so popular is because modern people are obsessed with getting somewhere.

We love going places.
We love exploring.
We love the journey.
We love getting somewhere.
And we love machines that will help us get somewhere too!
Perhaps TopGear isn't just about cars – perhaps it's also about getting somewhere?

How does this relate to the Bible?
Well, the Bible is full of roads!

THE ROAD IN THE BIBLE.

Have you ever realised that the Bible is all about roads and getting somewhere?
In fact, the word 'road' is a key word in the Bible, but we don't notice it because of tame translations.

Look at today's Old Testament Bible reading – it's a TopGear Bible reading...

Isaiah 43:19

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it grows; don't you see it? I am making a way in the desert...

Isaiah 40:3-4

In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord- in the desert make a smooth highway for our God.

Can you see the three TopGear places in these words from Isaiah?

Isaiah 43:19

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it grows; don't you see it? I am making a way (ROAD) in the desert...

Isaiah 40:3-4

In the wilderness prepare the way (ROAD) for the Lord- in the desert make a smooth highway (MOTORWAY) for our God.

See that word 'way' – it's an old fashioned word for 'road' or 'highway'.
The prophecies in the Old Testament are full of promises that God will make a highway or road.
The TopGear blokes would love this.
The Bible is all about roads – what road you choose.
The way you live is your 'path' or 'road'.
What road are you on?

Psalms 16:11

You make known to me the way (ROAD) of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence...

See that word 'way' there again – it means 'road / highway'.
So God promises to make for us a ROAD or a HIGHWAY of life.
And the destination of this ROAD is... Joy in God's presence.

All through the Old Testament there is this growing expectation that there will be an ultimate road.
There will be a way or road for God's presence to come into our hearts.
And finally when Jesus came this word way/road got used in a radical new way...

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way (ROAD) and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me..."

Hebrews 10:19-20

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way (LIVING ROAD) opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...

Do you get what this means?
There is a way, a highway, a road you can travel on.

This path or road will lead you to the most holy place – to knowing God.
And what is this ROAD?

Jesus.
Jesus says “I am the road to God.”
Now that’s radical!

And after Jesus came the first followers of Jesus, the first Christians took that word ‘road’ to radical new places.
They started to call themselves “the way” – which means “the road”.

Acts 24:14
“I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way...”

(See also Acts 9:2, 19:9, 19:23, 22:4, 24:4, 24:22 where ‘Way’ is used as a name for the Christian movement)

If you wanted to ask someone if they were a Christian you might say to them “are you on the ROAD?”
And they might say, “Yes I am on the ROAD.”
They were talking about Jesus as if he was the ROAD to life with God,
And they were saying that following Jesus is like travelling on a ROAD,
And they were calling the life of following Jesus ‘the road’!

So if you love TopGear, love the ROAD to life.
There is a ROAD for souls, and this road, this path, this highway is Jesus Christ himself!

So what does that all mean?

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

So what if there’s a spiritual path/way/road who is Jesus Christ?
What does this mean for your life?
Three things I want to leave you with.

1. JESUS IS NOT A ‘TICKET’ – HE IS A ROAD, A PATH, A WAY OF LIFE.

If you saw all the baptisms this morning and thought that they were like a ‘ticket to heaven’ you got it wrong.
Jesus is not some sort of ticket or insurance.
He’s not something you can just tick off on your list and then move on.
Jesus is a road, a path, a way of life.
Jesus is a journey for life.

If you think you can just get baptised and then drive your life wherever you want then you are missing the point.
Jesus is a whole path for your life – a road to follow.

Baptism is the start of this wonderful road,
And in Christ’s life this road led to the cross.
For you it will lead to suffering and struggle too,
For you it will cost as you forsake other roads, other choices, other possible detours.

They used to call Christianity ‘The Way’ because they understood that it was a road for your whole life.
This road will cost you everything but on this road you will gain everything!

Jesus is a road, a highway, a path.

2. FOLLOWING JESUS IS BOTH ABOUT THE DESTINATION AND THE JOURNEY.

Imagine if you watched an episode of Top Gear
They pulled up in a huge V12 Jaguar prestige car,
And they said “we’re driving to Cornwall in the Jag V12”

But then they just said, "And now we are at Cornwall!"
You'd feel cheated.
Because it's not just about the destination – it's all about getting there.
It's about the Journey too!

Following Jesus is like that too.
It's not all about getting to heaven.
It's about his deeply life-changing presence with you right now.
It's not all about what happens after you die,
It's about your life "on the road" with him right now.

It's about the destination that Jesus takes you to,
And it's also about the road you travel – which is Jesus Christ.

3. STAY ON THE ROAD – STAY WITH CHRIST.

With Christmas coming this is the season we traditionally call "Advent".
This is a time when we focus on 'staying on the road'.
Perhaps you need to hear someone say 'get back on the road!'
Because if you are on another road you will reach the wrong destination.
You can't be on two roads at the same time.
Only One.
Christ alone.

God is love,
And he has given us the road, the way, the path to life.

We don't have to worry about our performance,
We don't have to be concerned with every minor detail,
We don't have to worry about how good we can drive,
We just stay with Christ – stay on the road.
We simply need to keep our eyes on the road and stick with Jesus,
If we are with him then then no matter how tough the journey is right and the destination is sure!

Amen.