

# BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT HOW TO PREPARE AND DELIVER POWERFUL BIBLE MESSAGES

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## **About the author.**

I was born and raised in America. An ordained minister, I hold degrees from University of Portland (B.A., M.Ed.), Western Baptist Seminary (M.Div.), California Graduate School of Theology (Ph.D.), and Faith Evangelical Seminary (D.Min.). I served as a pastor for eight years, and another nine years as a missionary to the Kingdom of Tonga, South Pacific. I have over 20 years experience teaching at the college or graduate school level at various institutions. Presently, I teach a variety of psychology and sociology courses at a community college and Faith Evangelical Seminary (Tacoma) – where I also teach Bible. I founded the teaching site for Faith Evangelical Seminary in the Kingdom of Tonga. I, along with my wife, Esmie, travel internationally to conduct seminars and workshops for students, laypeople, and pastors. For more biographical details, look at the About Us at the website, **Bible-teaching-about.com**.

## **Introduction**

This compact ebook clearly explains the art and science of Bible interpretation – including personal preparation, 12 concise principles, and a step-by-step worksheet to follow. A concrete easy-to-follow plan is given on how to prepare and outline Bible messages. Proven teaching principles are explained, along with how to make a syllabus and lesson plan for excellent results in a classroom. A section details how to deliver a potent and compelling presentation in any situation. Finally, a time tested strategy is presented on how to organize and conduct a successful group home Bible study for evangelism and discipleship. A selected bibliography points the reader to a rich mine of information.

Some sections are taken from the author's book, Christian Foundations for the South Pacific.

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## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been puzzled about what a Bible passage really means – and if it has any relevance for you in your daily life? Let me try another question: have you ever been troubled on how to best prepare and deliver a Bible lesson, sermon, or conduct a group Bible study? If yes, then you are at the right place! Read on!

In order to accurately understand what the Bible says you must follow time-tested principles of interpretation. I will teach you those principles, and how to use them. Plus – you will learn a step-by-step system on how to bring Bible passages alive: observation, interpretation, and application – which will bring you great benefit.

You are reading a brief survey of what is known as “hermeneutics,” which includes exegesis, logic, along with historical and cultural elements of the original writings. Hermeneutics is a science, art, and the application of specific skills.

The primary purpose of biblical hermeneutics is to determine the meaning of the Bible. There are two parts: to find the original meaning a text had to the writer and readers, then to transmit that meaning to you and me today in our particular cultural and personal life situation.

The Bible is the most exciting and valuable document given to humanity – the actual Word of God. From it we learn how to live life here and now, and how to prepare for the next life. But, it one thing to believe the Bible is the Word of God; yet, quite another to know what the Word means to you. I will show you.

But wait! After you figure out what the text means, you must know how to develop and deliver what you have learned. In this ebook, you will learn how to plan and prepare a Bible message, then how to deliver your presentation in the classroom. The last two areas will pinpoint how to present a compelling message in many contexts, and finally, how to organize and conduct a successful group Bible study.

With this introduction, let’s get to work!

## PART ONE BIBLE STUDY METHODS

### PREPARATION FOR BIBLE STUDY.

In preparing our self for Bible study there are three issues to be discussed here: we must be spiritually, mentally prepared, and possess good study tools.

#### Spiritual preparation.

**1. First, we must have clear in our mind the reason and benefit** for Bible study. Scripture clearly commands, *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). Bible study gives us a framework to spot false teachers and religions (2 Timothy 3:1-9). We also learn how to live in this life and to be prepared for the next life. We gain profound knowledge, personal faith, purification of life, preparation and power for service and ministry (Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 3:15-18; 1 Peter 2:2; Romans 10:17; John 15:3; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 5:11-14).

**2. Secondly, we must be spiritually born again** to fully understand and appreciate the Bible. We are told that unbelievers cannot and do not want to understand the Bible (1 Corinthians 2:14). I recall that before I received Christ as my Savior, the Bible did not make sense. It seemed like a book full of contradictions, old myths and lies. After my conversion, the Bible opened up to me. I was amazed. The supposed contradictions and lies disappeared, and the truths became very real to me. I even spent hours reading its pages. Granted, I do not fully understand everything in the Bible, but much has become clear, I am still learning and I want to know more. I have found that other believers have had the same experience. The Bible is about spiritual truth; thus, we must be spiritually alive to understand it.

**3. Third, We must approach the Bible with a humble and clean heart.** If we entertain and tolerate sin in our lives, we will not want to approach the Bible, and we will explain away those parts that speaks of our shortcomings and sin (1 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 4:12). Christ desires our deep friendship and fellowship, but if we have offended Him with sin, the fellowship is cut off. We must confess the sin and come to Him in humility and honesty (1 John 1:1-9).

**4. We must pray** (Psalm 119:18). Communication is a two way street: we talk to God through prayer, and He talks to us through His Bible. When a student does not understand a problem at school, they go and ask the teacher. In the same way, when we do not understand a part of Scripture, we go and ask the author – God.

**5. We must recognize the role of the Holy Spirit** (John 16:12-15). It is His job to bring understanding and illumination to the Bible passages. He gives meaning and insight on how to apply the Bible to our lives.

#### **Mental preparation.**

As well as being spiritually prepared, we must also be mentally prepared. We must be willing to believe, obey and study the Bible.

**1. Mentally we must be willing to believe the Bible** (Matthew 13:10-15). We cannot doubt and refuse to believe the truthfulness and inspiration of the Bible. If we went to a class and told the teacher we refuse to believe what he said, he

would refuse to teach us. We would be wasting our and his time. It is the same with God: why would He want to explain that which we refused to believe?

**2. Mentally we must be willing to obey the Bible.** We are to practice and proclaim the Bible truths we learn (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; 2:1-12; James 1:22-25). It is like someone said, "Use it or lose it." As with belief, God will not teach us more if we will not obey what He has taught us. It must also be added, that God also teaches us through our failures. It is from our mistakes in life that we learn of His grace, and that His way of living life is better than our own ideas and plans.

**3. Mentally we must be willing to study hard** (2 Timothy 2:15). In our study we need to find a quiet place and set aside blocks of time to concentrate on study. It is good to study when we are mentally fresh. Keep a pad and pencil handy, and begin to build a library of good books about the Bible. Take Bible courses as often as you can. If a good local Bible college is not near, then you can study by correspondence or take courses on the internet. Take a serious interest in Sunday school and sermons.

#### **Bible study tools.**

You may have the motivation to mow your lawn, but if you don't obtain the proper tool (a lawn mower), the grass will just keep growing. Likewise, we may be spiritually and mentally convinced and prepared to study the Bible, but if we do not have the proper tools, it is very difficult. The following discussion offers a quick overview of Bible study tools; however, the amount of superb literature is abundant, and the suggestions below offer only a thin slice of tools available.

**1. A good Bible translation** is important. Accuracy of the translation from Greek and Hebrew to English (or whatever is your native language) is critical. The New American Standard Translation and New King James Version are excellent. Other translations vary from average to bad. Some paraphrases, such as the Living Bible, are useful for devotional use.

**2. Study Bibles** are a great addition to your Bible study tool box. As a start, I would recommend three: The Ryrie Study Bible, The Thompson Chain Reference Bible, and the Nelson Study Bible

**3. Bible concordances are important.** These books list every verse in which a particular word is found. Make sure the concordance matches the translation you have. Most study Bibles contain a small concordance. The two most commonly larger ones used are *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, and *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

**4. Bible commentaries** are essential. There are many good one volume works, and many two or several volumes. A one volume commentary is *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. A two volume set is *The Bible Knowledge*

*Commentary* by John Walvoord and Roy Zuck. An excellent multiple volumes set is *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* edited by Frank Gaebelin.

**5. Bible handbooks** give much detail on issues of the Bible. One old standard is *Unger's Bible Handbook*.

**6. Bible dictionaries** are a step up from the handbooks. One example is the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Another fine work is *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, by J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney. Taking things to the next level would be a Bible encyclopedia. An example is the five volumes *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, edited by Merrill C. Tenney.

**7. Word studies** or dictionaries of the original languages are helpful. An example is *Vine's Complete Expository Diction of Old and New Testament Words*, by Merrill Unger and William White, Jr.

**8. Bible background books** are vital. One can gain much from Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, but others give more detail. Examples are the *New Testament Survey* by Merrill C. Tenney, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, by Gleason Archer, *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible*, edited by J.I. Packer and M.C. Tenney. Another old standard is *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim.

**9. Systematic Theologies** are also critical in understanding specific topic and doctrines. One classic is L. Berkhof's *Manual of Christian Doctrine*. More recent works include Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, and Millard J. Erickson's *Christian Theology*.

**10. Apologetic works** are supportive to Bible study. These works defend the Bible, expose false religions, and explain how we got the Bible. An older but excellent work is Harold Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible*. Another older work is Walter Martin's *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Josh McDowell has written many fine books. A recent (1999) book is his *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, which includes and updates his previous works on "evidences that demand a verdict." A vital work is *A General Introduction to the Bible*, by Norman Geisler and William Nix.

**11. Revelation and interpretation** is a category to identify when suggesting books on Bible study. There are two old classics that still stand unsurpassed. One is *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, by Bernard Ramm, and the other is *Biblical Revelation*, by Clark Pinnock. Other books in this category would include ones on inerrancy and inspiration. There is also overlap between this grouping and others in this list.

**12. Specific topic books** form the final point in this list. These are books devoted to specific subjects concerning the Bible. They could be doctrines such

as *Angels*, by Billy Graham, *Christian Counseling*, by Gary Collins, or creation vs. evolution works such as *The Genesis Flood* by John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, or the *Genesis Record* by Henry Morris. Another great classic is *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*, by Wilbur Smith. The shelves of Christian Book stores are full of special topic works covering every imaginable topic.

In order to collect Bible study helps that are evangelical, one can become familiar with the authors, and also with certain publishing companies. Some examples of publishers who publish evangelical works include Baker Book House, Moody Press, Zondervan, Thomas Nelson Publishers, InterVarsity, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Cook Communications Ministries, Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., Navpress, Tyndale House Publishers, Bethany House Publishers, Broadman & Holman Publishers, and Word.

Having now examined the issues of spiritual and mental preparation, along with a brief introduction to Bible study tools, we turn to an introduction to the principles of Bible study.

## PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLE STUDY.

In this section we look at 12 principles that govern Bible interpretation.

**1. First**, we interpret the Bible in a **plain, literal, straightforward manner**. Let the interpretation be that which arises naturally out of the text, just as you would ordinarily understand any other piece of literature, such as a newspaper.

Some try to find a deep, hidden, spiritual meaning in the text, and the result is just their own wild imagination. Read the Bible like you would a travel guide or any other book. Look at what is on the surface, the direct intent of the author. God has communicated clear, plain, rational statements of fact to humanity concerning vital spiritual truths. The better we apply our God given reason, logic, and the rules of language to those statements, the better we can understand and relate to those real, spiritual dynamics and realities of the universe.

**2. Principle two** is to consider **figurative language**. The Bible uses metaphors, similes, symbols and other figures of speech, but even they have a plain, literal meaning behind the word picture. For example, Paul refers to Cephas and John as “pillars” of the church (Galatians 2:9). It is obvious they were not marble posts holding up the roof of a church building. The meaning of the word picture is that they were strong, supportive leaders in the church.

**3. Principle three** is to note the **grammatical structure**. Know what the words mean and how they are used in the sentence. It is always best to go to the original languages, but for most this is not possible. The next best choice is to obtain accurate English translations, and from there to the best native translation. Identify the subjects, verbs, modifiers, predicates, and how they relate to each other to communicate the meaning of the sentence and paragraph. Every

sentence has a subject, verb, and predicate. Sometimes the predicate is implied, or can be contained in the verb. A simple example is, "The boy kicked the bucket." Boy is the subject, kick is the verb, and bucket is the predicate.

**4. Principle four** is to interpret the section within its **context**. This principle can be broken down into two divisions. First, there is the textual context. Every word is couched within the context of a sentence. Sentences are in the context of a thought and paragraph. There is the context of the particular book, and finally there is the context of the Bible itself. An important key: what was the actual intent of the writer? What was he trying to communicate to his readers? What was his purpose? How would the original readers interpret and understand the words of the writer?

The second context is the cultural, historical, and geographical context of the particular biblical text. The Bible was written over a period of 1600 years, and the last book was written almost 2,000 years ago. Two major languages were used, and many cultures were involved. The writers came from different backgrounds. People in another culture and time of history think and live differently, and to understand them, we must understand their culture.

For example, I lived seven years in the South Pacific island country of Tonga. I did not understand all the nuances of the Tongan culture. The weddings, funerals, kava circles and ceremonies carry subtle meanings different than American culture. By the same token, Tongans have trouble understanding Western cultures when they travel overseas.

Consequently, to understand the Bible, we need to understand at least some of the culture, lands, and history, and situation of the people in the Bible. For example, Jesus used many illustrations from farming, and fishing. If we know something about the farming and fishing practices of those people in that day, then we can better understand what Jesus meant in His teachings.

**5. Principle five** involves the **progress of revelation**. God did not give the Bible all at once, but little by little. The practical result is that something that is very brief and hard to understand, say, in Genesis, may be explained more fully later. In fact, the Old Testament would be very difficult to understand without the aid of the New Testament. For example, the Old Testament does not mention the emergence of the church. However, Jesus announced its future coming (Matthew 16:18), Acts tells of its historical establishment, and the epistles further explain the significance of the church. In particular, Ephesians devotes much time explaining the nature and place of the church.

**6. Principle six** involves taking into account the **major divisions and eras** of the Bible. Scriptures, for example, that told Israel how to sacrifice animals do not apply to the church of the New Testament. Times were different with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which were different than the times of Abraham.

Carefully determine which era the verses fit into, and their specific application to those times.

**7. Principle seven** is to **gather all the pertinent verses** when studying a specific doctrine or topic. It is foolish to base a doctrine on a few selected verses. All the biblical information needs to be brought together, compared, contrasted and analyzed before a doctrine can be stated. Give attention to the details of the text. Many times the answers to alleged problems can be found right in the text, but were overlooked. Our Western court system works the same way. The police are to gather all the relevant information regarding a crime, and the defense does the same. Then, all the evidence is presented to a jury who sifts through the material to reach a decision or judgment.

**8. Principle eight** is to realize the **Bible is authoritative and final standard** over all matters of life: history, science, and faith. This means that when a conflict arises between someone's view of history, society, science, religion – or whatever – and the view of the Bible, then the Bible is taken as the final authority. Simply put: humanity's opinions must bow to God's statements. For example, when choosing between Karl Marx's analysis of society and that of God's, then we believe God. Or, when choosing between whether or not we were created by God, or evolved from something that came from nothing, then we believe God.

**9. Principle nine** states that ultimately there is one perfect author of the Bible who cannot lead us astray, and who has given us an error free Bible in the original autographs. From this foundation, we may derive four sub principles. First, **the Bible does not contradict itself**; therefore, we should view biblical data as complementary. Unfortunately, many people approach the Bible and try to manufacture as many contradictions as possible, but under closer examination, the so-called contradictions disappear and are found to actually complement each other with wonderful harmony.

Second, we should **compare Scripture with Scripture**. Obscure and hard to understand verses must give way to clearer verses that deal with the same subject. Brief statements are better understood in light of fuller explanations. We can find several places in the Bible where the same subject is discussed. By looking at the accumulated data, we gain a better understanding. An example is Colossians and Ephesians, and the subject of being filled with the Holy Spirit. We discover that the experience of being *"filled with the Holy Spirit"* (Ephesians 5:18) is described later by Paul as letting, *"the word of Christ richly dwell within you"* (Colossians 3:16)

Third, we are to compare our conclusions with the **analogy of Faith**. This means that a verse must agree with the other known clear foundational doctrines of the Christian Faith. Our findings must not contradict the total teachings of Scripture.

Fourth, if there is uncertainty about a particular text, wait for more information to clear up the problem. Don't jump to the conclusion that God made a mistake. The mistake is in our inability to understand what God has said, having overlooked or misunderstood some information, or lacking complete information.

**10. Principle ten** of Bible interpretation is to understand that different kinds of literature have special rules of interpretation. The Bible contains many kinds of material: history, letters, poetry, drama, prophecy, parables, types, legal, etc. In this space, I bring attention to three particular kinds of literature in the Bible that sometimes brings difficulties in understanding what the text means.

First, there are Bible types. Types are historical people, institutions, events, actions, offices, and things in the Old Testament that symbolized, predicted or prefigured the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Types are object lessons or pictures by which God taught His people about His grace and power.

For example, Adam was a type of prefiguring of Christ (Romans 5:14). The lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:9) was a type of Christ's crucifixion (John 3:14-16). The sacrificial system in the Old Testament is a type of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins. Since it is easy to invent types where none exist, the safest rule to follow is to determine from the New Testament whether the thing is plainly said to be a type. For example, in speaking of the time Moses struck the rock to provide water for Israel, Paul wrote, "*They drank of that spiritual rock...and that rock was Christ*" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

The second kind of literature that can bring difficulties is the parable. Biblical parables were a teaching method that took a commonly known earthly experience, event, or custom that contained or illustrated a spiritual lesson.

Examples are the parables of the sower, wheat and tares, mustard seed, leaven, and fig tree (Matthew 13:3, 24, 31, 33; 24:32). This was a method Jesus used to communicate spiritual truth to responsive disciples, yet hide the truth from unresponsive hearers (Matthew 13:11-17; Luke 8:8). To understand the parable, recover the local, cultural background. Second, locate the one central truth in the illustration. Find how much is explained by Christ Himself. Search for clues in the context. Compare the parable with the recordings of the parable in the other Gospels wherever possible. Finally, compare the doctrinal truth with other clear teachings, and do not read doctrine into the parable.

The third type of literature considered here is prophecy. There are two kinds: simple preaching the Word of God, and predicting future events. When interpreting prophecy, take the plain, literal meaning unless by a careful study of the context it clearly indicates the section is a type, symbol, or other figurative imagery. Note the historical background of the prophecy, the political and social events. Remember that prophecy involves describing future event that are beyond the experience of the immediate hearers. For example, think of the

difficulty of describing the internet to a person who lived before electricity, telephones, radios, satellites, and photography! **Warning:** don't read your prophecies into Scripture that cannot be demonstrated from the context itself.

One must also take into account the context and flow of the discussion. The prophets were not always systematic in their writing, but gave pictures of events that represented realities present, would happen soon, or would happen very far away in the future. Events that occur vastly apart in time are sometimes pressed together in the same prophetic sequence. Find parallel passages of prophecy to compare and contrast. Realize there can be multiple fulfillments of a prophecy.

**11. Principle eleven:** look for the principle involved. This ties back to principle four. When interpreting any section of Scripture, look for the eternal, abiding truth, or principle, that consistently stays the same across all cultures and periods of history. Distinguish between what is cultural and applies only to that distant time, place and event from the eternal, universal principle involved.

For example, when the children of Israel were fleeing from the Egyptians, Moses was to lift up his staff and stretch out his hand over the Red Sea (Exodus 14:16). The sea parted as a miracle from God. However, to use a staff and stretched out hand as a military strategy today would not work. That particular tactic was a localized, unique event limited to that time, place, and event.

But, obedience to God's express commands is an eternal, abiding principle that applies to all cultures and history. That is the principle we can pick up from the story and apply to today. His commands and promises are found in the Bible.

**12. Principle twelve:** develop good study habits. Following are several tips for a good study routine.

### **Study tips for greater learning And better exam scores.**

Following are some basic suggestions to make your study time more effective. They work for bible study, and if you are taking courses in school.

1. You must actively process the information. Using the SQ3R method is helpful, as explained below.
2. S = Survey. Read the chapters related to the passage for an overview of general content. Get the bird's eye view.
3. Q = Question. As you prepare to reread the section, form questions in your own words, then seek the answers as you reread the material.
4. 3 = three R's: Read, Rehearse, and Review. As you **read**, write down all the concepts, people and terms, and what they mean. As you **rehearse**, restate the material in your own words. Then, **review** the material until you have mastered it.
5. Understand and memorize the terms and their definitions.
6. Write down all the important people, and why they are important.

7. Then take the test, or start putting the data together: organize, compare, and contrast.

The bottom line is this: just keep going over the material until you know it.

Review, review, review.

### **Some other helpful hints are as follows.**

1. Space your study time. It is better to distribute study in smaller chunks over a period of time rather than cramming just before your Bible presentation.
2. Find a quiet place to study, and use the same place to do your work. Try to study at the same time every day. A familiar time in a familiar quiet place gears your mind to focus, and shuts out distractions.
3. Think critically. Note people's assumptions, evaluate the evidence, and assess the conclusions. Questions to ask include, "Who is saying it (are they an authority)?" "What exactly do their words say?" "What do they mean by the words?" "How do they know (what is the evidence, and is it valid)?" "What do others say?"
4. While in class, listen actively. Write down notes. Stay focused. Listen for the important main points and sub points. Ask questions.
5. Over learn the material. Even though you may understand the contents as you read, over learn the content by reviewing. Devote extra study time.
6. Be wise in taking exams. If you have a combination essay and multiple choice exam, turn to the essay first. Focus on the question to make sure you understand what the instructor wants. Jot down some ideas, and then turn to the multiple choice. When you finish them, then return and write out the answers to the essay. Check your spelling and grammar.

When taking multiple choice exams, remember to select the best answer from the choices. There might be two or more answers that may be construed to be correct, but pick the best answer. As you read the question, take a moment to try to think of the answer before going to the choices. If you don't know which might be the best answer, use the process of elimination. That is, eliminate those answers you know are wrong, and then select the answer left standing. Again, be sure to focus on and clearly understand the question.

Here we are. A review. I have shown you the preparation phase and 12 important principles of Bible study. Now, I will show you a simple method of Bible study.

### **A METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY**

It can be tricky to know how to apply the Bible to everyday living. Too often the Bible seems like a collection of fables and stories from another world – like the Pacific Islander's ancient god, Maui, hoisting up an island from the depth of the

blue sea. We listen to preaching. We read the Bible. But it is hard to connect the words of the page to our fears, frustrations, and problems in the everyday grind of life. It sometimes is like trying to screw a half inch nut onto a one inch bolt.

However, the task is far from impossible. There are several valid methods of Bible study. Some examples include the historical Bible study, topical study, concordance word study, biographical study, or an exegetical exposition of a single passage. I'll show you how to do the latter later on.

In this space, I introduce a simple, 3-step plan that involves observation, interpretation, and application. Depending on the Holy Spirit, and with practice, patience, prayer and perseverance, the plan will become a durable and effective tool for you to dig out timeless treasures of Bible truths. These truths will make a rich, vital and real profitable impact on your life.

As we walk through this process, I will use a familiar verse to illustrate the process, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”* (John 3:16).

### **Step one: Observation**

**1. Observation is the first step.** We must determine what the passage actually says. We can read the section over a few times to get the overview, and then dig out the details: facts, people, figures, writer, readers, grammar, culture, history, geography. We determine the context, find the purpose of the writer, and trace the thought progression. In plain, normal, straight forward language, just what do the words actually say? What do they mean? What is the historical and cultural background?

Apply the who, what, why, where, when, and how questions. For example, ask questions such as who is writing? Who are the people in the text/story? Who are the readers? What is the writer saying? Why is he saying it? When did he say it? What were the circumstances? Where did the events take place? How are the people to respond? What truth did the writer tell the readers?

Now we can study our sample verse. From a good study Bible, commentary, Bible dictionary or handbook, we find the Apostle John is the writer, people in general are the readers, and John wrote the Gospel so that people might be saved (John 20:30-31). In the immediate context, John recorded a convincing conversation between a powerful Jesus and a puzzled Jewish theologian by the name of Nicodemus on how to be saved – that is, how to obtain eternal life.

Looking at the grammatical connections, “God” is the subject of the sentence, and “gave” is the main verb. The motive for God “giving” His son was love for humanity. The result of this gracious “gift” is that eternal life, not punishment, may be given to all who believe.

By comparing Scripture with Scripture, maybe with a Bible concordance, we discover that God's Son is Jesus Christ. Later in the book, we learn that the "giving" refers to Christ's Atonement, or, His death, burial and resurrection from the dead. This act paid sin's penalty and obtained eternal life for all who believe.

Next, we get a dictionary to understand key words. We take three words that are very important: believe, perish, and eternal life. The Greek word for believe, we discover, means to trust, stick to, cling to, and is illustrated in the context by an Old Testament story (John 3:14, 15; cf. Numbers 21:4-9). The story is of those who sinned, and consequently were bitten by poisonous snakes. If the afflicted, however, looked by faith to the bronze serpent Moses had erected, then they were healed.

Believe is more than simply agreeing to something such as whether the weather today is rainy or sunny. Belief is a commitment, an embracing, or casting of one's deep trust upon something – like trusting an airplane to stay up in the air while we are riding on board.

Eternal life means everlasting. It is a wonderful quality of life that will never end, personally knowing and experiencing God, and residing, forgiven, in the presence of God (John 17:3). Perish, on the other hand, means a final destiny of ruin, described as the hot wrath of God abiding on the one who stubbornly refuses to believe (John 3:26). Other Scripture tells us that the place of eternal ruin is hell (Cf. Revelation 20:10-15; Matthew 25:46).

Having now gained a pool of information, we can move on to the next step, which is interpretation.

### **Step two: Interpretation**

**2. Interpretation is the second step.** In this phase we find out what the passage actually means. We discover the major theme – the big idea. We locate the spiritual truth the writer is communicating to the readers. We determine what the passage teaches us about God, and how He relates to us. What doctrines are taught? How is the theme developed? What is the main lesson? The key things to extract out of the text are the eternal, abiding principles that remain constant and absolute in all cultures and time of history. We separate out and discard those elements that relate only to that time and culture, but not to us today.

From our example, we pick up several precious principles that bring light to our mind, joy to our heart, and energy to our will. First, God loves. Second, all humanity needs salvation. Third, God has provided salvation. Fourth, salvation is obtained by faith. Fifth, salvation involves escaping eternal punishment, and gain

eternal life – like escaping the hungry lunge of a shark by climbing safely onto the wooden deck of a rescue boat.

As a safeguard, it is always wise to compare our interpretations with other teachings of the Bible to see if they agree. A good book on Bible doctrine, or a commentary, will help. Our interpretation of John 3:16, we will find, is consistent with New Testament teaching. As a final point, for any verse, there is one true interpretation, but there can be many applications.

### **Step three: Application**

**3. Application is the third step.** This step involves much prayer to have God show us the true needs in our life. We conduct an honest appraisal of our lives, not morbid introspections, but a fair examination of what areas need change (1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

Application is connecting the truths we have discovered into our personal life: our character, behavior, feelings, thinking, attitudes, relationships, service, priorities, and spiritual life. It is hooking the Bible up to our life, like hooking a horse up to a cart. The secret to application is understanding, faith, and obedience in the power of the Holy Spirit. We understand the Bible and believe it to be true. Then, we act until new habits are formed, and our devotion to Christ increases. Some question might be:

Are there attitudes for me to change?

Are there sins for me to confess?

Are there actions I need to take or cease?

Are there promises I can claim, or commands to obey?

Are there insights on how to pray better?

Do any of the principles instruct or encourage me on relationships of life: marriage, family, workplace, etc.

Are there things that help me in the defects of my character?

Are there encouragements for disappointments and failures in life?

What in the text gives me hope?

What does it tell me about God?

What changes can I make to practice better priorities in life?

What intellectual thoughts stimulate my mind?

What does it teach me about the next life?

What does it teach me about right and wrong?

Are there examples to follow?

Are there prayers to pray?

Is there a new perspective I can adopt in light of my life experience?

Is there a new skill I can learn?

As a final exercise, you may wish to wrap up your study by asking yourself what is the main lesson you received. What is the main “morsel” that stood out to you and became very real? In other words, what truth personally stood out to you and

seemed to impress your heart in a real, fresh, special way? Why did it stand out? What does it mean to you personally?

In light of our example, we might ask ourselves, “Have I ever, personally, with a conscious act of my will, linked my belief (trust) onto the Person and work of Jesus Christ to save me from my sins and give me eternal life?” We must make the application personal. That is, we are talking about your sins, not that He died for sins in general, but rather, He died and rose again for your sins – personally, for your sins.

By the way, I have trusted Christ. Have you? If not, then why not now?

Remember, the goal of all this study is that we might become conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Not only is Christ God, but He is a Person who desires our close fellowship (1 John 1:1-7). To strengthen, develop and fully experience that special relationship, we must learn about Christ, and the only sure source of knowledge is the Bible.

Following is an example format to apply this section.

**SCRIPTURE ANALYSIS  
OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, APPLICATION**

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Scripture: \_\_\_\_\_

1. OBSERVATION: What does it say?

2. INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?

3. APPLICATION: What does it mean to me?

MAIN MORSEL: The main lesson I learned from this study.

## **PART TWO**

### **HOW TO PLAN AND PREPARE A BIBLE MESSAGE OR LESSON**

Well, we have launched a good start in this study – but we have a way yet to go. We know how to prepare for Bible study, some tools and principles of study, and a practical method to understand the Scripture. Now, we have come to the point of putting it all together to present to a study group, Sunday school class – or for that matter, a sermon.

I have mentioned there are several types of studies. Also, there are several types of presentations. I will boil it down to two. In Bible teaching and preaching there are basically two types: the topical, and the expository. Some break it into three: topical, textual, and expository. The latter is actually an extension of textual.

Another distinction can be made: preaching and teaching. Both methods use the same study procedures, but they have different presentation goals. Preaching should end with asking the people for a decision regarding something. Teaching, on the other hand, is dispensing information. They are similar in that teaching will eventually bring about change, but preaching asks for immediate choices and decisions to be made.

An example of preaching is an evangelistic sermon where the evangelist asks the people to come forward to receive Christ. An example of teaching is explaining what God is like, and how He relates to His creation.

For either topical or expository, or preaching or teaching, make things real to people's lives. Always have a "so what" part. Following are example areas.

- Teach people about God, and how He relates to us.
- Teach people how to relate to God in their personal lives.
- Teach people how to live life. They are so busy trying to make a living among the pressures of life, they need guidance.
- Teach them how to minister Christ to others on the job.
- Encourage people. Give them hope. Inspire.
- Teach them how to serve God.
- Church leaders need to create for your people meaningful avenues for service, along with the administrative structure, training, focus, and motivation. People in the pews don't have the time to create their own ministries – nor can they afford to support them. This is not the case in all situations, but it is true for the general Christian sitting in the pew.

#### **TOPICAL PRESENTATIONS**

The topical presentation is where you select a topic, find what the bible says about it, illustrate it with practical stories, and arrange your findings in a logical order. An example topic might be worry. Two excellent passages are Jesus in

Matthew 6:25-34, and Paul in Philippians 4:6 and following. You can look up the word worry in a concordance, and soon find an abundance of information.

After you compile all the data, look for the abiding principles. For a 20-30 minute presentation, just three or four main points are enough, and have those principles relate to your main theme. You already have a topic (worry), and your theme might be: "You can have victory over worry." You want to put sub points for each principle – make sure everything supports your main theme. Example sub principles might be: worry doesn't work, pray when you worry, and exercise faith rather than worry.

## **EXPOSITORY PRESENTATIONS**

This type of presentation differs from the topical in that it is an unfolding of a section of scripture and explaining it to the audience. A good example of this is found in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. We are told that, "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people" (Nehemiah 8:5). Later we learn that with others they, "explained the law to the people ...And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" (Nehemiah 8:7, 8).

Again, the objective is to find the eternal, abiding principles, and then apply them to our present day to day life. We might take, for example, Jesus' explanation on worry in Matthew (8:25-34). For an expository presentation, you just stick with that one section and explain it clearly. Draw the topic, theme, and sub points from the selected section of scripture.

There are two kinds of expository sermons: a running commentary and a more formal one centered on a theme. I will illustrate them for you later. But, for now, let's explore some tools on how to put a talk together. Specifically, I will show you a planning sheet, how to make an outline, and then give some examples.

## **PUTTING IT TOGETHER: THE PLAN**

The next step in preparation is to make your sermon or teaching plan. You need to answer the who, what, why, where, when, and how questions. Following is a format for gathering the information you need to devise a message that meets the needs of the people, and best glorifies God. You need to customize your message to the level and understanding of the people.

## **FORMAT & PLANNING SHEET**

Your name  
Occasion  
Place/location  
Topic:  
Title:  
Date:

Topic: (What the speech is about)

Theme: (What you want to say about the topic – your main point?)

Audience: (Now you want to look at your audience. Who are they? What is the setting? What are their needs and background? What is their level of biblical understanding? Are they friendly or hostile? Do your background work on your audience. Direct your remarks to this population, and use illustrations and language that relate on their level, and to their life and needs. Who are you speaking to? Educated? Business people? Farmers? Housewives? Children?)

Occasion: (The event you are speaking at: Rotary club? Lecture? Funeral? Birthday party? Sunday sermon? Home Bible study? Etc.?)

Environment: (Where is the speech taking place? What props do you need? What are the seating arrangements? Lighting? Heating?)

Purpose: (Why are you speaking to them? Why is it important?)

Type: (Is your speech to inform? Persuade? Entertain? Explain/interpret, commentary?)

Goal: (What do you want to achieve? What response do you want from the audience: intellectually, emotionally, and behaviorally? – believe, feel, and do)

Resources: (Where and how will you do your research? Study Bible? Commentary? Internet?)

Illustrations: (They are windows shedding light on the topic. Make them compelling, relevant to the occasion, your subject and audience. These show the audience how to relate the principles to their everyday life).

Tools: (Will you use a whiteboard? Power point? Video? Object lessons? Handouts? Etc. Think through and rehearse your entire presentation. Through the process jot down all the things you will need to use.)

Introduction: (This should appeal directly to some felt need in the audience, or some point of reference they can identify with. It is the hook, or grabber. Normally, you have their attention for only a few seconds, and that is where they will decide to listen to you or not. Use a quote, statistics, illustration, arouse suspense, give a promise, use an exhibit, expert testimony, etc.)

Conclusion: (You have made your case. Summarize what you have said, and make the call for action if it is a persuasive speech).

By this point you have gathered a mountain of information from your Bible and audience research. Now you need to organize things in a logical, insight loaded, compelling, interesting, entertaining manner. Organize your presentation in a way that drives straight home to their minds, emotions, and behavior. Consequently, make an outline that sizzles with power.

## **THE OUTLINE**

Organize your speech on a piece of paper. Before outlining your final speech, however, it might be a good idea to write it out completely. That way you can get all your thoughts out of your mind and onto paper. Of course, you need a basic outline to first give you direction. My wife, Esmie, outlined, writes out the full manuscript, rehearses, and delivers off of her manuscript. I rehearse it in my mind, and work off an outline.

A caution: never read your speech word for word, or deliver a memorized speech – unless you are really good, like a T.V. newscaster reading a teleprompter. It will sound wooden and insincere.

You need three things in your outline: an introduction, body, and conclusion. Tell the people what you are going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you have told them. That simple.

It is good to start your presentation with an example that illustrates your major theme. That will gain their attention. Share things out of your own personal life, and also use illustrations from the Bible. Newspapers are another good place to look for illustrations, because newspapers are about people's life.

Following are several examples of the structure of an outline. Basically, you start out with a theme supported by several major points, and then you have sub points that support and relate to you major points. For a sermon, three or four points are probably enough, but each of those can have sub points.

The examples include a suggested shell that you can fill in, like a basic skeleton where you fit in the small bones and flesh. From there I include an example of a topical speech about headaches, a Bible example of how Jesus did it, a running commentary, expository sermon, and a topical sermon. From there, I will show you how to actually get up in front of people and deliver the message.

## **YOUR ACTUAL SPEECH OUTLINE**

Name  
Occasion  
Date  
Title

**Introduction:** (How are you going to quickly gain the attention and interest of your audience? Story? Question? Statistic? Quotation?). This is the “hook” that gains their focus in a compelling way. Sometimes cultures and the setting determine what the introduction is. For example, in the South Pacific region, speeches and sermons always must begin by recognizing important people who may be in the audience. They are carefully mentioned by title and name, starting with the highest ranking person first, then working down to the lesser lights.

### **Body:**

Sub points: (How are you going to break down and illustrate the theme?)

Sub point one: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation:

Illustration:

Sub point two: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation:

Illustration:

Sub point three: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation:

Illustration:

**Conclusion:** (Summarize the topic, theme, and ask for the response – if it is persuasive. One tactic is the wrap around, which is to tie your conclusion back to the introduction)

### **References:**

## **ACTUAL SPEECH OUTLINE EXAMPLE**

Jacob Nailbiter  
Rotary club  
June 4, 2007  
Headaches: how to find relief

### **Introduction of speech:**

The other morning I woke up, swung my feet over the side of the bed, stood up, and thought I banged my head into an anvil (*Illustration*). Another day and I had another throbbing headache (*Topic*). But, I am not alone. According to Bill Boones of the National Association of Health and Happiness, one out of four Americans will suffer from headaches during a week (*Credibility, importance, need*). How many of you have ever suffered from pounding headaches (*Engage the audience*)?

Good evening/morning. I am Jacob Nailbiter and I bring you good news. There is relief for headaches (*Theme, promise*). Like a cool glass of water on a hot day will quench a thirst, there are three ways to relieve the throbbing pain of a headache (*Concrete, visual illustration*). That is to know common causes, common myths, and common treatments for headaches (*Introducing sub points*).

### **Body of speech.**

#1. Common causes headaches.

Explanations  
Illustrations

#2. Common myths concerning headaches.

Explanations  
Illustrations

#3. Common treatments for headaches.

Explanations  
Illustrations

### **Conclusion of speech:**

What have we learned today/tonight about headaches (*repeat topic*)? By understanding some common causes, myths, and treatments for headaches, (*Repeat sub points*) we do not need to suffer throbbing headaches as a way of life (*Repeat theme*). We do not need to start the day feeling like we just banged our head into an anvil (*Wrap around back to starting illustration*).

### **References:**

Brownis, W.K., Billings, A., & Snow, D.A. (1998). The influx pattering of sympathy toward those with headaches. *Social Issues*, 43, 387-402.

Wells, A. G., Olson, S.G., Gomes, I.N., et al. (2000). An experimental evaluation of pain theory-based treatments. *Journal of Consulting and clinical Pain Studies*, 58, 843-856.

Huges, M.S. & Cambell, L (1999). *Living with pain, healing or help: Answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about headaches*. Rochester, NY: Health Life Press.

(references/names are for educational/learning purposes only and are not factual. However the students (e.g., yours) will be actual/factual).

### **Bible examples**

This finishes up the construction of your speech, lecture, group study, or sermon. Before we leave this section, let's try some Bible examples. Why not use the example of Jesus? He put together a dandy speech on worry (Matthew 6:25-34). To be technical, He started the concept back in verse nineteen, but for this lesson, I will pick the story up in verse 25.

Jesus was speaking to several disciples, and probably a crowd assembled around Him. The people evidently were very poor and troubled by the poverty and sickness around them (cf. Matthew 4:23-5:2). The purpose was to instruct the followers of Christ how to live life in the here and now in the midst of troubled times. He is starting another segment of His famous Sermon on the Mount.

His introduction is compelling, and goes directly to the felt needs of the people. How do I know this background information? Well, I first read the wider context. Secondly, I looked up some background material in Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary! Remember, this goes back to principle four under, "principles for Bible study" (p. 9).

Now, I will illustrate three types of sermons/studies: topical, a running commentary, and a more formal exposition arranged around a specific theme.

This may seem confusing at first, because we are going to do a running commentary expository speech on the section on worry in Matthew 5:25-34. However, Jesus, Himself, is actually doing a topical speech. We will do both things at one time: develop a running commentary exposition of Jesus' topical speech. Can I kill two birds with one stone? I hope so!

In our selected text, we clearly see Jesus' topic (worry) in verse 25, which introduces the section. The theme is clear: don't worry, trust God. Jesus introduces the theme in verse 25, and does a "wrap around" conclusion by

repeating it in verse 34, which ends the section. He repeats and explains the theme throughout the speech.

Some major principles He expounds on are: look at life from God's point of view; express faith in a caring heavenly Father; seek first His kingdom; and live one day at a time. Jesus used the illustrations from the local culture and geography: birds, lilies, Solomon, and grass. He applied His teaching directly to specific worries in the people's lives: food, drink, and clothing – in other words, the practical essential things of life that we still worry about.

Here is how Jesus did it.

### **Running commentary.**

Remember, we are doing an exposition of a topical speech by Jesus – we are unfolding, explaining, and following His thoughts.

Topic: Worry.

Theme: Don't worry; trust God

Introduction: Jesus introduces His subject, by speaking to the felt needs of the people in front of Him: hunger, clothing – basic living necessities. The same you and I have. Jesus unfolds His teaching this way.

Body

1. Worry is pointless (v. 25)
  - Illustration of birds (v. 26)
2. People are worth more than birds (v. 26).
3. Worry doesn't work (v. 27).
  - Subpoint: It won't add to our life (v. 27).
  - Subpoint: it won't buy us clothes (vv. 28-30).
  - Illustration of lilies and Solomon (vv. 28-30).
4. Root of worry: lack of faith (v. 30).
5. Worry is wrong (vv. 31-33)
  - Subpoint: The world worries. Don't be like them (v. 32).
  - Subpoint: God knows and cares for us like a father (v. 32).
  - Subpoint: Seek God' priorities first (v. 33).
  - Subpoint: God will supply (v. 33).

Conclusion: Therefore do this (v. 34).

Subpoint: live one day at a time (v. 34).

Subpoint: we will have trouble, but focus and take action today (v. 34).

With this, we can turn to the more formal expository presentation. Again, let's use Jesus' subject of worry from the same text. And, I need to stick with only this text – not bounce around the Bible looking for other verses. One exception, you might need to find another verse that more clearly explains the meaning of some principle in your primary text.

## Expository sermon

Topic: Worry.

Theme: Don't worry, trust God.

Introduction: you make yours up by a personal example from life that bridges to the Scripture.

Body:

1. See life from God's point of view (v. 30).
  - Subpoint: World's view (v. 32)
  - Subpoint: God's view (26-30)
  - Illustrations: Birds, lilies, Solomon (vv. 26-29)
2. Show faith in a loving God (V. 30)
  - Subpoint: He is there (v. 32).
  - Subpoint: He cares (v. 30)
  - Illustrate: From your personal life or situation.
3. Set proper priorities (vv. 33)
  - Subpoint: Put God first (v. 33)
  - Subpoint: Live one day at a time (v. 34).
  - Illustrations: from yours or the people's lives.

Conclusion: Repeat the theme and major points. Promise the people the message is true and will work in their lives. Ask them to switch from worry to faith.

Another example might be helpful. This time let's do a straight topical speech on worry. I will assemble several verses from Scripture to make my sermon.

## Topical sermon

Topic: Worry.

Theme: How to gain victory over worry.

Introduction: Terrorism. Weapons of mass destruction. A sudden heart attack or disease. The loss of your job. Your business collapses. Your spouse walks out. A relationship turns sour. Not enough money to buy clothes and food. These thorns from life are overwhelming personal, and have one thing in common: worry. It is a disgusting curse that covers the world, and disarrays our daily life. Is there an answer to worry? A Cure? Some Help? Yes, there is. I will show you today from the Bible: how to gain victory over worry.

Body:

1. Understand that worry does not work.
  - Subpoint: Jesus said so (Matthew 5:5:25).
  - Subpoint: It does not bring longer life (Matthew 5:27).
  - Subpoint: It does not bring a better life (Matthew 5:25).
  - Illustrations: Yours to make up.
2. Understand the purpose of trouble (1 Peter 1:6, 7)
  - Subpoint: God permits it (1 Peter 1:7).

Subpoint: God's purpose: build faith, which offsets worry (1 Peter 1:7).

Illustrations: Yours to make up.

3. Understand the cure of worry (Philippians 4:5-8).

Subpoint: Develop spiritual life: Prayer, attitude (v. 60).

Subpoint: Redirect the focus of your thinking (v. 8).

Illustration: Yours to make up.

Conclusion: Is peace of mind something you would be interested in? Aren't you sick of worry? I am. I have not become perfect by any means, but I have found in my personal life that Jesus is right. Worry does not work. God's purpose is to increase my faith. Spiritual life and prayer along with changing my thinking does give great relief. I ask you tonight. Give God's cure a try. Join with me. Let someone else do the worrying. Let us embrace God's way to have victory over worry.

So far you and I have learned principles and tools of Bible study, and investigated how to put a presentation together. One thing is left: we need to deliver the thing. Here is how.

## **PART THREE HOW TO DELIVER POWERFUL LESSONS IN THE CLASSROOM**

You are prepared, prayed up, poised – and ready to go. Suddenly fear strikes you, and you feel like running away. Stop! Here is how to get over the jitters of public speaking and deliver like a pro. Truthfully, I have delivered thousands of presentations over the years, and I still get butterflies in my stomach. It's normal.

I think it would be helpful for you to first become introduced to the laws of teaching. After a survey of those issues, you will discover what a syllabus looks like, and a format you can use to prepare individual lessons, in other words, a lesson plan. This is the first great secret in handling fear: be well prepared

### **PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING**

This Bible teaching about teaching principles follows the basic pattern set out by one John Milton Gregory who wrote the book, *Seven Laws of Teaching*. He lived in the mid 1800's, but the ideas he put forth are simple, and stand the test of time.

In this short study, I will present his ideas, plus expand on them from my own 40 years experience in a college or graduate school environment. I believe his book is still in print, and I would recommend that you read and digest all of what he said. Whether you are teaching or preaching, these teaching principles will work for you.

#### **Teaching Principle One: the Teacher.**

You, as the teacher, must be the subject matter expert. This does not mean you need to know everything about the subject. However, you do need to know and understand more than your students, and you must have a minimal and accurate level of knowledge. Be sure to pray for yourself and your students.

It helps if you have a passion for the subject matter, and you constantly study to improve and increase in your expertise. Your enthusiasm and example will help motivate your students. Fill your mind with much more than you will need to teach in the allotted time period for the class.

Paul displayed this energy, “how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20).

#### **Teaching Principle Two: the Subject**

You must have something to teach. This may seem too obvious, but it is true. It may be math, Bible, theology, psychology, art, or auto mechanics. One way of dividing knowledge is threefold: character building, theoretical knowledge, and practical application. Christian teaching falls into all three categories.

### **Teaching Principle three: the Place**

You must have a place where the teaching takes place. This can be anywhere: online, under a tree, in an air conditioned fully equipped university classroom, in a living room, across a kitchen table. Learning can take place anywhere. Jesus taught in a synagogue (Matthew 4:23), boat (Matthew 13:1ff.), and hillside (Matthew 5:5), for example.

### **Teaching Principle Four: the Student.**

The student(s) must be capable of learning, motivated, and you must have their attention. Discipline needs to be administered with an appropriate measure of reward, encouragement, persuasion, and punishment. A poor grade is a form of punishment.

### **Teaching Principle Five: the Communication**

Teachers must use a language understandable to the student – it must be on their level. Jesus used concrete, everyday life stories to illustrate His points (Matthew 13). The idea is to explain new information in terms the student already understands. For example, Jesus said to Simon and Andrew, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). Since they were fishermen, they knew exactly what Jesus meant.

### **Teaching Principle Six: the Teaching Process**

You must prayerfully think through your lesson plan. Have specific goals you want to accomplish, and a step by step plan to achieve those goals. Have many resources, but don't overdo it. It is good to have handouts, and practical exercises to inspire students to learn for themselves. We learn by thinking and doing.

Use enough materials to stimulate as many senses as you can: sight, sound, touch, etc. Use humor, visual imagery, enthusiasm, and sincerity. Get constant feedback to see if your students understand the material. For examples, use quizzes, exams, essay assignments, questions, projects, etc.

### **Teaching Principle Seven: the Learning Process**

The idea is to get the students to think and do – to process the information. Ask questions that stimulate thinking. Group discussion can be helpful, but don't let it

descend into a pooling of ignorance. Use debates. Have them write research papers or give reports. Teach them to think critically. Some material must be memorized. An example is learning the multiplication tables, or Scripture verses. Have them interact with who, why, what, where, when, and how questions.

### **Teaching Principle Eight: Assimilation and Accommodation**

This principle deals with two different phases of how people learn. Assimilation refers to taking new information into our minds, sorting it out, and storing it. Accommodation refers to adjusting and using the new information in everyday experience. It is the difference between knowing and applying new information.

The teacher, then, must instruct, explain, and inform the students. You first need to get the information into their heads. Secondly, you need to have the students think critically, creatively, and practically about the new information they have just received. In other words, ask the, “So what?” question.

In my own experience, I will state a principle, explain it, illustrate it, and then have discussion by the students. I start the discussion with this question, “Jack, what stands out to you the most about what we have learned?” Any answer is fine. Then I will ask another student what they think of what Jack said. That way, I get the students thinking about and discussing the material. In a small group, you can ask each student to participate.

### **Teaching Principle Nine: Review**

It is good to review, review, and review the material. At the beginning of the lesson, let the students know your topic and the subheadings. Present the material in small chunks. After you have presented the material, review what you have covered. Sometimes it is good at the beginning of a lesson to review what you have already covered in prior lessons.

### **Teaching Principle Ten: Study**

In this section I suggest a simple system of how to study. It will work for you, and for your students. In the final analysis, learning is work – even if we try to make it entertaining and exciting. Here are the steps.

- Survey the block of material. Get the overall view, the general ideas discussed, and how the material is broken down into subsections.
- Think it through. Read back over the material little by little. It is good to write down in your own words the important points, people, and concepts.
- Reflect on the material. Try to recall what you have studied. See how the material connects with other concepts you have learned. Search out the answers to any questions that come to mind. Visualize in concrete terms the concepts you have learned.

- Review and memorize. With your notes, review, review, and review some more. Memorize key concepts and people. Just keep going over the material until you can understand the concepts and can remember them.

Here, then, are the basic principles of teaching. However, let me make it more practical for you: I will share the actual syllabus I use for my seminary course on Christian leadership. Secondly, I will show you how to put together a basic lesson plan for a session. You can take them, and personalize them for your own use in your own setting.

The syllabus describes the overall course you are teaching, and links it to a time table. It explains things like the description of the course, course goals (outcomes), what the assignment are, and how the students will be graded. The syllabus is the big picture, while the lesson plan is what you use for an individual lesson.

I will start with the syllabus, and then show you what a lesson plan might look like. This particular course I taught once a week for nine weeks and the class met once a week for three and one half hours in the evening. A syllabus is good even for a group Bible study or Sunday school class. It gives a beginning and end to the course, and goals and directions of how to reach the goals. It is simply a plan put to paper.

## **SAMPLE COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **FAITH EVANGELICAL SEMINARY COURSE SYLLABUS**

**By Rev. Dr. Willis C. Newman**

**Course Title:** Christian Leadership.

**Abbreviation:** LE357

**Credit Hours:** 5

**Instructor:** Dr. Willis C. Newman

**E-Mail:** [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:*****)

**Phone:** \*\*\*\*\*

**Date of Course Outline** in Which Syllabus is Based: Summer 2004.

**Catalog Description of Course.**

This course will identify clear biblical principles that facilitate effective, visionary leadership. The course also introduces students to additional resources that will facilitate a life-long learning process in the area of leadership.

**Student outcomes:** upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe the theological basis for leadership and management.
2. Recognize areas for personal growth and development.
3. Understand the distinction between leadership and management.
4. Identify the major areas of abilities and functions of leadership.
5. Evaluate a biblical example of leadership.
6. Apply specific techniques of leadership to practical situations.
7. List specific tools leaders use in their role as leader.

### **Evaluation/Course Requirements:**

**1. The reading and understanding** of assigned reading. This includes the following.

*Bible Teaching About Christian Leadership*, by Willis & Esmeralda Newman  
*Lead like Jesus*, by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges.

*Bible Teaching About Conflict Management* by Dr. Willis Newman

Obtain Dr. Newman's ebooks at Bible teaching about.com. The other online at Amazon.com

**2. Examinations.** Required is the successful competition of one examination worth 200 points.

### **3. The adequate completion of written assignments:**

Write chapter summaries and reaction to every chapter of *Lead Like Jesus*. The student is required to write a one-page, double spaced, 12pt. font analysis of each chapter of the text book (7 chapters). Included in each chapter will be a one page summary of the chapter contents. Second, there is to be a personal reaction to the chapter. The student reaction can include answers to questions such as: What stood out the most to you in the chapter? What principle can you take from the chapter and apply to your work, life, etc.? How can you apply it? What about the chapter would you like to further research? What did you like most/least about the chapter contents? Why? You do not need to answer every question. These questions are only given as suggestions to help you focus.

**4. Analysis of Bible Teaching About Conflict Management.** Write a three page summary of the ebook. Evaluate it from a leadership point of view. Include your personal reaction to something that stands out to you personally.

### **5. The writing of a research paper.**

Write a ten page research paper on the life of Joseph or Moses as they exercised leadership. Include in your paper an identification and illustration of

their character, competency, and commitment to their people. An oral report is given to the class.

### **6. Field Project.**

The student is required to interview a Christian leader. In light of the content of this class, develop a 10 question interview to ask the leader. Set up an appointment, and interview the leader. Required is an oral student report given in class.

**7. Recommended Reading.** The preferred English Bible translations for the student to use are the New American Standard Bible, or the New King James Bible. Recommended study Bibles are The Ryrie Study Bible (Moody Press), and the Nelson Study Bible, NKJV (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Earl Radmacher, general editor).

### **8. Total possible points:**

Examination	200
Lead like Jesus	100
Conflict Management	75
Research paper	150
Field project	75
<u>Class attendance/participation</u>	<u>50</u>
Total	650

**Grading/Method of evaluation:** The grade point system is a simplified means of determining the grade average and class standing of the student. The total grade points for each course are determined by multiplying the point value of the grade by the credit value of the course. The grade point average is computed by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credits.

For this course, the final grade is determined by the total number of points earned by the student from the examinations and chapter summaries/reaction paper.

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Letter grade</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Description</b>
98-100	A+	4.0	Superior
94-97	A	4.0	
90-93	A-	3.7	Excellent
87-89	B+	3.3	
84-86	B	3.0	Good
80-83	B-	2.7	
77-79	C+	2.3	
74-76	C	2.0	Average
70-73	C-	1.7	

67-69	D+	1.3	
64-66	D	1.0	Below Average
60-63	D-	.7	
Below 60	F	0.0	Failing

Other listings:

Letter	Explanation
I	Incomplete
P	Pass (minimum 2.7 equivalent)
N	No pass
W	Withdrew
WF	Withdrew failing
WP	Withdrew passing
CR	Credit earned
AUD	Audit
IP	In progress
WX	Emergency withdrawal
RD	Report delayed

**Academic dishonesty:** If you use another person’s ideas, words, music, artwork, computations, models, etc., in such a manner as to imply that the thing used was your own, or if you use notes, texts or memory aids during tests when such use was not expressly authorized; or if you steal or knowingly use test master copies to gain information prior to an examination date; or knowingly allow another person to use your work as if it were that other person’s work; or otherwise act in such a manner as to gain for yourself or another an unfair advantage over other students, you may face disciplinary actions. See catalog and “Academic Policy.”

**Purpose of Faith Seminary:** Faith Seminary exists to educate men and women for worldwide Christian ministry as pastors, missionaries, teachers, and lay-workers. Our goal is to train students with an education that strengthens their beliefs, in order to proclaim and defend the teachings of the inerrant Word of God. This purpose is pursued through the development of a community of teachers and students who seek together to understand their faith by interpreting Scripture, applying those interpretations to life, and laboring together in fellowship to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**Study tips:** It is suggested that the student carefully study each reading. First, read through the assigned section to get a general overview. Reread the section, and write down important concepts as you read along. Review. Review. Review. Rehearse and visualize the contents. Memorize key concepts. Take the exam.

The exam is open book, but realize that you must know the material very well to complete the exam within the time limit allowed.

### **Course Schedule**

Session 1: Mar 25	Readings at your own pace Chapter summaries at your own pace Lecture: Leadership overview.
Session 2: Apr 1	Readings at your own pace Chapter summaries at your own pace Lecture: Leadership character
Session 3: Apr 8	Readings at your own pace Chapter summaries at your own pace Writing assignments at your own pace Lecture: Leadership competency
Session 4: Apr 15	Readings at your own pace Writing assignments at your own pace Lecture: Leadership commitment to people
Session 5: Apr 22	Readings at your own pace Research Lecture: The leader and stress
Session 6: Apr 29	Readings at you own pace Research Lecture: The leader and communication
Session 7: May 6	Readings at your own pace Research and paper development Lecture: The leader and conflict management
Session 8: May 13	Field project: No classroom work
Session 9: May 20	Final examination; all papers due; student reports

Now that you have an idea of what a syllabus looks like, and you have the big picture (plan) in view, you need to break things down into smaller pieces. That small piece is the individual lesson plan for each session. In the example syllabus, there are nine lesson plans. Following is a suggested sample for an approximately one hour Sunday school lesson at a local church. However, the format can be adjusted work for any setting.

## Sample Classroom Lesson Plan

Title of session: Doctrine of Jesus Christ

Teacher: Joseph Goodteacher

Subject matter: Theology

Grade level: Adult

Number of students: 15

Location: Second Christian Church Sunday school, Room 14.

Lesson topic: the Person and Work of Jesus Christ

Teaching method: Lecture, discussion, power point, flip chart

Duration: 55 minutes

Description: this lesson describes the identity and uniqueness of Christ, the purpose of His work on the cross, and the meaning for people today.

Objectives (outcomes, or goals). The students will be able to:

1. Understand the Divinity of Christ
2. Explain the humanity of Christ
3. Determine the purpose of Christ's work on the cross
4. Know how to apply Christ's work to their own lives

Equipment needed.

1. Chairs for students. Place in semicircle
2. Lectern
3. Table, screen, extension cords for projector and laptop power point.
4. Handouts of lecture notes
5. Lesson procedure.
6. Satisfactory room lighting and temperature.
7. Flip chart and writing pen.
8. Laptop computer, projector, presentation

Procedure

1. Open with prayer or hymn or both
2. Brief review of last session (5 minutes).
3. Introduction to present topic. (5 minutes)
4. Flip chart: write who they think Christ is, and why He came into the world (5 minutes)
5. Lecture, working off the power point presentation (25 minutes).
6. Discussion: what stands out to you the most in this lesson? (10 minutes).
7. Summary (5 minutes)
8. Assignments for next session.
9. Closure with prayer.

Lesson evaluation:

1. What worked very well?
2. What could be improved on?

These principles of teaching can be applied to your work, family, Sunday school classes, home Bible studies, preaching, and for your own self improvement. Now

let me introduce you to principles of persuasion, which is especially important in sermon or teaching delivery.

## **PART FOUR HOW TO PRESENT A COMPELLING AND POTENT MESSAGE**

### **PRINCIPLES OF PERSUASION**

Since you want people to accept what you say, you can use laws of persuasion (or compliance) that have been discovered by social scientists. Certainly you want your students to be motivated to accept what you teach, but especially in preaching, you want your audience to make decisions. After I show you these proven laws, I will explain for you several secrets about the actual delivery in front of your audience. All great speakers use these principles.

The Bible teaching about persuasion is vitally important, because Christians are in that business. If you and I take a look at the Bible, we will be surprised at what is taught regarding persuasion.

The Great Commission instructs us to, “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19), and that involves a great deal of convincing! Jesus said to, “Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in” (Luke 14:23). He had evangelism in mind.

The word used for compel is (*anankazo*), which means to earnestly constrain by entreaty, imploring, or persuasion. Pretty strong! Jesus, in this story, is talking about evangelism. But, He didn’t mean to club people into Christianity.

Paul plunged into the issue, “Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Here, the word for persuade (*peitho*) means to prevail or win over. It is the earnest effort to bring a change of mind with the use of reason or moral deliberation.

The contexts I have presented refer to evangelism, but Paul also used persuasion for Christians, “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice” (Romans 12:1).

### **Objections to Persuasion**

Many times Christians object to the use of persuasion in Christian work. Normally, the reason is fear of rejection and social disapproval. To handle rejection, I refer you to the article on our website, [Bible-teaching-about.com](http://Bible-teaching-about.com). Another reason is that people don’t want to be deceptively manipulated.

It is true that deceptive manipulation is wrong. Paul wrote, “For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

In other words, you and I are told to persuade people for Christ, but don't be a lying, tricky, exploitive con artist in doing it. We need to use diplomacy, kindness, sincerity, and Christian courtesy in our persuasion – and most important, rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis, it is He who saves, changes, and emboldens us.

Truthfully, everyone uses persuasion: husbands, wives, children, bosses, union members, teachers, students, politicians, advertisers, girl scouts who sell cookies – everyone.

With this said, I set forth six laws, or principles, of persuasion that are used by successful marketing or sales – or anybody – who wishes to get us to comply to their objectives. These are common ideas taught in marketing and social psychology courses, and they work because that is the way God has made us. An excellent book that gives scientific backing to these laws is *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, by Dr. Robert B. Cialdini.

### **Law one of Persuasion: Reciprocation**

This simply means that when we give something, such as a gift, it is understood that the other person is to give something back. For example, in many American stores you will see people handing out free samples of items. Why do they do that? It is to get you to feel obligated to buy their product in return.

Paul uses this motive, “I urge you therefore...by the mercies of God” (Romans 12:1). He is saying that since God has given us so much, we are obligated to, “present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice” (Romans 12:1).

### **Law two of Persuasion: Commitment**

This has to do with how our minds work. The values and beliefs we have stored in our mind tend to be consistent and complimentary, and also consistent with our behavior. That is why if we commit ourselves to a little step or decision in a certain direction, we tend to continue in that direction. We don't want to be seen as contradicting ourselves. It is sometimes called the “foot in the door” tactic.

James spoke of this principle regarding falling into sin (James 1:13-15). He said the first step is moderate temptation, the next step is a deeper commitment with enticement by lust, and the final decision is the full commitment to sin.

### **Law Three of Persuasion: Social Proof**

This principle is simple: if everyone is doing it, then it must be right. People want to have social approval; consequently, you and I tend to do what we think everyone approves of. This is why church and Christian fellowship is so important. When we see that others believe the Christian Faith, then we are encouraged to do so.

This is why the writer of Hebrews wrote, “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:25). That is why advertisers try to convince us that many people use their product; consequently, so should we. It is “proof” that their product is best.

#### **Law Four of Persuasion: likeability**

We tend to purchase things or agree with people that we like. Would you buy a car from a salesperson you hate? Probably not. Tupperware parties use this principle. A host will invite her friends to a party, have good food and fellowship, and then the saleslady will present the Tupperware. People buy because they like the host who is their friend.

Paul wrote of this law, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:6). In other words, be a nice, likable person. It is like the old proverb, “You will catch more flies with honey than vinegar.”

#### **Law Five of Persuasion: Authority**

People defer to and obey authority. For example, when the policeman or boss tells you or me to do something, we respond accordingly. That is why doctors have their diplomas hanging in their office: to remind you they are the authority in health matters. We comply. That is why salespeople wear suits, which are a symbol of authority. For example, when I walk through Nordstroms, all the men – even shoe salesmen – are wearing suits and ties.

Our Lord used this principle, “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations’” (Matthew 28: 18, 19).

#### **Law Six of Persuasion: Scarcity**

This principle deals with how our minds are wired. If we think we will never have a chance to again have something, we believe we must have it now. Sales people use it in slogans such as, “limited supplies...last chance to buy...this offer will never come again, etc.” It creates a sense of urgency to get it while we can.

In reality, the Bible uses this sense of urgency, “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:28). In other words, if we want to be saved, we better do it now, because after death the offer is over – forever.

With an introduction to teaching principles and laws of persuasion in our mind, I direct you to some very practical suggestions on how to actually present your case in front of people – the delivery.

## **BASIC THOUGHTS ON THE DELIVERY**

Here are some important and fundamental issues to consider whatever your situation may be – teaching a Bible study, Sunday school class, or delivering a rip roaring sermon. You want to succeed. Here is how.

### **Prayer**

1. Be prayed up. When delivering a message, you are dealing with spiritual content, and the things of God. There is satanic opposition. Consider, for example, the parable of the sower by Jesus, and His explanation of the impact of the Word of God in the lives of people (Matthew 13:18-23; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:3, 4).

We are informed that, “the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart” (v. 19). Consequences, you need to be aware of the spiritual dimension of teaching the Bible.

### **Expectations**

2. Have reasonable expectations. Again, according to the parable of the sower as mentioned above, not everyone will have a positive response to the Bible. If we can believe the statistics Jesus mentions, only one out of four will have enduring change.

### **Holy Spirit**

3. Consider the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching. It is He who convicts, convinces and gives illumination to the hearts of people (John 16:8-11). However, you and I must do our part: study hard, do our homework, prepare with care, practice with diligence, and deliver with power and reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

With sensitivity, I maintain that, at best, it is with an attitude of foolishness and naivety that some will wait until they get into the pulpit or behind a lectern and wait for the Holy Spirit to deliver them a special message.

Clearly, the Bible instructs, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:14).

## **Confidence**

4. Be confident, express enthusiasm, sincerity, and be friendly and warm. Relate with you audience, and communicate with them. Express your appreciation. The speech is a two way interaction. Try to identify with your audience, so they will perceive you as, “one of us.” Be sure to love and show genuine interest in your topic. If your audience or group has recently accomplished something, don’t you take the credit, but give it away generously. Brag on others.

When you approach the pulpit, do so quickly and firmly, and make quick eye contact. Never apologize or mention how unprepared, undeserving, or scared you might be. It is unwise to start with the funny story approach. Humor is fine, but use it sparingly, and don’t let the morning sermon or Bible study turn into a comedy event. The situation dictates its appropriate use.

The pulpit is yours. Get to business. Don’t fumble with your notes, and don’t take an armload of notes with you. The people will groan and think you are going to be there hours!

Don’t cling to, lay on, or wrestle with the pulpit. Stand behind it. It is fine to move around, but not too much. It will distract the people. If you don’t use a pulpit, then stand still or in a small area. Take Jay Leno for example. He bursts on the stage, contacts the people, but then stands and moves in a small area when delivering his monologue. After that, he sits behind a desk to interview guests.

It is ok to have some things on the stage with you, particularly an object or two with significant symbolic importance. But don’t stand before a cluttered platform and speak, it distracts people from you and what you have to say.

Here is some more stage etiquette. Remember that if you are on stage waiting to speak, others and other things are going on. Don’t think that just because your time is not yet on, you are being ignored. People are watching you from the moment you appear before them.

Consequently, stay away from spread eagle “crotch” shots. Show immediate interest in the people, and what is going on. If someone else is at the pulpit, give them your attention – not your fingernails, notes, and don’t be talking to others. Show your respect to the event. Don’t be bored. Be engaged.

## **Illustrations**

5. In your delivery, use many illustrations and examples. Be specific, personalize and humanize your talk. Use visualization and drama – but do not exalt yourself, ridicule others or embarrass people. Also make your illustrations appropriate to the culture and situation. Keep things positive, solution centered, and hopeful.

Compare the new and different teaching you are trying to get across with something familiar in the people's lives. Convert facts into visual pictures so people can see how they work out in life. It is good to steer away from technical terms. People probably don't know what they mean, and think you are trying to show off. An exception may be to illustrate a concept by giving the background and special meaning to a Greek or Hebrew word in the text you are using.

### **Invitations**

6. If you are calling for a decision, be clear on what it is, and show how it will benefit the people. Make it easy for the people to enact. Express your honest faith that what you say is true. This brings us to the invitation following a sermon that is persuasive in nature. How do you give an invitation? Or do you? It all depends.

It always pays to deliver an invitation (or call for a decision) in a way that is in keeping with the expectations of your audience and situation. For example, in some countries of the world, if you give an open air, public sermon, and call for a public decision for Christ – you may go to jail, or worse. Better keep it low key.

If you are in the process of building relationships with a new group of people, then don't ask for the decision too early. Bond first. Earn their trust. On the other hand, if you are talking to a stranger who you will never see again, ask for the decision. It is not wrong to do "cold turkey" evangelism door to door, at the mall, or on the beach.

In a church setting, sometimes the speaker will ask those interested to talk to a church member after the service, or to come forward and talk to altar workers who are trained and will wait for them.

Sometimes the speaker will simply have people bow their heads and close their eyes, then ask for those who want to receive Christ to raise their hands. Other times, you can ask the people to stand, and while they are singing a hymn, ask people to step forward, come to the altar and receive Christ.

Another method is to ask people to come to an enquirer room at the end of the service. There a leader will answer questions, explain the gospel, and ask for a decision.

A really aggressive method is to ask all the audience to stand. Then ask those who are sure they would go to heaven if they died to sit down. That leaves the unsure still standing. That is pressure! From there it goes something like this, "I see there are a number of you who are not sure. I would ask you to step out, come forward, and we will explain the gospel to you and pray for you."

A milder method is to have everyone raise their hands if they know they are saved. Then you can note that not everyone raised their hands, and address them – urging them to receive Christ.

Does the going forward to the altar save a person? No. Not at all. It is the expression of faith in the heart of the person that saves – and that is a result of the Holy Spirit converting the person. People can trust Christ anywhere. The going forward or asking for a decision one-on-one is just the person's expression of faith in Christ as their Savior.

## **Fear**

7. Overcome fear. The best way to overcome fear is to be prepared. This doesn't mean to have every word memorized, and give it rote to the audience. Know about four times the amount of information that will fill the time slot you have been given. It will give the impression that you truly know your subject. Just don't think you have to tell everything you have researched. If you do, you will start feeling pressure and dump the information too fast for the people to comprehend. It is better to tell people a little bit that they can understand, than a whole bunch that they cannot understand.

Another way to combat fear is to simply act confident. There is the old saying, "Fake it 'till you make it." Pretend you have confidence, and soon it will begin to creep up on you.

A third way is to get lost in your material, focus on your audience, and forget about how good or bad you are performing. Worry about your performance will only freeze you mentally, drain your energy, and make your delivery worse. If you are in a smaller group, use people's names – that is, talk to specific individuals. Say good things about them. Make others feel special and important.

Practice and rehearsing helps to put away fear. Practice in front of a mirror, your spouse, or go talk to the trees and pretend they are a vast audience.

Another way to handle fear is to turn it to enthusiasm. Emotion is simply a chemical surge in your body that you put a label to, and then you act in a way that conforms to the label. For example, if it is anger, then you yell. If it is fear, you grow weak. Mentally label your emotion as excitement or enthusiasm, and then act accordingly.

Give yourself a pep talk. This follows on the last idea. Tell yourself how excited you are – even tell yourself you are good, and begin to believe it. Just don't tell others, or they will think you are bragging! And, also be grateful to God and your audience that they choose to sit there and listen to you. They have given you a great privilege.

The best approach is just to be prepared, be relaxed, be yourself, trust God, and enjoy the moment.

## **Emotion**

8. The use of emotion. There are many sides to this issue. Some rely almost entirely on emotion; some avoid it like the plague. Here is an undeniable truth. The greater an emotion is linked to a thought or experience, the deeper both are buried in the memory banks of our brain.

This is why traumatic events such as being in a battle zone, being raped, entangled in a violent car wreck, and events like these, cause Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The thinking and emotion are so deeply interwoven, and pervasively embedded in our brain that the slightest reminder of the event can even years later bring back all the raw emotion in a torrential rush.

A degree of emotion can be used in a talk, class, or sermon. The mental pictures and visual illustrations you give can have an emotional component. It helps the people remember the points of your talk. Personal testimonies normally carry emotion, and become powerful vehicles to transmit truth. Here is the point: use emotions to carry home in dramatic fashion the truth you are verbally conveying to the people.

However, emotions can be abused. Just to raise emotions to whip up a crowd for a momentary “feel good” experience, then to call it a unique “spiritual” experience is not healthy. In fact, it causes people to get the wrong idea of spirituality. They think that if they are not on a continuous emotional high, then somehow God must not be speaking to them – that they are somehow being ignored or disapproved by God.

Then there is the other end of the argument. If there is no emotion, then the talk becomes very boring, dry, dead, and a “ho-hum” event for the people. They will go to sleep, and may not come back. Emotions are a part of the human experience and should be acknowledged and used in an appropriate fashion.

## **Aristotle’s Canons: Ethos, Pathos, Logos**

9. Aristotle’s canons. The famous Greek philosopher has had a powerful impact on many areas of our civilization. One thing he is famous for deals with how to deliver a persuasive speech. He maintained that there are three things that must be present: the character of the speaker (ethos), the emotional state of the hearer (pathos), and the argument itself (logos).

Ethos refers to the moral character, disposition and underlying values connected to a person. The speaker (you) must be seen to be sincere, honest, credible and believable. You must appear to truly believe what you are saying. To establish

this condition, you must project a practical intelligence, an honorable and upright character, and to demonstrate a good will toward the audience. In other words, you cannot be perceived as a phony.

Pathos refers to emotion and in particular the emotions of the people – your audience. Your audience will not evaluate you the same if they are bored or hostile as opposed to friendly, interested and sympathetic. Let the emotion come from the subject matter of the speech. The key is to recognize the various emotions, and then know how to arouse them in the audience. Emotion is used to drive home a mental thought, and also to provide motivation to adopt certain actions.

Logos refers to the logic of your argument or position. You must arrange your talk in a logical fashion so that it seems to be true. This is done by logical deduction and induction. Your case must seem to be consistent, non-contradictory, and fit with the presuppositions the audience already has.

Logic has a premise and a conclusion. Deductive logic can be stated as an “if or since something is true, then we can conclude this or that.” For example, “Since the Bible is true (premise), then it is morally wrong to murder innocent life (conclusion).”

You can bolster your argument with personal testimony, statistics, authoritative quotes, and other sources of evidence – although the power of your argument rests in the logic.

Another key is to have your points, or conclusions, match the presuppositions the people already have. For example, if your audience is full of atheists, then “the Bible is true” premise will not carry much water. To them you would have to appeal to a premise such as, “Since science says.”

10. A final thought. Some characterize the art of convincing others in two ways. The first is to use the power of logic. This is the direct method. In this manner, you need to get the people thinking carefully about your argument, and hopefully, they will see the value of your position. For this to work, your audience must pay attention, understand, believe, remember, behave, and act on your message.

The second way is to use peripheral influences. This strategy takes less thinking. You use persuaders such as beauty, pleasure, youth, vitality, happy people, great music, and famous people – things that make you and your message attractive to the audience.

With these basic thoughts in mind, let me take you into another area of study: home or group Bible studies.

## **PART FIVE**

### **HOW TO ORGANIZE AND CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL GROUP BIBLE STUDY**

As you and I approach the end of this ebook on how to make and deliver Bible messages, let's spend some time on a very important tool: group or home Bible studies. They are powerful; consequently, here are some principles to consider.

John Wesley used small groups in the formation of Methodism. Today a popular term is home cell groups. For many years we have had Sunday school, which is a group study method. In the world of counseling, group counseling sessions are a popular technique.

Even Paul used the method. At Philippi he, "went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assemblies" (Acts 16:13). At Ephesus Paul said, "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20).

In this section, you will learn several principles and methods to enhance the group you are teaching – or are planning to teach.

#### **Forming a group**

1. The first thing to consider is how to form a group. You need people. If you are teaching Sunday school, then you already have a group. If your church has cell groups, then people are there.

However, you might not have anyone. Then what? You might have to start with one other person. This might be a convert who recently received Christ, or another Christian who wants to be discipled. Depending on your culture, you might be able to form a group with a family or friends.

The number in the group is important. It seems that effective group work ranges from six to about 12 in number. If you have more than 12, it is hard for one person to manage if you want to have discussion. Too many times two or three people will start their own conversation, which is interrupting to the rest of the group, and distracts you the teacher. Many cell groups make a point to divide the group when it reaches 12, 15, or 20. If you get more than 20, it becomes impossible to hold a group discussion – it becomes a lecture format.

#### **Meeting place**

2. Next, you need to find a place to meet. This could be in someone's home, in a park (weather permitting), or empty school or church classroom. Some groups meet in a restaurant. If you choose a home, then it is good to move the meeting

place around to the group member's home so it won't become a burden on one host or hostess.

If you are using home Bible studies as an evangelistic tool, then it is good to go to the home of the potential convert. One downside to this is the many distractions that might interrupt a genuinely interested person. This might include noisy children, loud TV's, or a hostile spouse who is trying to discourage the potential convert.

Having said this, I would say this form of evangelism is powerful. In my years as a pastor, I would have sometimes as high as seven individual Bible studies going every week. When the people received Christ, and were grounded in a few basics of the Christian Faith, then I would transfer them to a group already formed. That way the new convert(s) could bond with the larger church. Building positive relationships are critical to fold new people into church.

If the people did not receive Christ, or lost interest, then after five or six lessons, I would stay in touch, but close out the studies. I found it helpful to tell the person in the beginning we would only meet for five or six lessons. That way it made it easy to close out the lessons on a positive note.

Focus on those who are interested in learning, but don't neglect others on the fringe who may not show great interest now, but will later on. Bible studies are where leaders are developed. In developing leaders, spend quality time with FAT Christians. I don't mean overweight people, but those who are Faithful, Available, and Teachable!

### **Subject matter**

3. Step three can be hard. You have to decide on what to teach. Paul said he taught, "anything that was profitable," but later he defined it as, "the gospel of the grace of God," the "kingdom," and, "the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:20, 24, 25, 27). In other words, teach the Bible. For beginners, start with the basics of how to be saved and grow in the Faith. From there advance onto other doctrines or books of the Bible – and how they relate to practical life.

From my own personal experience, I would say that the 10 Basic Steps to Christian Maturity by Campus Crusade for Christ is among the very best. Navigator material is also excellent. The problem is they cost money. If you go to the Bible studies at [Bible-teaching-about.com](http://Bible-teaching-about.com) (our website), then you can get similar material free.

Be wary of getting stuck on a single hobby horse to the neglect of, "the whole purpose of God." Don't get stuck on prophecy, the Trinity, miracles, demons, or whatever it might be. These are important, but there is more. Get into the Bible, see what it says, means, and how it applies to everyday life.

The composition of your group will also determine what you teach. For new believers, stick with the basics. Peter said, “like newborn babes long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2). By basics, I mean the central beliefs of Christianity, and spiritual life exercises such as worship, prayer, witnessing, Bible study, evangelism, character, relationships, and the like.

One caution: there needs to be direction from the pastor or some leader to select and monitor groups. Many groups get together, and argue for months over what book or subject they want to teach. Usually, everyone wants to advance their own interests or favorite topic. Have a set curriculum with set goals, and a defined purpose.

### **A Suggested Format**

4. Now that you have a group, a place to meet, and subject matter to study, how do you actually conduct the group? Good question. Following is a suggested format to follow.

#### **Fellowship**

Start with a time of fellowship, and maybe some finger foods. Food relaxes people, and allows people to arrive late without interrupting the session. If you are holding it in a home, don't have the host also provide the food – it is too much of a burden on her.

Sometimes it is good to have short ice breaker games. They encourage people to get to know one another. This is especially true with a group of new people.

#### **Song**

Call the session together with a hymn or song. Singing can get everyone's attention, and can set the mood. Aim to have the session limited to one hour – though sometimes it goes more.

#### **Prayer**

Have a short time of prayer. Ask people to submit prayer requests, and ask someone else to volunteer to pray for that specific request. This again sets the tone, and invites God into the session, and begins to have people become aware of needs. Bonding occurs as the reserve begins to drop. However, if people are too timid to pray at the beginning, don't force it, but wait until the end of the study.

#### **Bible Study**

The Bible study time is next. You, as the leader, can introduce the subject, and mention the goals of the lesson. It is good to have passed out before hand the topic or Bible text with predetermined questions. During the week, the students can fill out the answers to the questions, and bring them for discussion – along with questions they might have. Sometimes they will not have the lesson completely filled out. In that case, go ahead and discuss the questions anyway.

Get everyone involved. It is good to be sitting in a circle so people can face each other. Start with the person on either side to take the first question, read it and give their answer. Never make fun of anyone's answer, nor condemn nor argue. Prevent the group from jumping in to straighten out a person who offers a wrong answer. Set a solid ground rule that everyone can feel safe in the answer they give. Make sure one person talks at a time.

If the person gives an answer that is correct, then heap the praise on them. If they give an answer that is part right, but also part wrong, then praise the correct part and say something like, "When you mentioned such and such, you were dead on right. In addition, you might want to consider this angle." Then you can make the correction.

There might be time when people want to argue. When that happens, stick to the verse you have in front of you, and reply something like, "Well, Joe, you have a good point, but let's stick to what the Bible actually says. And in this case what do the words actually say?"

You need to make the determination if they want to argue, or if they have a legitimate question that needs answered. If you think they are trying to get you off track, then you can say something like, "Bob, that is a very good question, and I realize people have different views, but we really need to stick with the subject at hand. Your question might be answered as we go along, but if it isn't, then at the end of the study we can revisit your point. Would that be all right?"

You have to keep in mind the advice of Paul, "But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned" (Titus 3:9-11).

On the other hand don't be too quick to eject people from your group, or you will not have anyone left, and those who stay will be fearful to speak up! Keep in mind that you need to keep people in the Word of God, and let the Holy Spirit do His job with the Word in the lives of the people.

You want to encourage discussion among the group. Use open ended questions that start with maybe, "Why for instance do you think...?" Avoid using questions that can be answered with just yes or no. One technique is to have one person read and answer the question, and then ask another person in the group, "What

do you think of what Mary just concluded?” Then you might ask others what they think the Bible actually says, what it means, and what it means to them.

Even though you want to encourage participation, you need to keep things on the subject, and to avoid long winded side tracks that are off the point. Remember that in a group Bible study, your role as leader is to facilitate discussion. Lead your members in discovering the truth and answers to the questions by themselves. Listen carefully to get to know your members and understand where they are spiritually.

If a person answers a question partially, you might want to expand somewhat on their answer, or give an illustration or practical application. Again, be lavish with your praise, and make people feel important and special. Use their names. Be ready to summarize answers and wrap up the discussion in such a way that it relates to the topic being discussed. Finally, it is good to end discussion with a personal application.

### **The difficult person**

Another problem that seems to always to crop up is the person who talks too much, and the person who is shy, and doesn't want to talk. For the latter, just have them read the question when it becomes their turn, give the answer, and praise them. That encouragement will help them to gain confidence to emerge out of their shell.

The know-it-all talkers are the problem. Don't let them dominate the group. Don't be rude to them, and don't let them be rude to others. One way to curtail the problem is to set up ground rules at the first that you want to let everyone have time to participate, and that if one person dominates, you will run out of time.

If the person persists, then interrupt with something like, “I appreciate your contribution, Amy, and you have much wisdom. But, let's let others have time to interact in the conversation. Would that be ok?” Hopefully, they will say, “Yes,” and you will have a basis to remind them in the future of their agreement should they start up again -- and they will.

For that occasional person who wants to take over and be the teacher and the hints don't work, then you may have to pull the person aside and explain that you really need their cooperation, but their interruptions are really too distracting. But, be sure to keep things on a positive, but firm, note, and always give a person the opportunity to “save face.”

Another good strategy is to meet members outside the Bible study to learn more about them and to address possible personal issues.

## **When to disband**

5. When should you disband a group? Hopefully never - but here are some things to consider. When the group dissolves into a gossip session, and becomes indifferent to the Word, prayer, and evangelism, then perhaps it is time to stop meeting. If conflict erupts, and it cannot be resolved, then it is time to quit, or reorganize the group. Every group should have clear goals, a sharp focus, and solid ground rules.

Sometimes a group turns into a session that complains about the pastor or church and its leadership. A mutiny can develop that may result in a church split. That is why groups should be monitored by the leadership. Sometimes a person might try to take over a group to create a power base to oppose the pastor.

Remember, a "cell" group is named after a "cell." Cells divide and grow, and that is the aim of a successful group. After about 20 people are in the group, then it should divide into two groups, and keep on dividing and growing. A group that becomes ingrown and rejects new people loses its purpose and effectiveness.

Having said this, I must admit that there is the fellowship aspect of some groups such as men's groups or women's groups, or the women's missionary circle. They seem never to grow, but they provide needed social and friendship support for a certain sector of church members.

## **Social events**

6. Social events are helpful. In order to increase the bonding of your group, it helps to plan social events together. Maybe a trip to the beach or mountains for the day, or a weekend retreat would work. Taking your group to an expert speaking at a seminar, evangelistic meeting, or one time important event in the community is another idea.

Maybe shopping for the women and guy things for the men would work. Picnics are good. Have the event centered on fun activities that include all members. Even if it is a social event, it is good to have a time of prayer and Bible study. Good food always seems to help bond people. Keep the event informal.

Social events are where you can get people involved. Try to get all your people involved with some job or task so they will feel invested in the group. There is the saying, "Use 'em or lose 'em." Social events allow many ways for people to exercise their gifts and abilities in the planning and executing of the event.

With this we come to an end of our study. Much information was given, and don't expect to become experts over night. Start off with little chunks, digest them well, practice them often – and someday you will become an accomplished

professional. Keep up consistent practice, and gradually the improvement will come.

It is good to summarize. We first examined at several Bible study methods, which included personal preparation, principles for Bible study, and the method of observation, interpretation, and application. Next, you learned how to plan and prepare a Bible message, then how to deliver your presentation in the classroom. The last two areas pinpointed how to present a compelling message, and how to organize and conduct a successful group Bible study.

God bless you, and I pray for your increased and abundant success in your ministry for Jesus Christ. All the best.

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