



Facilitating Effective Bible Studies

Note: The Scripture references in this hand-out are taken from the New King James Version.

Teaching the Bible

God desires a personal relationship with each one of us and provided us His Word so that we may know Him. He also blessed us with the Holy Spirit so that we may understand what the Bible says: *“the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things”* (John 14:26). So believers do not need specially trained scholars to interpret the main and plain things of the Bible: *“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 2:5).

Since all Christians have direct access to the Great Teacher, all Christians have the ability to teach spiritual truths. While having teaching skills is a gift that different Christians have in varying degrees, all Christians should aspire to teach: *“a servant of the Lord must... ..be... ..able to teach”* (2 Timothy 2:24). Being able to teach is result of a Christian’s spiritual growth: *“by this time you ought to be teachers”* (Hebrews 5:12). Christians who seek opportunities to teach accelerate their own spiritual growth because the best way to learn a topic is to teach it.

Teaching Styles

The most effecting teaching style for a given group depends on the size of the group. In large groups, it may be necessary to have more of a lecture rather than a discussion. Thus, a teacher of a large group is really more of a preacher. Smaller groups are necessary for two-way conversations to take place between the teacher and students. People learn more in smaller groups because the teacher can tailor the information discussed to interests of the participants. Students in small groups are more engaged because there are opportunities for them to interact with the teacher and other participants. So the most effective teacher is going to be more of a discussion facilitator.

Characteristics

Effective Bible study leaders are discussion facilitators who have the following characteristics:

- Pray to be effective.
- Remember that the true teacher is the Holy Spirit.
- Prepare by writing down discussion questions in your notes (the more questions, the better).
- Avoid dominating the conversation and don’t preach.
- Encourage discussion by giving others time to answer and showing interest in what they have to say.
- Encourage others to ask questions (but don’t depend on this as a substitute for being prepared).
- Address tangential topics but bridge back to the prepared subject material.
- During the course of the Bible study, be prepared to give the insights you’ve learned if others do not give the answer your questions are probing for.
- Keep the session within the predetermined time.

Preparing Discussion Questions

Here are some recommendations for preparing discussion questions:

- Ask questions to lead people to discover the truths you’ve learned from meditating on the passage.
- Ask what the Bible passage meant to the intended audience.
- Ask what principle is being addressed that may be applied to all people.
- How does what the passage teach contrast with what the world teaches?
- Ask what application you see for yourself in the passage.
- What may we learn about God or ourselves from the passage?
- What other verses reinforce the passage being studied? What can we learn from the differences?
- Are there any verses that appear to contradict the subject passage? What can we learn from this?
- Look at different translations... what can we learn from the differences?