



## *Learning to Give a Bible Study*

Bible studies are an indispensable soul-winning tool in the on-going cycle of evangelism in the Empowered Church.

“The plan of holding Bible readings was a heaven-born idea. There are many, both men and women, who can engage in this branch of missionary labor. Workers may thus be developed who will become mighty men of God. By this means the word of God has been given to thousands; and the workers are brought into personal contact with people of all nations and tongues.” Gospel Workers, page 192.

What follows are some of the essential components that should be included in preparing for and presenting a Bible study.

### **Ascertaining an interest**

All who show a desire and interest should be given the opportunity receive Bible studies. However, we are never to judge whether people will be saved or lost. Instead, we are to be fruit inspectors and determine which fruit is ripe for harvest. We should spend quality time with those who are ripe for the truth. Those who are green or nearly ripe should still get our attention, but it should be in proportion to their interest level. If we spend the bulk of our time with the green fruit, we will find the ripe fruit will pass beyond the point of interest.

Some people are ripe to study, others are a little green but nearly ripe. Then there are those who haven't even blossomed. How can we identify those who are ripe for Bible studies?

#### **1. Some characteristics of people who may be classified as “ripe fruit”:**

- People who manifest an earnest desire to seek and find Bible truths.
- People who accept Bible studies and complete the lessons weekly.
- People who are lonely, unhappy, and dissatisfied with their lives.
- People who feel the need for change.
- People who are dissatisfied with their church.
- People who don't belong to a church or are backsliders.
- People who accept major doctrines and make positive decisions.
- People who display signs that they are under conviction.
- People who evidence a change in lifestyle as they learn truth.
- People who demonstrate a desire to share with others what they learned.

These People are the category that you want to spend a major part of your time with.

## **2. Some characteristics of “green fruit”**

- These people usually will refuse Bible studies.
- If they accept studies, they do not have them completed on time.
- They make excuses over and over for not completing the study.
- They don't accept the clear teachings of Scripture.
- They are deeply involved and committed to their own church.
- They talk badly about the lesson, your church or doctrines.
- They are friendly but won't make any commitments.

### **General Principles for Giving Bible Studies**

- 1. Use a good series of simple Bible studies.**
  - a. It's not necessary to write your own set of Bible studies. There are many good, solid, proven sets of studies that have been found to be effective.
- 2. Have a distinct plan.**
  - a. When giving Bible studies, determine to have a distinct plan; before you teach any subject, it is important that you understand each subject yourself.
- 3. Follow the same basic sequence with all interests.**
  - a. Don't skip the study even if the student says they already know the subject.
  - b. Be sure the person understands the subject clearly before going on to another subject.
- 4. Make Christ and salvation the central theme of every Bible study.**
  - a. Every Bible study subject that is presented should have Christ at the center. It is Christ, the Christ on the cross, that attracts.
- 5. Present text after text.**
  - a. The most effective and powerful Bible study presents one text upon another. Isaiah 28:10 teaches that precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little.
- 6. Present testing truths after conversion.**
  - a. Some subjects should be presented after you have presented Jesus. When an individual experiences genuine conversion, they are open to receive more of God's truth.
- 7. Keep your arguments to a few on any subject.**
  - a. It is best to use only a few texts and notes on any subject.
- 8. Encourage informal remarks and discussion.**
  - a. Answer questions from your students, but keep them on the subject you are studying.

**9. Give simple explanations.**

- a. Keep your Bible study simple by giving simple explanations. It is very important to keep the study from getting too complicated.

**10. Work with the love of God in your heart.**

**11. Meet people where they are.**

- a. It is important to meet people where they are. Each person is different.

**12. Recount your own experience in conversion.**

- a. Tell what Jesus has done for you in your life.

**13. Pray before each study.**

- a. Prayer should always precede the opening of the Bible.

### **What to Include in the Bible Study**

- 1. Deal with felt needs.** Maybe the interests are fearful of the final events just before Jesus comes or His actual coming. You will want to weave into the study some promises that would take away the fear and give comfort, trust, and faith that Jesus will be there and will see us through.
- 2. Use additional texts.** Be sure that you include some texts that focus on Christ as the center of the lessons.
- 3. Use a personal testimony.** They can know that the Christian life is working for you, this can give courage that it can work for them.
- 4. Make an application.** Make the Bible study relevant to everyday struggles.
- 5. Ask for a decision.** Always close your Bible study with an appeal for a decision.
- 6. Study at the pace of your student.** Keep in mind that future lessons will often answer the questions that your student asks.

### **Key points to remember**

- Show confidence and thus inspire confidence.
- Look people in the eye. Don't stare, but don't avoid eye contact.
- Be a good listener.
- Use the person's name frequently.
- Use good posture. Don't slump. Sit and stand erect, but relaxed.
- Speak clearly, not too fast. Have a pleasant volume, not too loud, not too soft.
- Focus on the person you're talking to and on what you want to say.

- Have clear objectives and accomplish them.
- Trust God that He will bless your Bible study.
- Discover your interest's felt needs. This is so important.
- Weave Bible texts into the study that will address these needs with Scripture.
- Pray for discernment that you will be able to see their felt needs during your social time.
- It is wise to leave quickly after prayer, leaving them in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Avoid entering into conversations that are not spiritual at the close of the study.
- Leave the Bible study guide and remind them of the date and time for the next study.
- Encourage them to take time for God's Word daily.
- Express your appreciation for their friendship and the pleasure of studying with them.

### **Time Outline of a Bible Study**

It is best to keep the study time less than an hour. Even if they want you to stay longer, it is not wise to take too much of their time. It is far better for them to be anxious for you to come than for them to dread your visits because you stay too long.

- 1. Social Time - 8 to 10 minutes.**
  - Get to know them. Discover their felt needs.
- 2. Bible Study Time - 30 to 40 minutes.**
  - Always open with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to join you in your study.
- 3. Application and Decision – 2 to 4 minutes**
  - Two to four minutes application and call for decision on material studied. Always ask for a decision to follow Jesus and the truth that they have just learned.
- 4. Prayer.**
  - Seal the decision with prayer.

### **Dealing with Objections**

- Discover what hinders them.
- Come close to your Bible study contacts. Getting close to your Bible study contacts will help them through the difficult time of meeting obstacles.
- Never argue.
- Avoid conflict.
- Expect objections, don't be surprised by them.
- Answer objections before they're raised.
- Give short, concise answers.

- Listen carefully to each objection.
- Meet objections with texts

### **When People Have Objections, What Might This Indicate?**

- The person has genuine questions that loom large in their minds.
- The person has not fully made up their mind on the topic.
- The person may be using an objection to defend themselves.

### **Helpful Suggestions for Giving Bible Studies**

- Pray with your students before each study.
- Keep the Bible study simple.
- Keep the Bible study short and to the point.
- Be a learner. Don't claim to be an authority on the Bible. It's important not to give your students the impression that you think you have all the answers and they don't know anything.
- Study the lessons in their given order.
- Be consistent.
- Study every week at the same time.
- Study one lesson at a time, two at the most.
- Let the student ask questions. Questions will arise that you might not be prepared to answer. Don't pretend you know the answer. If you don't know the answer to a question, tell them you don't know. Say, "I'm not sure about that answer, but I'll find out and give it to you next week."
- Keep the student on track.
- Ask for a decision at the end of each lesson.
- Depend on Christ.
- Read the introduction to the lesson.
- Explain to the student how you will review the lessons.
- If someone gives a wrong answer, never say they are wrong. Instead, say, "We seem to have different thoughts to this question."
- Remember to be kind and tactful during the study period.
- Be a good listener and ask questions.
- Tactfully postpone answering questions that will be covered in a future Bible study.
- Don't be embarrassed if a student asks you a question you cannot answer.
- Encourage the student if he hasn't completed a study guide when you return.

## **Conclusion**

After we have learned the “how to” of giving a Bible study, we must continually remind ourselves that, after all is said and done, it is the Holy Spirit that must bring the fruit to harvest. We may plant the seed, but only the power of God can make it grow.

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