**Studying the Bible With Our Friends**

**How to**

Our purpose: To know God and to be known by him—to give Glory to God.

Our mission: To win souls for Christ.

2 Cor 5:17-20

Romans 15:14-16 Our “priestly duty” as ministers is to “proclaim the gospel of God” to non-believers.

How do we do that?

1. By sharing with our friends, neighbors, relatives, fellow students and co-workers. (our lesson 6 weeks ago)

2. By studying the Bible with them.

I want to give you a challenge and a vision: To study the Bible with a friend, fellow student, relative, neighbor or co-worker sometime in the next two months.

But this is a how-to class. A nuts-and-bolts primer.

1. Ask the person to study.

2. Ideally, get at least one other person in the study, but do NOT delay it for this reason.

3. The first study:

Ask questions.

Do a spiritual timeline.

When you do this do NOT pre-judge!!!! Apply the Golden Rule.

You and/or partner share your spiritual “story.” Emphasize how you came to be interested in studying, and be quite specific about the exact date and circumstances when you were baptized.

Ask the person and listen VERY CAREFULLY.

Then ask questions from the following list:

Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God/inspired?

Why do you believe this?

Do you believe you are a Christian? Do you believe you are saved?

When and how (and please be VERY specific) were you forgiven of your sins?

What was your frame of mind at the time?

These questions can either be a cynical attempt to manipulate people to a desired end, or it can be a sincere attempt to find out where they are at so you can help them to get to where they need to go.

Note: Some people do this as part of their seeking God study. Up to you!!!! Ask yourself this question:

1. Is this person relatively religious? Does the person think he or she is probably saved? Do they, at least theoretically believe the Bible is from God?

Note: This group includes people (rare, but…) who are actually already a Christian.

This person should do the traditional Bible study series.

For this person, doing something like a discipleship study early on makes sense.

Or

2. This person has almost none or only a limited background in Christianity. He or she is not even completely sure that they believe Jesus is the Son of God or that the Bible is inspired by God.

This person should do the Jesus study series.

For this person, doing a discipleship study early makes no sense. You want to build faith in Jesus.

Now, do two skits to demonstrate.

**Person #1**

Seeking God study optional

Word study optional

Discipleship study not optional!!!

(the part about showing that the word disciple is more common that Christian is not essential)

Ask strongly directive questions.

John 8:31-32 Q: Have you been holding to the teachings of Jesus?

John 13:34-35 Q: Have you been part of a church like this?

Mark 1:14-18 Q: Have you been a fisher of people? Explain? Are you a disciple?

Luke 9:23-26 Q: Have you been denying self and carrying your cross?

Luke 14:25-33 Q: Have you counted the cost?

Matthew 28:18-20 Q: Does the order matter (make disciple, baptize them)?

Then complete the series…

**Person #2** Goal: To help them to come to have faith in Jesus.

Possibly read John together, then do Jesus series.

The Gospel of Jesus (introduction: you can start The Life of Jesus immediately)

The Life of Jesus (meet Jesus: prophecy fulfillment, miracles, claims)

The Death and Resurrection of Jesus (cross study)

The Promise of Jesus (salvation study)

The Response to Jesus (a call to repentance and teaching on baptism)

The Lordship of Jesus (a call to discipleship)

If you do not have the studies, go to [www.mercedchurch.com](http://www.mercedchurch.com)

Click on resources

Click on the Bible Study

Final challenge:

Write down and share with your partner the names of 3-5 people you are going to ask to study the Bible with you. Then pray about it and go out and make it happen.

1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase.

Keith planted, Katie watered, God gave the increase.

**Seeking God.**

The purpose (always keep in mind the purpose. Do not just go through the verses) To get the person excited about and, more importantly, committed to studying the Bible with you.

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Mention the context (Jerusalem has been destroyed because of their idolatry and other sins. They will be in captivity for 70 years!)

Q: What does God have in mind for you acc. to this passage?

Q: How do we find God according to this passage?

Q: Are you prepared to “seek God with all your heart?”

Q: What, specifically, will you do?

Acts 17:26-28

Give the context (Paul speaking to intellectual Gentiles in Athens)

What has God been doing in order to “find” you?

Note: This is the classical Seeking God study. The next two passages are optional.

Psalm 42:1-2

Q: How do you feel about having the opportunity to “meet with God?”

Q: What will you commit to doing this week to make this happen?

Matthew 6:33

Q: What does it mean to you to “Seek first the Kingdom of God?”

Q: What specific steps will you take to put this into action?

At the end:

Set up the next study: date, time and place.

**The Word of God**

Purpose: To establish solidly that the Bible is the ONLY source of truth and standard of how we should live, and to motivate them to personally study the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Q: What does it mean when Paul says “All Scripture is inspired by God”?

(Give the person a solid definition if they cannot. It means that every word of both the Old and the New Testament is supernaturally from God—it is God speaking to us.)

Q: Do you believe this?

Q: Why do you believe this? (supply reasons if they do not, for example from fulfilled prophecy, accurate science and history, evidence for miracles of Jesus)

Q: What is it useful for? I have no authority over you, but if I use the Bible, then that carries authority.

2 Peter 1:18-21 This passage complements 2 Tim 3:16-17

Q: What does it say about Scripture?

Q: What does that mean for you and for me?

Hebrews 4:12-13

Q: What does it mean that the Word of God is living and active?

Q: What is it active in doing? (cutting)

Q: What is the significance that it can even separate between soul and spirit? (It makes distinctions and the truth clear)

Q: Are you willing for the God to use the Bible to expose you?

John 8:31-32

Q: Read this carefully. Who is Jesus speaking to? (answers people who believe in him)

Q: Is belief in his words sufficient to be a disciple of Jesus?

Q: What is required? Q: What does “holding to his teaching” mean?

Q: Are you prepared to hold to his teaching/practice what Jesus says?

Matthew 15:1-9 note: how much time you have to spend here depends on the person. If they are Catholic, for example, you will need to spend more time here

Q: What is it that Jesus says that we can do which would make our worship be in vain?

Q: In the bottom line, if you learn something you were taught is in fact a non-biblical tradition, will you be willing to follow the Bible rather than your tradition?

1 Tim 4:16

Q: Which is more important: having the right life or the right doctrine?

Q: If you are way off on either, what will be the result (not saved)

Generally, maintaining right “life” is a bigger part of the Christian life, but correct doctrine is essential to salvation.

John 12:48

Q: It says that Jesus did not come to the earth in order to judge, but according to this passage, what will be the standard of judgment?

Q: What does this mean about/to you?

Acts 17:10-12 (let him/her know who the Thessalonians and the Bereans were)

Q: What was more “noble” about the Bereans?

Challenge: Will you commit here and now to daily Bible study and to not only read it, but doing what it says?

We assume that you have done the Word study with this person and that you have done a spiritual timeline.

Follow up on the homework you assigned after the Word study.

**Discipleship Study**

Purpose:

1. To establish a biblical definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

2. To challenge the person with whom you are studying to make the commitment to be that kind of disciple.

As you do this study, Ask strongly directive questions.

John 8:31-32 Q: Have you been holding to the teachings of Jesus?

John 13:34-35 Q: Have you been part of a church like this?

Mark 1:14-18 Q: Have you been a fisher of people? Explain? Are you a disciple?

Luke 9:23-26 Q: Have you been denying self and carrying your cross?

Luke 14:25-33 Q: Have you counted the cost?

Matthew 28:18-20

These are Jesus’ last words of instruction to his apostles/disciples. We can assume that he speaks very carefully and intends this to be applied to all Christians.

Q: What are the three things Jesus tells all of us to do? (make disciples, baptize them [ie. those you made disciples of], teach them to obey.)

Q: What is a disciple, generically? (a student, follower, apprentice)

Acts 11:19-26 Q: What was the most common label for a follower of Jesus at that time? Answer: disciple. “Christian” used only three times in the NT, two of them by non-Christians as a put-down.

Let’s look at a biblical definition of a disciple.

John 8:31-32

Q: Who is Jesus talking to? Get them to answer the question!!! (the correct answer is Jewish people who believed in Jesus.)

Q: Were these believers in Jesus disciples? Why or why not?

Q: What does this tell you about being a disciple?

Q: Have you done this. Have you fully held to the teaching of Jesus? If so, when did this begin in your life?

Q: By this standard, are most “Christians” you meet out there disciples?

John 13:34-35

Q: What defines a disciple acc. to this passage?

Q: Who will recognize disciple by this “mark of discipleship”? (outsiders)

Q: Have you been part of a church where discipleship of this sort is normal?

John 15:5-8

Q: What is the mark or sign of being a disciple in this passage?

Q: What will this “bearing fruit” consist of?

Point out that this includes a changed life (for example Gal 5:22-23) and conversions. (Note: grape vines bear grapes, apple trees bear apples, a Christian tree bears Christians)

Q: Have you been bearing fruit?

Note: I skip 1 John 2:3-6 as redundant, and this is a long study!

Mark 1:14-18

Here Jesus is famously calling the first disciples. We can assume that this sets a standard for discipleship.

Q: What, specifically, did he call his disciples to do?

 -follow him

 -fish for men

Q: Is this something you have been doing on a regular basis?

Q: How did they respond to this call? (at once)

Luke 9:23-26

Q: What is Jesus asking all of his disciples to do?

Q: Is this optional for a disciple?

Q: What does it mean to deny self and take up Jesus’ cross?

Q: Is this something you have done?

Luke 14:25-33

Note: Although he was happy to have so many there, Jesus is not all that impressed with crowds. He is looking for disciples.

Q: What does Jesus mean in v. 26?

Q: Who are you closest to? What does this passage mean in practice? (that your commitment to Jesus comes WAY before your commitment to your wife, father, boyfriend, sister)

Note: We already covered v. 27

Q: What is Jesus’ point in v. 28-30.

Q: Are you ready to count this cost?

Q: What is Jesus’ point in v. 31-32 (discipleship involved unconditional surrender)

Q: (from v. 33) What will be the hardest thing for you to give up in order to be a disciple of Jesus? In what sense will you need to “give it up?”

Note: I skip John 12:24-26

Matthew 28:18-20

Now, you have a good sense of what Jesus is asking all of us to do when he says to “go, make disciples.”

Q: Does the order matter here? (in other words, first become a disciple, then be baptized, then be taught to fully obey)

Assignment: Read the Book of John.

Discussion group:

Is there an aspect of what is contained in the discipleship study that you feel particularly challenged by?

Do you feel you could lead this study? Why or why not?

**Light and Darkness/The Sin Study**

Purpose:

1. To help people come to the point of repentance for their sins.

2. If necessary, to help people realize that they might be lost.

1 Peter 2:9-10 Light and Darkness The reason for the title.

Q: Is there a grey area here between being in the light or in the darkness?

Q: What is the difference in state between the two? (forgiven or not forgiven)

Q: And this is key. Do not back off on this. Which are you right now and why?

(do not try to talk them out of their position, but perhaps push gently on their why if they say that they are in the light. Remember, you already did a timeline.)

Isaiah 59:1-2

Q: What is the effect of sin in our lives?

This infinitely high wall must be broken down in order for us to have the kind of relationship with God we want.

Q: Who is more lost/separated, the blatant sinner or the “good” person?

Q: Who might find it hardest to repent?

Def of sin: *Harmateo*  missing the mark. A word from Greek archery.

Galatians 5:19-21

Q: What is the result of living like this? (not see the kingdom/not go to heaven)

Note that this passage is written to people who have been saved.

Note: Something we do, something in our mind, something we do, something in our mind…. What does this tell you?

Instructions: Go through this list, defining the terms, and setting an example by sharing you own personal experience with these sins.

Then, ask them to do the same. Do not be afraid to ask specific questions. Explain you are trying to help them to come to a solid repentance.

Sexual immorality *pornea*  Any sexual contact with someone you are not married to.

Impurity. Impure thoughts lust, desire for someone to die, violent thoughts

Debauchery Wanton appeal to the senses. Gorging on food, masturbation

Idolatry Any thing we put above God

Witchcraft *pharmaceo* use of mind-altering drugs marijuana for example

Hatred

Discord argumentativeness, divisiveness

Jealousy (rivalry competition), Envy (discontent, wanting something not yours)

Fits of rage outbursts of anger, shouting, road rage

Selfish ambition

Dissensions Factions racism, party spirit, divisiveness

Drunkenness

Orgies

And the like… stealing, lying, arrogance, selfishness There are other lists.

James 4:17 Sins of omission.

Q: Are there any obvious examples in your life?

Romans 6:23

Q: What are the ultimate consequences of unrepented, unforgiven sin?

Q: Why?

Homework:

Write a letter to God in which you open up with yourself about the sins you have committed. It may even include things you have not felt comfortable sharing with us. Spend significant time thinking about and praying about these things.

Read 2 Tim 3:1-5 (and also Colossians 3:5-11?) to help you to think about your list.

We will talk about the letter next time, but it is for your eyes only.

**Salvation Study**

Purpose: To establish a solid doctrine of how and when one is saved.

Ephesians 2:1-10

v. 1-3 Q: What is the problem? Who has that problem?

v. 4-8 Q: What is the solution?

Note the idea of being raised (v. 6). We will see what that refers to later.

v. 9 Q: What definitely does not save us?

Does this mean that God does not require any works?

Illustration. Give reach out with an object as a gift (but coach your helper ahead of time not to take it). Then, do this again, but this time have him/her take the gift.

Q: Did the person earn the gift? Would he/she have received it without doing something? Did doing that thing earn the gift?

Our works, no matter how awesome, do absolutely zero to earn salvation, but this does not mean that God does not ask us to do something in order to receive it.

So, what response on our part to God’s offer of salvation is required?

1. John 3:16 To believe. Q: What kind of belief is this—intellectual assent that something is true, or faith and trust in God?

2. John 3:3-6 To be born again.

Q: What MUST happen for us to enter the kingdom?

Q: What is involved in being born again? (water and spirit) We will see what this means in the next passage.

3. Acts 2:36-41 Repent and be baptized.

Q: What does “cut to the heart” mean?

Q: What two things did Peter tell them to do?

Q: What does repent mean? (*metanoia* 180o mind change)

Q: What does baptism mean? (*baptizo* immersion in water)

Q: What two things would God do for us if we do those two things?

Q: Who is this for?

Romans 6:1-7

Note: The only thing in the Bible ever connected with into Christ is baptism (Gal 3:26).

Q: What happens when we are baptized into Christ?

(buried with him AND raised with him)

v. 5,7 What if we have not been united with him in a death like his?

Note: This explains the born again language in John 3:3-6

1 Peter 3:21-22

Q: What does the water of Noah’s flood symbolize?

Q: What does baptism do?

Romans 10:8-10

Q: What act on our part is connected with our salvation here?

Q: Do we need to actually say these words, or is the actual taking on of lordship sufficient?

Summary:

In order to receive the offered gift of salvation, the Bible tells us we must:

1. Have biblical belief/faith in Jesus—in his death burial and resurrection.

2. Repent of our sins.

3. Confess Jesus as Lord.

4. Be baptized by immersion into Christ

Q: Does the order matter?

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

Q: What is worldly guilt, and what is the result of this?

Note: There are two categories of repentance—the deep, 180o turnaround repentance that leads to salvation, and daily life-style repentance of those already saved.

Go through each of these qualities that define the repentant person/heart and ask the person what that will look like for them. Assure them that if they do these things, then they are ready to be baptized.

Assignment: Review your letter to God and spend time praying and perhaps even fasting.

**The Church Study**

Purpose: To establish the importance in church/body in the life of a Christian.

We want to avoid any “surprises” when someone becomes part of the local church.

Colossians 1:15-18

Q: What metaphor is used for the church, and for Christ here?

Q: What are the implications for us individually and as a group?

Ephesians 2:19-21

Q: What metaphor is used for the church here?

The church is a family/household. We call each other brother and sister.

Being part of a family comes with responsibilities and privileges.

Q: What are some of the privileges of being in a famiy (and therefore in the church)?

Q: What are some of the responsibilities of being in a family (and therefore in the church.

Explain the meaning of Jesus as the cornerstone of the church.

Q: What might it mean that the apostles and prophets are the foundation? (most likely this is talking about their teaching—the Bible. The Bible sets the agenda for the church.

Ephesians 4:4-6

Q: What word is repeated here many times? Why might that be?

Unity is important. God’s plan is for there to be one church, not thousands of denominations. These things are what we can be united on (with the Bible as the unifying document)

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Q: When do we become part of the church?

Q: What does this scripture (esp. v. 15-20) say about our relationship with the body?

(Many parts, one body, We are stronger together than apart)

Q: What about v. 21-27? (We need the body. No special treatment. All equal)

Q: What happens to a pinky finger if you cut it off?

Hebrews 3:12-13

Q: What does it mean to “see to it”? (We are our brother/sister’s keeper)

Q: How often do we need encouragement? Why? (daily, so we will not be hardened)

Q: What is at stake? (salvation)

Hebrews 10:23-25

Q: What does it mean to “spur one another on”?

We need to be in the habit of meeting together.

At this point, explain to the person how we, as a body, meet for Church on Sunday, Bible group 1/week and devotional 1/2 week and we expect everyone to be at every meeting.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 Optional, but I use it to explain about dating and marriage if necessary.

Malachi 3:6-12 Optional. Can be used to explain tithing. Sometimes I simply mention that one commandment is to give sacrificially.

1 Peter 4:10. Optional. Can be used to get them to think about what they can contribute to the church—get them to understand that it is about giving, not receiving.

Homework Read Romans 12 List the gifts that God had given you and how you can see using those gifts to serve Jesus’ Church.

Discussion group:

Any progress on the goal to do at least one study (restoration, follow-up, Jesus studies, or First Steps/First Principles)?

Of those qualities of godly sorrow, which has meaning for you right now? Which one can you work on this week?

How do you feel about your own church life? Are there any areas in this study that challenge you?