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## SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP

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**Bible Study Principles and Group Dynamics**

**Dates: January – February 2016**

**Area of Study: The book of Ruth**

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## 3 NECESSARY GOALS OF A SMALL GROUP

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The 3 Goals create a quantifiable measure of a small group's effectiveness and provide a structured pathway of accountability for everyone involved.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

### 1. Study and Communication of God's Word – SOUND MIND

1.a. To properly study and communicate the Scriptures.

1.b. To rightly divide and communicate the Scriptures.

2 Timothy 2:1-4, 14-18

1.c. A time of corporate provocation.

Proverbs 27:17

1.d. Exalting of the Scriptures as our final authority.

Hebrews 4:12

### 2. Prayer and Intimacy around God's Word – LOVE

2.a. True Biblical Fellowship focuses on our closeness to God and his Mission. 1 John 1:3, 6-7, Acts 2:42

2.b. Transparency and Vulnerability builds accountability for your personal relationship with God.

2.c. Transparency and Vulnerability have everything to do with confession.

2.d. Romans 10:9, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9, 2 Corinthians 8:4, Galatians 2:9, Ephesians 5:11, Philippians 1:5, Philippians 2:1, Philippians 3:10

### **3. Engaging and Transforming our World with God's Word – POWER**

3.a. To always give an answer. (The Answer)

1 Peter 3:15

3.b. To use our small groups as outreach opportunities. (The Lost)

Luke 19:9-10

3.c. To invite those who need a proper understanding of the scriptures.

(Lost Sheep) Luke 15:20

3.d. Deuteronomy 30:2-4, Job 33:27-28, Psalm 103:10-13, Isaiah 49:15

Ask yourself, are these 3 GOALS happening in your small group?

# A HEIGHTENED LEVEL OF EXPECTATION

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## 1. We are calling people to make a commitment.

- a. Small group members will be asked to commit to the small group for the duration of each book or topic of study.
- b. Small Group members will be asked to come with a prepared study, a prayerful heart and a desire to reach the people in their lives.
- c. Small Group members will be asked to actively and regularly participate in all small group meetings.
  - i. If a small group member is unable to attend a meeting, the expectation will be that they email their prepared study to their small group leader.
  - ii. If a small group member is consistently unprepared and/or not attending the meetings, small group leaders should:
    - 1. Remind the group member of their stated commitment.
    - 2. If not receptive invite the group member to meet with you and their pastor together to navigate next steps.
      - a. It is not the small group leaders responsibility or right to kick group members out of their groups.
      - b. It will be the responsibility of their pastors or ministry heads on what the proper next steps will be.
      - c. We desire that our small groups are places of restoration and edification, not condemnation or guilt so please do not make ultimatums with your group members.

3. Some solutions might include asking the small group member to meet one-on-one with their small group leader to discuss a profitable strategy to help get them back into the scriptures on a daily basis or possibly suggesting a sabbatical until the next study.
  - a. The issue is not a time problem, it's a spiritual one.
    - i. Everyone has opportunity to study the scriptures on a daily basis.
    - ii. We simply have to make a choice everyday to do so.

## **2. What is the rationale behind this commitment?**

- a. In a desire to create strong relationships centered around knowing and living the Word of God, we are calling people to a higher commitment.
  - i. Irregular attendance and non-participation from established members deflates a group quickly and lowers the bar of what is expected by others around.
    1. This causes disinterest or a feeling of insignificance on what is transpiring any given small group night.
    2. The metaphor of a cancer spreading throughout the group creates a sad but appropriate picture for the dangers of disinterested or inconsistent small group activity.
  - ii. Instead of building a heart of expectation, there is of heart of "exceptionalism". Which tends to come from a selfish place rather than a place that is looking for the benefit or the growth of the other group members.
    1. Ask yourself, would it be ok if my small group leader did this?

- b. In order to grow our ministry fellowship, we must build a base of qualified and faithful disciplers. Faithfulness and a steady flow of equipping in your small group are a good help and indicate that you will be faithful in leading another person in a deeper walk with God as well.
- c. After Discipleship 1, our small groups are the main form of accountability in our church. It truly needs to be a focus!

**3. This commitment is for all members who have finished with Discipleship 1 and are clearly established in the 4 goals of Discipleship.**

- Established in the Word of God
  - Established in the Fellowship of Believers
  - Established in the Structure of the Local Church
  - Established in the Work of the Ministry
- a. For anyone who is still going through our Discipleship 1 material and for ALL of our guests, these expectations do NOT apply.
    - i. We want all of our young members and guests to feel absolutely welcome with just the desire for them to join us as we study the scriptures together.
  - b. For anyone who is currently in Discipleship 1 but also desires the greater accountability of a small group, this individual can come and participate to the level of their desired interest.
    - i. Small group leaders should encourage these members to put their priority in their Discipleship 1 studies
      - 1. One example for a group member who is currently in Discipleship 1 could be that they share what they are learning in their weekly Discipleship 1 study.

- ii. Small group leaders will need to have good communication with the discipler of your small group member to make sure the disciple has a good balance in their studies.
- c. Additionally there will be people who want to attend your small group and have been through Discipleship 1 and are established in the 4 goals of discipleship but are currently in a place of trauma and/or just beginning their road to healing.
  - i. The principle that applies for these cases is that we always operate from a place of grace, not policy or condemnation.

## THREE BASIC APPLICATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

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All scripture applies to us somehow. Yes, there are passages and sections of scripture that cannot be literally applied. For example, you'll notice we didn't sacrifice any animals this past Sunday. However, that does not mean we can not learn from every passage. As you study out the Bible, you should always start with trying to establish basic truth around these three different applications. The three applications of scripture are:

- (a) Historical: The Bible records actually historical events that took place.
- (b) Doctrinal: The Bible teaches key concepts and principles that we should learn.
- (c) Personal: There is a way in which we should apply the Bible to our own lives.

### A. Scripture has a \_\_\_\_\_ application:

In order to establish the history of a passage you should ask yourself these questions:

1. Who wrote this book? Paul, Moses, James?

Authorship is best established by considering what the Bible itself declares about the authorship of a particular book.

**1Co 1:1** Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, **1Co 1:2** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth

**Joe 1:1** The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

There are a handful of books in the Bible where there is no data and or very limited internal data in the book to indicate the author. In these cases, it is good to familiarize yourself first with ***who the early church held as being the author*** and to understand the reasons behind this. There are of course modern day scholars that may reject the conclusion of thousands of years of church history for what they term a “critical perspective” but these modern scholars very often reject more than just the commonly held authorship of a particular book of the Bible, in many cases they reject the preservation and inerrancy of scripture. The point here is



that you should recognize the presence of a critical spirit in today's age towards the Bible. The goal is to get believers to distrust the Word of God.

2. Who was it written to? \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When was it written? Before Christ, during Christ's earthly ministry, after Christ's death?
4. Under what circumstances was it written? What was the writer going through when it was written?

5. Are there any cultural considerations to factor into this passage?

**Luk 15:20** And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

6. What can we learn about God and man from history? Recognize that the Bible is unique among religious books in that it is a book of history and its history is true even if our records say different!
  - When people disbelieve God's account of history then they will misinterpret the true, doctrinal meaning of Scripture.

- God did create everything in six days. Noah did experience the flood.

**B. Scripture has a \_\_\_\_\_ application (teaching *and* prophetic)**

The Biblical definition of doctrine is “teaching” or truth. This second level of application is to discover what God is teaching through the historical words and stories recorded in the Bible.

Sometimes the doctrinal teaching is prophecy or revealing the future.

**Isa 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

In order to establish the doctrinal teaching of a passage, you should ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the Scripture directly teaching?

A. John 15: 1 - 9

B. Numbers 21: 4 - 9

C. Joshua 1: 1-8

2. What can I learn from this aside from the historical data? Recognize that just because a passage does not specifically mention a doctrine does not mean it's not being taught. Take Jonah for

example, nowhere in the book of Jonah is it stated that Jonah is a picture or a type of Christ and yet you can't ignore the similarities between Jonah and Christ. It's actually clearly stated in the gospels:

Mat 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

### **C. Scripture has a \_\_\_\_\_ application**

Also referred to as a practical, devotional or inspirational application. You should ask yourself these questions in order to establish the personal application:

1. How can I \_\_\_\_\_ this teaching or principle to my life?

A. John 15: 1-9

B. Numbers 21: 4 - 9

C. Joshua 1: 1 - 8

2. How will you be different as a result of reading this book?

3. How does God want to teach me, reprove me, correct me or instruct me?

4. We can apply any scripture inspirationally but not doctrinally. Take the burnt offerings in Leviticus for example. In this day and age, we know that we are not commanded to offer literal sacrifices of animals. This however is the doctrine taught in Leviticus and was to be carried out until the first coming of Christ. So how would we apply the truths of the sacrifices listed in Leviticus personally?

<b>Sacrifice</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Personal Application</b>
Burnt Offering	Lev 1: 3-9	We freely choose give our lives to Christ (Rom 12:1)
Meat Offering	Lev 2: 1-6	We grow in practical purity and holiness (1 Cor 5:7)
Peace Offering	Lev 3: 1-5	We find peace with God through Christ (Rom 5:1)
Sin Offering	Lev 4: 1-12	Though we still struggle with our sin nature, Christ has made provision for us. (1 John 1:9 )
Trespass Offering	Lev 5: 6-10	Sin has a price that must be paid. (Rom 6:23)

5. We don't study the Bible just to learn something but to apply something. This means that the truth should produce some type of change or decision. It should somehow draw you closer to Christ.

## PREPARING A BASIC BOOK STUDY

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When you are creating a book study the goal is not to try to enter a dissertation on whether or not Adam had blood before the fall, or the doctrine of the Mysteries of God. You are not trying to impart tons of information in the study – you are trying to clearly communicate the purpose, meaning and significance of that particular book.

**The Goal:** As simply as possible, present Biblical truth in an understandable manner illustrated by example or anecdote.

**Key Insight:** If you want to have something to say – that means time spent in God’s Word!

People too often create studies out of ignorance! As a result Bible study becomes a chore. When you have gotten with God, no one will be able to keep your mouth shut! Not even you – you are filled with the word – you are SO EXCITED by the word, and the Spirit will not let you stay! If you are full to the overflowing – even when life may be a bad time – you have a message from God!

Jeremiah said...

*Jer 20: 9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

### The 3 r’s of Bible Study Prep!

(1) \_\_\_\_\_:

1 Tim 4: 13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

(2) **wRiting:**

When a king in Israel would come to the throne he had to fulfill a biblical requirement...

Deut 17: 18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and

that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

(3) \_\_\_\_\_:

1 Cor 2: 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

## Steps To Creating A Book Study (ASSIGNMENT # 1):

1. Pray and keep a journal! God is going to show you things as you prayerfully consider his Word. Joshua 4:7.
2. Read the whole book thru! For a true sermon series the standard is— 50 Times! WOW! For Bible study, 7 will be the number of perfection. No one will stop you from reading more! The first time read it quickly. The last time - Read it carefully and prayerfully!
3. Outline the book. Allow the Bible to be your outline.

### Basic Outline of Philippians

- I. (1:1-11) Opening Salutation, Thanksgiving and prayer.
- II. Paul's Circumstances and Encouragement for the Church (1:12-2:30)
- III. Warnings Against the False Teaching of the Judaizers (3:1-4:1)
- IV. Final Exhortations (4:2-9)
- V. A Word of Thanks (4:10-20)
- VI. Final Greetings and Closing (4:21-23)

### Detailed Outline of Philippians

- I. (1:1-11)**
  - A. Salutation 1:1-2
  - B. Thanksgiving and Prayer 1:3-11
    - 1. Thanksgiving (1:3-8)
    - 2. Prayer (1:9-11)
- II. Paul's Circumstances and Encouragement for the Church (1:12-2:30)**
  - A. Paul's Circumstances and Attitude (1:12-26)
  - B. Paul's Encouragement for the Church (1:27-2:30)
    - 1. Concerning Humility and Obedience (2:1-18)
      - a. A Call to Humility (2:1-4)
      - b. The Example of Christ's Humility (2:5-11)
      - c. A Call to Obedience (2:12-18)
    - 2. Concerning Timothy (2:19-24)
    - 3. Concerning Epaphroditus (2:25-30)
- III. Warnings Against the False Teaching of the Judaizers (3:1-4:1)**
  - A. The Warning: Steer Clear of the Judaizers and Their Legalism (3:1-2)
  - B. The Solution: Follow the Example of Paul (3:3-4:1)
- IV. Final Exhortations (4:2-9)**
  - A. Concerning Disputes (4:2-3)
  - B. Concerning Joy and Prayer (4:4-7)
  - C. Concerning How to Think and Live (4:8-9)
- V. A Word of Thanks (4:10-20)**
  - A. Paul's Contentment (4:10-13)
  - B. The Philippians' Gift (4:14-20)
- VI. Final Greetings and Closing (4:21-23)**

4. Select a Key Verse. This verse should encapsulate the most critical truth or fundamental truth in the book you are studying. In general, it's one verse but sometimes one sentence may extend to a second or third verse. Ask yourself, if I had to pick one verse that best represents this entire book *which verse* would it be and *why*?
5. Write down what you think is the Key Theme of the book. What central truth is the book communicating?
6. What is the Historical Application of the book? Write this out.
7. What is the doctrinal Application of the book? What biblical concepts is this book teaching us about? Write this out.
8. What is/are the key word/words in this book? Write it down. For example, the key word in the book of Philippians is JOY. Key words can be words that show up more frequently in the book than in other books and or words that have a clear connection to the fundamental meaning of the book. Sometimes, key words are rare and don't appear often. For example, you can't ignore the fact that the word "success" is only found one time in your entire Bible. It would have to be a key word of the book it's found in.
9. Write out how Christ is seen in the book.
10. Write out ONE personal application of the book.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY

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### A. The Principle of \_\_\_\_\_

This is the most critical of all bible study principles. Actually, most every other principle that we study is a subset of this. Principles that come after this principle help you to understand how to determine context.

A failure to understand context is where doctrinal heresy comes from. Let me give you a few examples:  
Mark 16:18

**Before you ask what a verse means, determine the context.**

**This principle is rooted in common sense and courtesy**

**People, just like God, are often quoted out of context**

#### 1. The context of the Gospels for example

- Hebrew 9:17 sets the parameters for the beginning of New Testament
- This does not mean the Gospels are not part of the “New Testament,” but means that God’s new covenant begins at the death of Jesus Christ
- Every word of the four Gospels has application for the believer, but we should not look for direct doctrine, policy or procedure for the Church



## 2. Every book, chapter and verse has a specific doctrinal context

- Where does the book fit in relationship to the rest of the Bible:
- Where does the \_\_\_\_\_ fit in relationship to the rest of the book and God's purpose for that book?
- Where does the \_\_\_\_\_ fit in relationship to the context of the chapter?
- Determine the meaning of words from the author. \_\_\_\_\_ always determines the meaning.

## B. The Principle of People Groups

### 1. The Bible is written to three types of people, 1 Cor 10:32-33

- Jew, Gentile & Church of God
- Part of understanding the context is recognizing the primary group of people to whom the passage was written.

### 2. All the Bible is written *for* you; not all the Bible is written *to* you

- ALL Scripture is divinely inspired and applicable to your life (2 Timothy 3:16-17), but you must determine HOW to apply it to your life – directly or indirectly
- God warns of religious sects who believe that they have replaced Israel and who misapply Bible doctrine which God specifically gave to the Jew, Rev.2:8-9; 3:7-9. Examples:

## C. The Principle of \_\_\_\_\_

2 Timothy 2:15 gives us our mandate, *rightly divide the word of truth*.

### 1. The Bible has divisions of time, and you must put those divisions in the right place.

- The Bible is divided into different \_\_\_\_\_ of God dealing with man.
- \_\_\_\_\_ = method by which the government uses to dispense the commodities necessary for a society to live and produce.
- “Dispensation” is a Biblical word. Synonyms are: economy, \_\_\_\_\_ & administration, 1 Cor.9:17, Luke 16:1-2.
- It is a time period where God has a certain method of dispensing truth. Ephesians 1:10; 3:2; Colossians 1:25.
- There was a time when God “dispensed” his truth through the law. While Christ was on earth, God dispensed his truth through Him. Now, he dispenses his truth through the Bible by grace through faith.
- Any passage – when was this written? Which dispensation? The means by which God administers and manages his truth in any age.

### 2. Learning to rightly divide the Bible

- Old Testament and New Testament are two \_\_\_\_\_ dispensations
- Many Bible teachers commonly divide the Bible into seven or eight dispensations (time periods).

We will be examining a “Classic View” of the Seven Dispensations.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ – before the fall of man.

- Adam and Eve are put in the garden for the purpose of having children and begin the process of populating God's Kingdom.
- Before they have children, they sin. 2 Corinthians 11:1-3
- This was crucial, because now their children would not be born with a sinless nature.
- God judges man's failure by removing him from the garden. Genesis 3:23

b. \_\_\_\_\_ – following the fall of man until the Flood.

- Adam and Eve's descendants are now beginning to \_\_\_\_\_ outside the garden. Genesis 6:1
- However, before they complete this phase, they sin. Genesis 6:2
- This leads to a race of giants being born to them. Genesis 6:3 - 4
- God judges man's failure by sending the flood to destroy the earth. Genesis 7-8

c. \_\_\_\_\_ – the Flood until Abraham.

- Adam's descendants (through Noah) are given the same \_\_\_\_\_ to be fruitful, multiply, and replenish. Genesis 9:1-2
- After several hundred years, they are ready to replenish. Gen 10
- Once again, sin enters into the picture as they refuse to leave the plain of Shinar. Genesis 11:1-2
- God once again judges man's sin by confounding the language of the people, forcing them to scatter abroad. Genesis 11: 7-9

d. \_\_\_\_\_ – Abraham until Moses.

- Abraham is \_\_\_\_\_ by God to have a seed that compares to the stars of heaven is multitude. Genesis 15:1-8
- Isaac - Gen. 26:4
- Jacob - Gen. 28:3
- NOTE: Satan tries to keep the patriarchs from bearing children. Genesis 11:30, 25:21, 29:31
- The house of Jacob is forced to leave the land and go into Egypt. Genesis 46:1-7

e. \_\_\_\_\_ – Moses until Jesus

- The sons of Jacob are \_\_\_\_\_, however they do not possess the land, as they are bondmen in Egypt. Exodus 1: 7
- God uses Moses to deliver Israel (Exodus 12) and give them the law. Exodus 20-Leviticus

- Through the reign of David, God gives Israel a King to bring peace to its borders. I Kings 4:24
- Israel is now ready to build the temple and reach the world for the Lord. Deuteronomy 12:10,11; I Kings 8:41-43
- God judges Israel's failure by sending them into captivity. 2 Kings 17, 24 (see 2 Kings 24:1-4)

f. \_\_\_\_\_ – first coming until the second coming of Jesus

- \_\_\_\_\_ is how the church today is fruitful. Note: Satan attacks with deception. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. Wanna be fruitful? PREACH THE GOSPEL. The gospel IS the power of God. Literally! You want more power, preach the gospel! Rom 1:16
- Discipleship is how the church today multiplies.
- Missions is how the church is to replenish the earth.

g. \_\_\_\_\_ – from second coming of Christ until the Great White Throne Judgment

- God picks up where Israel went off track by setting the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne of David. Zechariah 14: 8-9

- The temple is built and Israel reaches the world. Ezekiel 43:1-6, Zechariah 14:16 - 19
- However, after 1000 years of peace on earth, Satan goes to lead the nations in rebellion against the King. Revelation 20:7-9
- God judges man's rebellion one last time. Revelation 20:10-15
- God's eternal kingdom is ready to begin. Revelation 21, 22
- Other good Bible teachers vary in number of dispensations

Dispensationalism” is nothing more than the human attempt to find God’s order and plan in His dealings with man, or how God is “dispensing” His grace at a particular moment in time.

- Most false religions or denominations take their salvation doctrines (or terms of acceptance) from Matthew, Acts and Hebrews. They end up in false doctrine condemning people to hell.

### 3. Recognize that some Bible teachers disagree with “dispensationalism.”

- Some people accept only one division between O.T. & N.T.
- Some people have divided the Bible to an extreme
- Heresy is truth misplaced, out of dispensational context

*You can slice a loaf of bread so many times that you are left with crumbs.*

### D. The Principle of \_\_\_\_\_ Words

- God measures His words and says what He wants us to know
- God wants us to understand His hope, His calling and His promises. Eph.1:17-20
  1. Every event, phrase, and word has a specific purpose
    - The world couldn't contain all the books about the life of Christ, John 20:30-31; 21:24-25
    - God chooses specific words for a specific purpose, Psa.12:6-7; Prov.30:5-6; Rev.22:18-19
  2. Jesus Christ promised that every “*jot and tittle*” have been \_\_\_\_\_, Matt. 5:18; Mark13:31
    - In many KJV Bibles, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet appear above the stanzas of Psalms 119
    - A “jot,” or jod, appears above Psa.119:73 and is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet
    - A “tittle” is the slightest difference of a pen stroke, such as that distinguishing the *daleth* (v25) from the *resh* (v153)
  3. The \_\_\_\_\_ words are the key to understanding the Bible
    - What makes a book unique are the words – not the overall message
    - Changing one small word can change the whole message
    - What determines a genuine Prophet in the O.T. is when the absolute words from God are spoken and fulfilled, Deut.18:18-22

## **E. The Principle of First \_\_\_\_\_**

1. Once a truth is established in the Bible, God does not deviate from it
  - God's Word is consistent, because God's nature is consistent, Heb.13:8; Mal.3:6
  - The idea is to see God's consistency in a truth, figure or picture throughout the Bible
  - The majority of "first mentions" will be found in Genesis, Job, Matthew and Acts
    - Genesis – is the book of beginnings
    - Job – oldest book in Bible chronologically
    - Matthew – transitional Gospel to Jews, opening door to N.T.
    - Acts – transitional book setting pattern for the N.T. Church
2. Several examples from the first book, Genesis
  - Gen.2:3, "sanctification" in Scripture means a setting apart
  - Gen.3:1, the serpent is consistently associated with sin and Satan
  - Gen.22:5, "worship" is mentioned in the context of a life-changing encounter between God, Abraham and Isaac

## **F. The Principle of Full \_\_\_\_\_**

1. God declares His mind fully in regard to issues of vital importance
  - Somewhere in the Bible, God lays a solid foundation of particular subjects of great importance
  - This passage may be a single verse, a chapter, or a series of chapters
  - When you come upon a certain theme in a passage of Scripture, you may be able to discover a more definitive passage elsewhere.
  - In a very practical sense, to learn about the human tongue, begin in James 3 and trace the cross references in the margin of your Bible, check your concordance, or use other study helps available to you.

2. Examples of this principle “full mention”

- The spiritual birth, John 3:1-13
- Spiritual gifts, 1 Corinthians 12-14
- God’s plan for Israel: past, present, & future, Rom.9-11
- The Law, Exodus 20

**G. The Principle of \_\_\_\_\_ Understanding**

1. Always take a passage literally until it is impossible to do so

- Very few passages in the Bible are symbolic – but when symbols exist, they are defined in the text or elsewhere in the Bible.
- God used symbolism to illustrate His judgment upon Israel, but the elders wrote it off as Ezekiel just telling parables, Ezekiel 20:45-49.
- Understand the Bible as if you were listening to your best friend face to face

2. Example of symbolism clearly indicated and defined in the Bible

- Matthew 13:1-23, parables are defined
- Revelation 1:12-20, seven stars and seven candlesticks

## **PREPARING A CHAPTER STUDY (Assignment # 2)**

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1. Chapter Outline
2. Key Verse for the chapter
3. Key Theme
4. Key Word (s)
5. Identify any key people and places. What do the names of the people and places means?
6. Historical Application (couple of sentences)
7. Doctrinal Application
8. Inspirational Application



## **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY continued...**

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### **H. The Principle of Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ by Comparing Scripture with Scripture**

1. Comparing scripture with scripture, 1 Cor 2: 9-14
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Understanding the Bible is NOT a matter of any persons interpretation
  - The Word of God is not of any “private interpretation,” 2 Peter 1:2
  - This destroys the argument of those who hide behind their personal interpretation
  - What is important is the interpretation of the very Author of the Bible, the Holy Spirit of God
  - The Bible is its own dictionary and commentary
  - Learn to use cross references, a concordance, and take notes

### **I. The Principle of \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning**

- Never violate a clear passage when trying to understand an obscure passage
- There are obscure passages in the Bible, 2 Peter 3:16
- Learn to apply this principle to those passages that are objects of controversy or confusion
- Whatever they mean, they will not conflict with other Scripture
- Examples: 1 Corinthians 15:29; Hebrews 6:4-6

## **J. The Principle of a Direct \_\_\_\_\_ Over a Question**

### **1. Never base a doctrine on a question**

- Many strange and false doctrines are based in passages that are questions, not clear teachings of God
- Questions are to \_\_\_\_\_, not to declare
- Must build doctrine with clear passages

### **2. Examples of misapplied Scripture in question form**

- 1 Corinthians 15:29, is not teaching the church *“to baptize the dead”*
  - Paul is saying if there is no resurrection, correct baptism would be to leave the person under the water
- James 2:20, is not teaching that the church must have both faith and works for salvation
  - One must look at the context in following verses (21-24) and consider which people group James is addressing doctrinally

## **K. There are no contradictions in the Bible, only “\_\_\_\_\_ contradictions.”**

- We reach this conclusion first by faith, believing that God’s Word is divinely inspired and without error
- We will resolve some apparent contradictions by applying the basic principles of Bible study we previously learned
- There appears to be some inconsistency in scripture. God is simple but requires faith, study and personal application to understand.

**A. These “apparent contradictions” serve two purposes.**

1. To give the skeptic a lie to believe, Ezekiel 14:1-11
  - If a skeptic comes to the Bible and wants to find a case for his skepticism, God will give him one
  - When God’s people refuse to believe His Word, God is not obligated to give them anymore truth, Isaiah 29:9-14
2. To reveal hidden truth to the serious Bible student, Matthew 13:10-23
  - Anytime you come across conflicting scripture, give God the benefit of the doubt and search through the eyes of faith, Eph.1:15-18
  - The disciples had FAITH in Jesus Christ and his Word

**B. Example: Can God tempt man?**

A. The problem:

1. James 1:13-14 says that God cannot be tempted with evil, and He does not tempt any man.
2. Genesis 22:1 says God tempted Abraham.
  - Is this a contradiction? Is temptation from God?

B. The solution: Apply the Principles of Bible Study

- Compare Scripture with Scripture – no private interpretation
- Never build a doctrine on one verse
- God measures His Words
- The individual words are the key to understanding the Bible
- Gen. 22:1: God tested Abraham’s faith rather than tempting him to disobey.
- Heb 11:17: Abraham tried. Temptation has many uses. Not always to do wrong.

- James 1:1-3: divers temptations – trying of your faith
- Job 23:10-12, Pro. 17:3: Lord trieth the hearts
- 1Cor. 10:13: God doesn't tempt us with sin but controls amount that comes our way.
- We have a way to escape.

C. The lesson learned: Three ways by which man is tempted or tried (1John 2:15-16):

1. Devil will tempt you to sin. Matt 4:1-11 (Job 1-2), Devil tempted Eve to disobey God-  
Gen 3
2. Flesh will tempt you to sin. Gal. 4:13-14, Man is drawn away by his own lusts-James  
1:13-14
3. God placing something in our lives to test our faith. God tested Israel in the wilderness  
by allowing suffering, Deut. 8:2-6. God tried Paul's faith, 2Cor 12:7-10.

## PREPARING A WORD STUDY

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When you find the key word in chapter, make sure you know what it means! Do not be guilty of assumptions where God's word, and its meaning is concerned. Do not put together a bible study or message until you KNOW that you have the proper understanding of the passage involved! Be able to answer the following questions concerning your word study:

### 1. What does the word mean?

You need to look up the meaning in a *Strong's Concordance*.

Get a good bible dictionary (ie: Webster's 1828 is good)

***Law of 1<sup>st</sup> mention says that the first place a word appears more often than not, will determine its primary usage and teaching throughout the rest of scripture.***

So: find the location in scripture where the word first appears. That will give you your best picture of how the word will be used throughout the bible!

Never forget! In the Bible – usage determines meaning!

### 2. How many times does the word appear?

Check the other places that the word appears by use of the *Strong's Concordance*, to find out how the word is used each time.

### 3. How else is it translated in scripture?

Use the Strong's to get the Greek or Hebrew word from which the English word comes. Trace it to the dictionary in the back, and see how else it is translated into English.

A Greek or Hebrew concordance can greatly speed up this process as they are now keyed to Strong's numbering system.

### 4. How is it contextually related to other passages?

Use a Treasury of Scripture Knowledge to find cross references that deal with the same topic.

## 5. Invest in the TOOLS of the Trade

1. Strong's Concordance
2. Englishman's Greek Concordance of the N.T.
3. Englishman's Hebrew & Chaldee Concordance of the O.T.
4. Bible Dictionary – (Webster's 1828 Ed. Is a good one)
5. For Names: Cruden's Concordance – or – Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names

## 6. To expand your search: THEMATICALLY

1. Roget's Thesaurus of the Bible
2. Treasury of Scripture Knowledge
3. Good study Bible like - Thompson Chain Reference Bible
4. Bible Search Programs – ex: e-sword.net, QuickVerse, Online Bible, etc...

Once you understand the word, how it's used, and how it is translated in other passages of scripture, you will be able to ready to develop application in your message!

## EXAMPLE: WORD STUDY ON WORSHIP

1. To prostrate or bow down before royalty or God
2. The word *worship* is used 108x in the Bible (not including variations like worshipped, worships etc.)
  - Used 15x Psalms
  - Used 15x in Revelation
3. It's also translated as bowed, reverence, fall and stoop
4. Other references:
  1. Same word worship in Exd 34:14 is "bow down thyself" in Exd 20:5
  2. Jer 13:10 Worshipping other gods brings God's judgment in our lives
  3. Rev 4:10 Elders in the throne room of God fall down before him and worship
5. **Key Lesson:** Worship is critical in that worship is ONLY for God. You can give men praise but only God should receive your worship!

## PREPARING A VERSE STUDY

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1. What is the context of the book the verse is in?
  1. What's the theme of the book?
  2. What's the main point being made? Is something being corrected? Is something being illustrated?
2. What is the context of the chapter the verse is in?
3. Do you understand what comes before the verse in the chapter? If not, stop and study that. Then come back to the verse. You don't have to write this out. Just make sure you understand it!
4. Write the verse out. Do this several times.
5. Diagram the verse (use this for tough or complex verses)
6. Are there other verse references that support the meaning of this verse? You should have at least 2-3 references.
7. What is the key lesson (s) to learn from this verse?

### EXAMPLE: VERSE STUDY ON ROMANS 14:19

1. The context of the Book of Romans is God's Righteousness revealed in Salvation, Separation, and Sanctification. In short; GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.
2. The context of chapter 14 is Relationship Instruction. This chapter helps us to understand how to fit in with other believers in Christ.
3. Diagramming the passage...

***Rom 14:***

***<sup>19</sup>Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. <sup>20</sup>For meat destroy not the work of God.*** All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. <sup>21</sup>*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. <sup>22</sup>Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. <sup>23</sup>And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Rom 14:19: Diagram

<sup>19</sup>Let us therefore  
follow  
AFTER THINGS  
after the things  
which make for peace,  
and things  
wherewith one may edify another.

Therefore?

Look at vs...14-18 (esp 17-18)

Peace with God – man vs grief (15) and damnation (23)

Look at vs 15

Edification – vs Destruction of your brother!

**Following after the things of God**

**I. Follow after Peace**

**a. With God –**

**righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost**

**b. With Man**

**don't walk to his stumbling!**

**II. Follow after edification – vs 19**

**a. What edifies my brother**

**b. Grieves**

**c. Destroy**

4. Other verse references: Ps 133:1, Rom 12:18, Ps 34:14, Eph 4:3-7

5. Key Lesson:

1. The things that really count are the things that bring harmony to the family.
2. You can be used by God to inform your brother or sister but you must leave room for the Holy Spirit to persuade them.

**Assignment # 3: Complete a Chapter Study on Ruth 2**



## A HEIGHTENED LEVEL OF EXPECTATION: PART 2

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There will be times when people in your group go through seasons of difficulty and hardship. This might occur because of unhealthy personal choices (flesh), pointed satanic attack (devil) or particular life events (world). All of these instances from our enemy are meant to derail the believer. As it affects our small groups (whether you are a group leader or not), if a group member is struggling to participate because of one of these reasons, your role, as guided by the leading of the Holy Spirit, is to help guide that believer back to a place of scriptural accountability and prayerful fellowship.

From the very beginning, as we see in Genesis 3, Satan has questioned the validity and merit of God's Word and he continues to do so today. His goal is to keep you from studying the scriptures and finding Biblical answers to the problems in your life.

Our desire, in responding to these threats, is that your small group will be a safe place for accountability and provide you with a Biblical response to the spiritual warfare that occurs in your life. In Matthew 9:36 Jesus recognizes the broken state of the multitude where it is recorded, *"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."*

Jesus sought out the health of his followers and we should likewise seek out the welfare of those in our groups.

### A MINISTRY OF COMPASSION

1. The people fainted – How can we provide them sustenance and rest?  
James 2:15-16
2. The people were scattered abroad – How can we draw them closer?  
Isaiah 45:20, Psalm 73:27, Hebrews 10:22
3. The people were as sheep having no shepherd – How can we protect them?

Jeremiah 50:6, John 10:4, 10-14

**A ministry of compassion provides rest and renewal, is a place of protection and belonging and is led by a diligent overseer.**

## **GROUP DYNAMICS: STRUGGLING MEMBERS**

If you recognize a believer struggling with their commitment to their small group there are ways to sensitively bring them back to a healthy place of dependence on God's Word and into dynamic fellowship with the body once again.

At different times in life, our members will come across moments of spiritual difficulty that can get out of hand, or spiral out of control if left alone. When someone we know is going through a time like this, we as friends and counselors, can apply Holy Spirit led grace during these situations. For most occurrences, if the believer chooses to apply scripture to their situation, they can deal with their problem personally and immediately.

The more severe issue, as it relates to small group, is when those moments become increasingly consistent in their pattern. Learning when and how to intervene is critical. Also understanding the ramifications of struggling members can give insights on how to deal with someone who is drifting apart from the body.

### **1. We're looking for clear patterns of struggle.**

- a. The key word is, "struggling".
  - i. They are not living victoriously in some manner. Romans 8:1
  - ii. Don't forget this. Something is wrong.
- b. The "one-off" occurrence will happen.
  - i. Be mindful of it and lead them by listening (if they provide a reason).
  - ii. Then lead in prayer and practice.
    1. You can personally pray for them.

2. You can practice consistency and accountability even when life problems arise.
- c. If two or more meetings go by and your group member either has not shown up or has not arrived prepared, it is important not to simply assume things are fine.
  - i. Do not delay. Set up a personal time to speak with them.
    1. The person will already feel guilty or alienated.
      - a. You do not need to aid in this process of “conviction”.
      - b. Your job would be to encourage healthy steps of accountability and growth.
    2. Remember that your stewardship will not always be received and many times it will be scrutinized.
      - a. People in sin or under extreme pressure usually don’t respond in sobriety.
      - b. Don’t take it personal.
  - ii. Remember that the person agreed to be a part of your small group.
    1. Your inquiry into their lives is not imposing.
    2. They committed to the small group.
  - iii. The goal of your inquiry is not to fix them, but rather to see what is ailing them.
    1. It could be that in listening to their situation, you might see a side of them that they have not allowed you to see in the group.
    2. Many times the believer will recognize what’s the problem before you even have to state it.
    3. As a small group leader, you shouldn’t be as concerned with whether or not they are doing their “homework” as to whether or not they are spending time with God in his Word.
  - iv. Recognize weakness vs. wickedness.
    1. If the believer is weak in a spiritual issue, look for ways to revive them.
    2. If the believer is showing traits of wickedness or outright rebellion to the Word of God, rebuke sin. Psalm 141:5

- v. Remind them of their commitment if necessary.
  - 1. You can say, “This is something you wanted.”
  - 2. “What happened?”
    - a. This is not a judgmental question.
    - b. This is a question of great sincerity and earnest on their behalf.
- vi. Before you issue a rebuke, make sure you really know what is going on. (Not what you think you know or what has been told to you by someone else.)
  - 1. Know that rebuking a “lack of Bible study” is typically only the tip of the iceberg.
  - 2. By prayerfully speaking with your struggling member you might find what the source of the issue is rather than just trying to “fix them” by telling them what to do.

## **2. Let them know that when they are hurting, we all hurt. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27**

- a. Typically the struggling believer does not believe their hurt affects others.
  - i. Remind them that they have great significance with God and the body of Christ.
    - 1. We need them present to help bear the burdens of life.  
Galatians 6:2
    - 2. We need what God has shown them in his Word.
  - ii. Recognize if their distance is a result of self-centeredness.
    - 1. Self-centered responses usually point to how unique their situation is when it comes to studying the Scriptures with the body. *“I would come to Bible Study, but...”*
    - 2. Whatever follows that “but” will identify something that is more important (an idol) than their time in the Word with other believers.
  - iii. We want to build in all our small group members a strong desire to be accountable in the Word rather than a heart of exceptionalism.
    - 1. Exceptionalism is where the rules apply to everyone but me.

- a. I know we all were supposed to have studied a particular passage, but my life is real busy right now.
  - b. This is assuming that everyone else's life is not busy.
  - c. Exceptionalism tends to put the focus on self at the expense of others.
- 2. Instead of looking for ways out of responsibility, let's teach our small group members about how to draw closer to the Lord.
  - a. We can teach them to ask simple questions like: Instead of, "What's wrong with this delinquent behavior?" ask, "What's right with it?"
  - b. Also teach them to ask, "How is what I'm doing now bettering myself and those around me?"
- 3. This will require more time with the Father in his Word.
  - a. Which, if we were to consider this point, rather than punishment, we'd see the great reward it is to spend time with God.

**3. Your small group members will always make disciples, for good or bad.**

- a. As a leader, your testimony is always on display.
  - i. For the struggling participant, they need to see you as being a rock of accountability and consistency.
  - ii. In the same way that a Pastor is expected to come prepared to speak, you and I should also be prepared to share what God has been showing us.
- b. Inconsistent meeting times or inconsistent elders in the group will encourage inconsistency and a lack of necessity for younger believers.
  - i. If your attendance is spotty, then know that other members in your group will see that and at times look to emulate you.
    - 1. You're telling them it's ok to be inconsistent or to not have studied in the Word.
    - 2. This is the truth whether you like it or not.

- ii. Your struggling behavior does not happen in a vacuum.
- c. Likewise, your day-in, day-out consistency proves to a younger believer that being daily accountable in the Word is not just a slogan that you live by, but an actual mandate and that fellowship in the body is critical to good growth. Hebrews 10:25
  - i. Consistency might be one of the most important parts of a healthy small group.
  - ii. If you're not a leader in your small group, you probably don't spend much time thinking about this, but if you are leading a bible study, I guarantee you have considered the faithfulness of your group.

**4. Our reasonable service to God is to die daily. Romans 12:1-2**

- a. The normal Christian life is a life dedicated to the scriptures.
- b. Being a Bible student is not an amazing thing. It is what God expects out of his children.
- c. Instead of being sympathetic to the world's condition let's be sympathetic to God's desires.

**5. We always have time for the things we love. Matthew 6:21**

- a. You can make time for this.