

Owning the Word: Teaching Youth to Study Scripture  
CDG National Conference 2009  
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**Introduction:** Give your students the book of God!

“I have thought I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing—the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end He came from heaven. He has written it down in a book. O give me that Book at any price, give me the Book of God” (John Wesley, cited by John Piper in “Biblical Exegesis,” p. 2).

Notes:

**Answering Common Objections:**

- ❖ *Don't we have pastors to tell us what the Bible means?*
  - Pastors *equip* the church for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12)
  - Believers are called to test and think over what they hear (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:7)
  - Don't be a “second-hander”!
  
- ❖ *Isn't studying the Bible ... hard?*
  - 2 Pet. 3:14-16
  - 1 Cor. 9:24
  - 2 Tim. 3:15
  - There is joy in searching out and discovering truth for yourself.
  
- ❖ *Isn't this too much to expect of youth?*
  - Jer. 1:6-7
  - 1 Tim. 4:12
  - Charles Spurgeon preached over 600 times before he was 20 years old.
  - The Student Volunteer Movement

Notes:

## **The Basic Inductive Bible Study Process**

1. OBSERVE- What does this passage \_\_\_\_\_?
2. INTERPRET- What does this passage \_\_\_\_\_ in its \_\_\_\_\_?
3. APPLY- What is the \_\_\_\_\_ of this passage for \_\_\_\_\_?

### **Notes:**

## **Inductive Bible Study Strategies**

- *Read a passage slowly, carefully, and prayerfully several times.*
- *Ask questions when you read. Start with Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?*
  - *Who was Epaphroditus? (Phil. 2:25)*
  - *What is the name above every name that God bestowed on Jesus? (Phil. 2:9)*
  - *When will Jesus transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body? (Phil. 3:31)*
  - *Where is Philippi? (Phil. 1:1) Where is a believer's citizenship? (Phil. 3:20)*
  - *Why does Paul command believers: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"? (Phil. 2:12)*
  - *How does Paul say that the church will complete his joy? (Phil. 2:2)*
- *Pay special attention to connecting words, for they are key for following the biblical author's argument (What's the therefore there for?). A few examples:*
  - *Therefore* indicates a conclusion based on what was just said
  - *For* or *because* introduces a reason for what was just said
  - *In order that* introduces the purpose or result of what was just said
- *Color-code repeated words, phrases, and themes.*
  - Underlining with colors helps us slow down when we read and it also helps us see more clearly things that the biblical author is trying to emphasize.
- *Compare several English translations when you study.*
  - All translations are interpretations, they are like commentaries on the meaning of an ancient Hebrew or Greek text.

- It is helpful to use a “word for word” translation for your main study Bible (like ESV or NASB) and then to compare it with a more interpretive “dynamic equivalent” translation (like NIV or NET)
- *Use a concordance to find out where else an author uses an important word.*
  - A word has meaning based on how it is used in context.
  - You (and students) can start with the abridged concordance in the back of your Bible, but for serious study you will want an exhaustive concordance that lists every usage of every word in a particular translation.
- *Use cross-references to interpret Scripture with Scripture.*
  - This is one of the most valuable and overlooked Bible study tools!
  - To use the ESV cross-references, you look for the small letter included in front of the word or phrase you want to look up, then you go to the cross-reference column and under the correct chapter and verse heading, you look for the letter that corresponds with your word or phrase in the text. This leads you to an abbreviated verse reference and then you look it up. These cross-references include (1) references to specific words or phrases; (2) comparative references (same theme); (3) less direct references (general thematic help); (4) Quoted references (source of words or phrase in a different part of the Bible).
- *Use “phrasing” or “arcing” to trace an author’s flow of thought.*
  - For “phrasing,” see William Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us*, chapter 8.
  - For “arcing,” see John Piper, “Biblical Exegesis: Discovering the Meaning of Scriptural Texts” (Desiring God) or [www.biblearc.org](http://www.biblearc.org)

Notes:

**Common Small Group leader pitfalls**

- Lack of preparation, “winging it”
- Skipping the Bible study “head stuff” to get to the “heart stuff” like relationships
- Reading the study like a script, not making it your own

- Letting the group be student led/dominated and get way off track
- Giving students the “right” answer without leading them to discover it themselves

Notes:

## Studying the Bible with students

### **(1) Own the Word for yourself, because it has to be real in your own life if you are going to teach it to others.**

- Ezra 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:1-2

### **(2) Model a passion for Christ and for the Word of God, because your attitude and enthusiasm will make a significant impression on those you shepherd.**

- 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:9

### **(3) Make a Plan to study through a book of the Bible with your students.**

- People learn through problem solving, so compliment up-front teaching or preaching with hands-on Bible study by the students.
- Choose a shorter book of the Bible (such as Philippians) and commit to spend at least four weeks working through the book passage by passage.
- Prepare your small group mentors for leading students in Bible study.
- Write out a list of questions to help your small group leaders guide the students to discover for themselves what is really there in the text. Try to have several *observation* questions, several *interpretation* questions, and several *application* questions. A good place to start would be asking the following questions of the text: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

### **(4) Set goals for your students and challenge them to meet these goals (with God's help!).**

Several of my goals for the students I am called to shepherd:

- They should be able to clearly articulate what the gospel is, using their own words and appealing to specific biblical texts.
- They should be able to read and study the Bible effectively in order to feed their own souls and not be dependent on a youth pastor or parents to do this for them.
- They should be equipped with a biblical framework for making wise, God-honoring decisions in their friendships and dating/courtship relationships.
- They should have a strong understanding of biblical fellowship and accountability.
- They should understand the power of prayer and the importance of consistent personal devotions and spiritual disciplines.
- They should have understanding of the vital importance of the local church.

### **Example Student Bible Study: Philippians 4:4-7**

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

❖ *Observe:* What words or themes does Paul repeat in these verses? What do you think the emphasis or main point is of these verses?

❖ *Observe:* Choose a colored pencil and underline all the commands in this passage.

❖ *Observe:* Choose a different color and underline any the promises in this passage.

❖ *Interpret:* Why does Paul say that believers should not be anxious about anything? What reasons do you see in these verses for not being anxious?

❖ *Interpret:* What does “let your reasonableness be known to everyone” mean? Look at other translations of this verse. What are some of the options for what this means?

**TRANSLATION COMPARISON FOR PHILIPPIANS 4:5**

<b>NASB</b>	<b>ESV</b>	<b>NIV</b>	<b>NLT</b>
Let your gentle <i>spirit</i> be known to all men. The Lord is near.	Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;	Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.	Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

❖ *Interpret:* How does Paul say that we should let our requests be made known to God? (Note the word “by” in v. 6)

❖ *Interpret:* How can Paul command us to rejoice in the Lord? Can feelings, attitudes, or emotions such as joy be commanded? Why or why not?

❖ *Apply:* What things in your life are you anxious about right now? Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from rejoicing in the Lord? Confess your anxiety and lack of joy and turn the promise in v. 7 into a prayer back to God.

Notes: