

# Bible Study Skills

## INTRODUCTION: How to Give Bible Studies

In this session, we are going to answer three specific questions.

1. What is the Biblical Rational for Bible studies?
2. What are the characteristics of a good interest?
3. What is the structured outline of a Bible study?

### 1. What is the Biblical Rational for Bible Studies?

God's plan for this world is clearly expressed in the great commission text, Mark 16:15: "And He said unto them, **Go ye** into all the world, and preach the gospel to all creatures."

"Wherever a church is established, **all the members** should engage actively in missionary work. They should visit every family in the neighborhood and know their spiritual condition. If professed Christians had engaged in this work from the time when their names were **first** placed on the church books ... **thousands upon thousands** would today stand with God's commandment-keeping people." Testimonies, Volume 6, p. 296-297.

"The commission given to the disciples is given also to us."  
Gospel Workers, p. 29

What would happen if each person who accepted Christ would share the gospel with just one other person a year and that person shared with another person each year, and on and on? Below is a chart comparing what one person could do by bringing one person to Jesus each year compared with an evangelist who could bring 1,000 people to Jesus each day. As you see from the chart, you would be responsible for seven times as many people as the evangelist would at the end of 26 years! Never underestimate the value of one-on-one evangelism!

Gifted Evangelist Wins 1,000 converts a day	Believer begins by winning One person a year
After 1 year: 365,000	2 converts
After 2 years: 730,000	4 converts
After 3 years: 1,095,000 converts	8 converts
After 4 years: 1, 460,000 converts	16 converts
After 5 years: 1,825,000 converts	32 converts
After 8 years: 2,920,000 converts	256 converts
After 23 years: 8,395,000 converts	8,388,000 converts

After 24 years: 8,760,000 converts	16,777,216 converts (nearly twice of the evangelist)
After 25 years: 9,125,000 converts	33,554,432 (nearly 3.75 times the evangelist)
After 26 years: 9,490,000 converts	67,108,864, converts (7 times that of the evangelist)

### THE IMPORTANCE OF ONE-ON-ONE EVANGELISM:

“The beauty and true efficiency of the Bible study method of personal evangelism lies in ministry to the ONE-SOUL audience. The winning of one soul to Christ, or of ten thousand souls to Christ, is best done by the effort of an individual ... **winning one soul at a time usually results in the winning of a multitude of souls in the process of time.**”

**“You cannot reach a thousand until you can reach one! The world will never be brought to Christ wholesale, but one by one. Men are not born collectively; they do not die collectively; they do not accept or reject Christ collectively.”**

The Art of Personal Evangelism by Alonzo J. Wearn, © 1934

### TAKE NOTE OF THESE STATEMENTS:

“I saw One (Christ) standing on a high platform with arms extended. He turned and pointed in every direction, saying, ‘**A world perishing in ignorance of God’s holy law, and Seventh-Day Adventists are asleep!**’ The Lord is pleading for laborers, for there is a great work to be done!” *Evangelism*, p. 32

Ellen White also declares, “*The time has come when, as never before, Seventh-Day Adventists are to arise and shine, because their light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon them!*” *Letter 296*, 1904

“He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more he will receive. The more one tries to explain the Word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 354

## 2. What are the characteristics of a good interest?

All who show a desire and interest should be given the opportunity to study God's word. However, you must know and understand the "sad reality" that not everyone is going to accept the truth. You must watch for signs of those who you may spend a lot of time with, but who will not commit their lives to God. The devil dances for joy, when this happens because they are keeping you from studying with those who long for truth and are ready to join God's kingdom.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matthew 7:16

We are never to judge whether people will be saved or lost, but 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 proportionate 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?

### Let's look at some characteristics of "Ripe Fruit":

- Manifest an earnest desire to seek and find Bible truth.
- Accept Bible studies and complete the lessons weekly
- Lonely, unhappy and dissatisfied with their lives.
- Feel a need for change.
- Dissatisfied with their church.
- Don't belong to a church or a backslider (even SDA).
- Accept major doctrines and make positive decisions.
- Display signs they are under conviction.
- Have evidenced a change in lifestyle as they've learned truth.
- Demonstrate a desire to share with others what they've learned.

This is the category that you want to spend the majority of your time with.

### "Green Fruit" definitions:

- Green fruit will usually refuse Bible studies.
- If they accept studies, they do not have them completed on time.
- Make excuses over and over for not completing the study.
- They don't accept the clear teachings of Scripture.

- Deeply involved and committed to their church.
- Talk badly about the lesson, your church, or doctrines.
- Friendly but won't make any commitments.

### 3. Structural Outline of a Bible Study

The two prevalent methods to giving Bible studies are the review method and the presenter method. The review method is where you leave the Bible lesson for your interest to complete on their own and then review it with them at a later time. The presenter method is where you first present the material and then at the close of the Bible study you leave a Bible lesson with your interest to complete at a later date. Keep in mind, when it comes to evangelism, there are 100 ways to do the right thing. Today, you will learn the presenter method to giving Bible studies. Besides, for having a good set of Bible lessons to leave with your interest, you will need material to present. Amazing Facts sells two wonderful books that I highly recommend:

- Studying Together by Mark Finley
- Winsome Witnessing by Gary Gibbs

If you have a partner, they may enter in the conversation during the social time but once you start the study, then they become the ***silent prayer partner***. They play a very important role praying for the presenter and the interest. The prayer partner should pray for a hedge of angels to protect the study from distractions. They should pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal truth and speak to the heart of your student to bring them to decisions.

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

### ABC's of Giving Bible Studies:

#### A. Present Jesus First

*"The very first and the most important thing is to melt and subdue the soul by presenting our Lord Jesus Christ as the sinbearer, the sin-pardoning Saviour, making the gospel as clear as possible." Evangelism, p. 264*

*"The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing." Desire of Ages, p. 826*

**B. Reveal Truth Gradually**

*"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18*

*"I have been shown that our ministers go too rapidly through their subjects and bring the most objectionable features of our faith too early into their effort. There are truths that will not involve so great a cross that should be kept before their minds, day after day and even weeks before the Sabbath and immortality questions are entered upon. Then you gain the confidence of the people as being men who have clear, forcible arguments, and they think you understand the Scriptures. When once the confidence of the people is gained, then it is time enough to introduce publicly the Sabbath and immortality questions." Evangelism, p. 246*

**C. Make Regular Appeals**

*"At the close of every meeting (and Bible study), decisions should be called for." Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 64*

**Three Parts of the Bible Study:****1<sup>st</sup> Part – Social Time: 8-10 minutes****Important Relationship Skills**

- Spend 8-10 minutes getting to know them and winning the heart of your interest.
- Use FORT to start a conversation.
- Recognize things of interest.
- Be a good listener.
- Good body language.
- Respect personal space.
- Good eye contact.
- Voice – tone and expression

**2<sup>nd</sup> Part – Body or Main part of the Study: 40-45 minutes**

- Ask if they have had a chance to work on their lesson.
- Present Bible study.
- Christ centered! Love is the basis of all your lessons because "God is love."
- Relational and Personal.

- Use personal testimony at least once in the study.
- Use a minimum of two additional texts dealing with their needs and showing the beauty of a personal relationship with Christ.

### ***3<sup>rd</sup> Part – Appeal and Decision: 3-5 minutes***

- How will this study affect their life?
- What difference will it make?
- Always ask for a decision (but not multiple decisions!).
- Seal the decision in prayer.
- Give the next lesson.
- Leave immediately.

### **Key Points to Remember:**

- Show confidence and thus inspire confidence!
- Take turns looking up Bible verses.
- 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. Do not slump. Sit and stand erect but relaxed.
- Speak clearly. Not too fast. Have a pleasant volume - not too loud, not too soft. Try not to let your volume fade.
- Focus on the person you're talking to. Focus on what you want to say.
- Have clear objectives and accomplish them!
- Trust that God will bless your Bible Study
- Discovering your interest's felt needs is so important! You will want to weave in 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.
- Recognize everyone at the study ... even the children.

## I. How to Prepare the Study Using Pre-Made Bible Studies:

Your goal is to make each study **CHRIST centered and LOVE focused**. Each lesson should show how our trust and faith in a love relationship with Jesus will give us peace and joy even in a time of trouble. Just as Jesus wins in the end, if we make Him the Lord of our life, we will win with Him.

### Essential Elements of the Study:

**1) MAIN POINTS** - This will help you with organizing your illustrations and applications. Each point should focus on a key thought that the study brings out.

- YOU SHOULD HAVE 3 MAIN THOUGHTS THAT YOU BRING OUT AND EMPHASIZE IN YOUR STUDY. LOOK FOR THEM WITHIN THE LESSON. THEY ARE THE GUIDE POINTS FOR YOUR LESSON THAT EVERYTHING ELSE FALLS UNDER.
- EACH POINT SHOULD HAVE A PRACTICAL APPLICATION THAT MAKES THE MAIN POINT PERSONAL.
- THE MAIN POINT WITH THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION SHOULD BE NO LONGER THAN 2 SENTENCES.
  - SENTENCE #1 THE MAIN THOUGHT
  - SENTENCE #2 THE PERSONAL APPLICATION.

### **2) PERSONAL TESTIMONIES**

- Think of a personal experience that you can share for each section. Show how God has worked in your life. Show how God has cared for you and protected you. Show the joy and peace you have since you made Jesus the center of your life. Personal testimonies make it real; they demonstrate that the verse is more than just ink on paper. Personal testimonies also help you connect with your study friend. You may use this anywhere in the study.
- **USE AT LEAST ONE PERSONAL TESTIMONY IN YOUR STUDY!**

### **3) ILLUSTRATIONS**

- Use a story or illustration to help the person understand an important idea better. Your illustration should help them understand the point in a personal & practical way. It can be a story, amazing fact, personal experience, or anything that will help them understand. Make it personal for yourself and your study. It should not be too long. How

can the illustration make it REAL to the person, so that it brings the spiritual idea to something they can relate to and understand?

- **USE AT LEAST TWO ILLUSTRATIONS IN YOUR STUDY.**

**4) ADD ADDITIONAL TEXTS OR COMMENTS IF NEEDED.**

You don't have to use each additional comment or text. However, if you don't have them written down you may not remember them when you are giving the study. You can find wonderful texts in a Promise book or by using a concordance. Remember to add texts that address felt needs.

**5) SUMMARY –**

The summary consists of the 3 main points that you emphasized throughout your study. You should repeat these in a systematic way at the end of your study before your appeal. This will prepare your contact to make a decision based on what they learned in your lesson. An example would be:

“ Today in our lesson, we learned 3 very important truths:

1. Jesus wants us to connect with Him through prayer, and He wants to answer our prayers.
2. God is in control of world events, and He wants to guide our lives as well.
3. Jesus is coming soon, and He wants us to be in His eternal kingdom.”

Your summary will lead right into the appeal where you will ask the decision question.

**6) APPEAL –**

*Write an appeal and decision question* using the thoughts from your main points. Your appeal should be heartfelt and genuine. It should focus on the love of God for the sinner and God's plea for them to make a right decision. It should soften the heart and pull the heartstrings. You may wish to use a relevant story about yourself or someone else at the end.

If they do not understand any lesson, do not go to the next lesson until there is a good understanding of the current lesson. This may mean that you present it again at your next study. You may have to create a new study using additional texts. If there are questions in their mind that have not been answered they will not be able to make a decision on that subject. If you go to the next study without answering all of their concerns then they will not fully understand the next subject. If their concerns will be answered in a future lesson, then tell them that you have another lesson that will answer their questions in a few more lessons.



Be sure to label your notes in the study guide so that you know when to refer to what you need. (MP1 = Main Point #1, ILL1 = Illustration 1. PT = Personal Testimony, DQ = Decision Question)

***Principles to Effective Bible Studies:***

1. Make Jesus the center of all your Bible studies.
2. Lead your interest into a loving relationship with Jesus by stressing the blessings and privileges of obeying Him.
3. Prepare to get a total commitment to Jesus as **Savior** and **Lord** at the earliest possible time.
4. **Don't argue.** Jesus is the argument. Refer all doctrinal argument to WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?).
5. Be in step with your student. Move at the student's pace. Don't be boring, but rather make your study interesting and exciting.
6. Ask them what they enjoyed most about the lesson.
7. Try to get a decision in every lesson, but don't press too hard. Always work to build a strong friendship.
8. At the close of every lesson, introduce the next lesson (salt their oats).
9. Constantly pray for your interest throughout the Bible study and during the week!
10. Be confident and expect success.
11. Never tell all you know on a subject. Always leave them hungering for more.
12. Always ask questions such as: "What does this text say to you?" or "What do you think that God is saying in this text?" or "What is the significance of what God is saying here?"
13. Be sure to keep your studies at one hour total. Do not shift about to different subjects but rather stick to your course. **KEEP BEFORE YOU ONE SOUL AT A TIME, ONE SUBJECT AT A TIME, AND ONE OBJECT ALL THE TIME.**

## Building a Christ-Centered Bible Study

"And I, If I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32

Our goal is to make each study Christ centered and love focused. He must be the center of every thought. He must be the core, the shell of every idea that we present. Jesus, not information, saves. But the information that leads to Christ is essential.

The following elements must be used in every Bible study:

- 1) Every lesson should show how our trust and faith in a love relationship with Jesus gives us peace and joy even during the challenges of life.
- 2) The focus of prophecy is not beasts and kingdoms; it is Jesus Christ!
  - a. For example, in Daniel 2, Christ is the rock that smites the multi mineral tower in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
  - b. From the lonely isle of Patmos, John reminded us that prophecy at its core is a "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:1).
- 3) We can also lead people to Christ through His promises. Consider using one or two extra texts in your study to supplement our lesson. These verses should focus on felt needs and make our study more love focused and Christ centered. A promise book and a concordance are wonderful reference books for finding these texts.

## Creating Illustrations

The primary purpose of an illustration is to make abstract truths more comprehensible. With an illustration, we use something that has relevance to their everyday life to bring new truth to their minds. In other words, our goal with the new truth is to **"make it click"** in their minds! Illustrations do this beautifully.

Think of when you listened to a sermon. When the preacher was "theologizing," you thought you understood, but you weren't quite sure. However, when he told a story to illustrate his point, you got it right away!

*"In His teaching, Christ drew His **illustrations** from the great treasury of **household** ties and affections, and from **nature**. The unknown was illustrated by the known; sacred and divine truths, by natural, earthly things, with which the people were most familiar. These were the things that would speak to their hearts, and make the deepest impression on their minds." Counsel to Teachers, p. 178*

**Illustrations:**

- a. **Maintain interest** – No one likes a boring sermon or Bible study. Being boring is a sure way to lose a Bible study. Vary your tone of voice. Be excited about what you are studying. Don't act nervous even if you are. Be confident, but not over zealous. Having illustrations can also be a very effective way to hold your contact's attention. People always love interesting stories or facts.
- b. **Deepen impression.** People always have an easier time "getting it" when it relates to their every day life. It brings things into a more common light. It helps them understand spiritual things in a familiar setting.
- c. **Serve as perpetual reminders.** People will not remember everything you said in a sermon or Bible study ... they will likely not even remember the title or the theme. However, if you bring a vital point of truth home with an illustration, they will not soon forget this!

**SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

Some people struggle to come up with illustrations, but this need not be the case. Often, those who struggle do so because they over-think what is needed. Illustrations are all around us. Every day can be filled with dozens of illustrations if we open our eyes to the things that God reveals to us. Here are a few examples we can use:

- 1) Personal Experience: miracles, answers to prayer, etc.
- 2) Stories from books or magazines
- 3) News
- 4) Amazing Facts
- 5) Stories about other people
- 6) Nature

Places where you can find illustrations:

1. Newspapers
2. Book of Amazing Facts
3. Encyclopedia
4. History
5. Your daily experience
6. Your past experience
7. Internet (Beware though of false information!)
8. Nature books or videos
9. Creation Science Fact books or websites
10. The possibilities are endless!

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Illustrations help to improve the study greatly, but they never take the place of the WORD! We should not have a study filled with amusing stories but no spiritual food. Every illustration must have a climax that is relevant to the Biblical point we are trying to get across. In other words, the person should be able to clearly understand the truth you are trying to get across. Here are some good guidelines to ask when looking for illustrations:

- 1) Is it true? (It doesn't always have to be totally true, but it should never be ridiculously false.)
- 2) Is it directly to the point?
- 3) Is it easily understood, or do you need an illustration to understand the illustration? (Not a good plan.)
- 4) Is it appropriate? Never make loose jokes or inappropriate comments.
- 5) Is it relatively brief? It should not be the focus of your study time. While you want to share experiences that have happened in your life, you should not unload your "baggage" on your study contact.
- 6) Does it focus on and uplift the Biblical theme of your study?
- 7) Does the humor or seriousness of the illustration overpower the spiritual thought that you are trying to establish?
- 8) Does it glorify wickedness? This should never be done.
- 9) Does it speak negatively about a certain faith, class, race, or gender? Do not do this. If you wish to speak about a particular religious experience that may not have been ideal, do not identify the particular denomination.

In conclusion, the main goal is to lead our study friend to understand how to better apply the principles that are being presented.

**Illustration Websites:**

[www.sermonillustrations.com](http://www.sermonillustrations.com)  
[www.bible.org/illus.php](http://www.bible.org/illus.php)  
<http://www.crosswalk.com/pastors/illustrations/>  
<http://www.ozsermonillustrations.com/>  
<http://elbourne.org/sermons/>  
<http://www.sermonillustrator.org/>  
<http://www.higherpraise.com/illustrations/a.htm>  
<http://www.sermons.org/illustrations.html>  
<http://net.bible.org/illustration.php>