

PREPARING AND DELIVERING BIBLE STUDIES AND SERMONS

Lesson #2

Writing Inductive Bible Studies Part 2

In the previous lesson we discussed a variety of issues related to writing Bible studies and discussed the different kinds of questions that might be asked. In this study we will spend more time giving specific examples of questions asked of the text, how to pick and choose what questions to include in your study, and some other helpful suggestions for making your Bible studies clear and practical.

I. EXAMPLES OF A BIBLE STUDY IN THE MAKING

- A. **You are asked to teach a Bible study for a Sunday School teacher who will be out of town.** You are told that the class begins with prayer and announcements and that you will have about 45 minutes to teach a Bible study on whatever you want. You think about this for a while and remind yourself that smaller texts are easier to teach than bigger texts. You remember the class you took on preparing Bible studies where you learned that one of the common mistakes beginning teachers make is trying to teach a text that is too big. So you decide you are going to teach on a single verse (Good idea!). You decide you will teach on **II Tim. 2:22** because you have always liked that particular passage which reads: ***Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.***
- B. It is now time to start writing your Bible study!
1. **First thing you do is spend 30 minutes to an hour looking at resources to help you get familiar with the author, date, theme, outline, and historical setting of the book.**
 2. Next, you decide to **write a short introductory paragraph to your study.** Often it is best to wait until you have asked and answered all of your questions and then write your introductory paragraph so that it closely matches the content of your study. Or you can write it at the beginning and then after the study is written refine it a bit. Here are some examples:
 - a. *It was 67 A. D. when the Apostle Paul wrote his last letter to his beloved child in the faith, Timothy. In prison for preaching the gospel, Paul knew his execution was near. He had run the course and finished the race and soon he would be martyred for the cause of Christ. Knowing that his time is short, he writes to remind Timothy of the most important aspects of any ministry. One of the things Paul talks to Timothy about is what he needs to flee from and pursue. In this study we will discover that what Paul told Timothy two thousand years ago, is still God's will for all Christians today.*

- b. I am sure we have all seen those bumper stickers and signs that say, “Just say no to drugs.” Those signs are an attempt to get students to say “no” to controlling substances that will ruin their life or kill them. The problem is that the signs don’t tell students what to say “yes” to. Should students to “Say yes to. . .” alcohol, immoral relationships, stealing, lying, what? Is doing what is right only about saying “No?” The Apostle Paul, in **II Tim. 2:22** not only tells us what to say “no” to he also tells us what to say “yes” to. In this study we will learn what every Christian is to flee from and pursue in order to give glory to God.

3. Now that you have your introductory paragraph written it’s time to start asking the right kinds of questions. Remember that as a teacher you are trying to help your students discover truth in the text. Your questions have to help them do that. Here is an example of study questions which might be asked for a study on **II Tim. 2:22**.

- a. Look at the commands in **II Tim. 1:13-14; 2:1-3, 8, 14-16** leading up to **II Tim. 2:22**. What do these commands tell you about the responsibility of leaders in the church? (*Observation Question*)
- b. In **II Tim. 2:20-21** what figure of speech does Paul use and what is this figure of speech supposed to teach us? (*Observation question and meaning question combined*)
- c. In **vs. 21** what is the main idea Paul is trying to communicate? (*Observation and Meaning question*)
- d. How does **vs. 21** relate to **vs. 22**? (*Observation and meaning question combined. This question is more subjective*)
- e. What two commands are given in **vs. 22**, how do they differ, and what do they mean? (*Observation and meaning question combined*)
(1)
(2)
- f. What specifically is Timothy to flee from according to **vs. 22**? Give examples of the kinds of things these might be. (*Observation leading to application question*)
(1) Look up the verses below and note the kinds of things all Christians are to flee from. (*Doctrine Development question*)
(a) I Cor. 6:18
(b) I Cor. 10:14
(c) I Tim. 6:11 (in the near context of **I Tim. 6:3-10** see if you can find ten things we are to flee from and write them down)
(d) Based on what we have learned from these texts and **II Tim. 2:22**, how would you summarize the kinds of things Christians are to flee from? (*Meaning and application question combined*)

- g. In **II Tim. 2:22**, what four specific things is Timothy told to pursue? Why and what do these things mean? (*Observation and meaning question combined*)
- (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - (4)
- h. What kind of people mentioned in **vs. 22** will we be associated with by fleeing and pursuing? (*Observation question*)
- (1) What does it mean to “call upon the Lord?” (*Meaning question*)
 - (2) What does the word “pure” mean? (*Meaning question*)
 - (3) What does the word “heart” refer to? (*Meaning question*)
 - (4) Is it important to call upon the Lord from a “pure heart?” (*Doctrine development question*)
 - (a) Psa. 66:18
 - (b) Prov. 1:28-29
 - (c) Prov. 15:8, 29
 - (5) If it is necessary to call upon the Lord from a pure heart, what should this cause us to do before we pray to God? (*Application question*)
- i. Look at and consider your life. What “youthful lusts” and sins do you struggle with and need to develop the habit of fleeing from in order to pursue righteousness?
- (1) How specifically are you going to flee from these sins? What will be your flight plan?
 - (2) What Scriptures are you going to commit to memorize to remind you what to flee from and what to pursue?
 - (3) Who will you ask to help hold you accountable?

C. **The study above is an example of an inductive Bible study.** Notice that the general inductive Bible study format is: 1) What does the text say? 2) What does the text mean? 3) How does the text apply? 4) How are you going to implement this text in your life? I also included two doctrinal development questions, one on what we are to flee from and the other on the need to call upon the Lord from a pure heart. I could have included doctrinal development questions on every question, but for a 45 minute Bible study, this is plenty. Notice how I indented the questions so that I could visually see what questions were primary questions

and what questions were sub questions. Notice the logical structure for material below as one way of organizing your study. Example:

1. Main observation question
 - a. Meaning, doctrine, or application question related to the main observation question
 - (1) Questions related to any of the categories above
2. Implementation questions related to general truths learned in the study.

II. **REFINE AND CLARIFY YOUR STUDY QUESTIONS**

After you have gone through your text and asked lots of observation questions, you may discover that you have asked too many observation questions or that your observation questions need to be followed up by meaning, doctrine, application, and implementation questions. This is a common problem. You know in your mind that all Scripture is profitable and yet, you know that you can't teach everything discovered in the text. This is when you have to "go for the fillet's."

- A. First, go through your study and see if you might be able to combine questions.
- B. Second, you might see if some things are so obvious that it might be better to just state what the text says (give them the obvious answer) and then go for meaning and application type questions.
- C. Third, you might decide that your students really need help in one or two areas and so you decide to remove some observation questions and replace them with doctrinal development, application, and implementation questions.
- D. Fourth, you may realize that your study is still too big and that you are going to go for the "one big bullet" truth or doctrine in the text. In order to do this you might give an honorable mention to the other good points in the text in the form of an observation question or two, but then focus on observation, doctrinal development, application and implementation questions related to the one point you think will be most helpful for your students to learn. This will give you the opportunity to dialogue and discuss in greater detail how to apply and implement the text.
- E. Fifth, read your questions out loud. This often helps you discover awkward wording. Refine your questions so they are clear to someone who has never studied the text before. Do things such as:

1. Avoid abstract, nonspecific words such as “it,” “he,” “she,” “him,” “her,” “they,” “them,” “in the text,” “in the verse,” etc. When you can, say what “it” is, say the name of “who,” “he,” “she,” “him,” “her,” “they,” and “them” is. List the Bible verse instead of saying “in the text” or “in the verse”--just write down the reference again. Be specific and concrete. Examples:
 - a. *“What does it say about sin?”* Should be changed to: **“What does vs. 9 say about sin?”**
 - b. *“Why do you think he said this?”* Should be changed to: **“Why do you think Paul said all men are to repent?”**
 - c. *“In the text, we see him struggling to learn the lesson.”* Should be changed to: **“In Psa. 148:8-10 we see David struggling to learn how to obey God’s will.”**

- F. Make sure you have thought through ways the text might be applied and that your questions drive your students to those applications.
- G. Make sure you have considered how the text might be implemented to your life and the life of your students and make sure your questions help them apply the text to their life.
- H. If you are giving homework, make sure everyone has the resources they need to answer the questions you have written. Be prepared to recommend good resources if you think some people might want to purchase them.

III. **CONSIDER ADDING THINGS THAT WILL CLARIFY WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO TEACH FROM THE TEXT**

- A. As you study you might come across one or more good quotes. Put them in your study either at the end of a series of questions, in a text box, in a footnote, or give them verbally when you teach.
- B. You might make a chart if you think it will be helpful to help organize ideas, thoughts, observations, etc.
- C. You might attach handouts to your study for further reading, articles, larger quotes, hymns, stories, or even a separate quiet time study that they can work on during the week. You can choose not to include some of these things but to give them verbally during the Bible study.

IV. STUDY AND ANSWER YOUR OWN BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. After your study is written, and refined, you need to do your own Bible study. Answer the questions, read commentaries, insert extra cross references in your notes that you might use if you have enough time.
- B. Consider how to illustrate the major points or lessons so they are clear to the students. Examples:
 - 1. Think of a personal example in your life that relates to the truth being taught.
 - 2. Think of what the truth is “like.”
 - 3. Think of metaphors you might use to describe a truth.
 - 4. Make up your own parable, your own illustration, your own allegory.
 - 5. Think of a biblical example you might use to relate to the truth.
 - 6. Think of a story, poem, hymn, song, TV show, movie, something you read in a newspaper, magazine or saw on a billboard, that illustrates the truth.
 - 7. Think about the things your students need help with -- situations at school, situations in marriage, situations at work, situations with neighbors, situations with relatives. Appeal to what you know they are dealing with and use these things to illustrate the truth.
 - 8. Appeal to common experiences, things people feel, taste, touch, hear, and smell which might illustrate the truth.
 - 9. **You want your students to be able to “see the truth” you are teaching them in their minds.** How can you help them see providence, concurrence, redemption, atonement, substitution, etc.? Think of ways to make things that are unfamiliar, understandable.

V. HOMEWORK – WRITE A STUDY ON MICAH 6:6-8

The goal of this homework assignment is to have you write your own inductive study on **Micah 6:6-8**, following the criteria below.

- A. Pastor Dave Hintz calls you up three days before the college group gathers for Bible study and says, “Hey, I have come down with spinal meningitis, could you please prepare an inductive Bible study on **Micah 6:6-8** for the college students? (If you are a woman, you will be teaching college age women. If you are a man, you will be teaching college age men.)
- B. Dave tells you, “You will have about 40 minutes to teach the study. Make sure you focus on application that will be college student specific.”
- C. Dave also tells you, “Make sure you have a handout that is no more than two pages long (10-12 point font). And don’t forget to pray at the beginning and end of the study.”