

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

LESSON 3: STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD – PART 2

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Christian Disciplines. This series of lessons introduces the disciplines of a Christian life, including prayer, Bible study, as well as fixing our mind on eternal things. This is exciting content that should energize and renew the spiritual life of mature Christians and propel newer Christians into deeper faith. The material is practical in nature, yet focussed on the many spiritual rewards of a life devoted to God.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

LESSON 3: STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD – PART 2

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to continue to examine a method of Bible study that will help participants understand how to interpret and apply the Word of God to their life.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson continues to look at the inductive Bible study method. In this lesson you will practise the interpretation and application steps. It is important to encourage students to use other scripture to support their interpretation. Truths in the Bible are always supported by other verses. Incorrect interpretation can lead to false beliefs. It is important to rely on the Holy Spirit to teach and instruct us while we study. You may wish to prepare for this lesson by collecting some Bible Study tools your participants might have access to. There are online Bibles, Bible dictionaries, and concordances that many people find helpful. You will need to find some in your own language and preferred translation. Some online English language tools include: www.biblegateway.com, www.biblestudytools.com, www.biblehub.com

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ When trying to understand the meaning of a difficult passage of Scripture, what can you do? What resources can you turn to? How can you use other parts of the Bible to clarify this passage for you?
- ❖ What passages of the Bible are you most interested in studying? What book have you always wanted to look into more?
- ❖ Why does the Bible require interpretation? What factors contribute to the Bible not always being straight forward and easy to understand without a little work?
- ❖ What do the words “interpretation” and “application” mean?



STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **Learning to Interpret the Bible:** After we have looked at a passage of Scripture to observe what the key details are, we are ready to interpret it. People who interpret something from one language to another function as an interpreter. This job requires a great understanding of both languages, but translation word for word may not be the most effective means of communication. An interpreter must understand the meaning of the words and give those to the intended audience. Interpretation of the Bible requires us to find out the meaning.
 - **Interpretation requires asking questions:**
 - Why is this passage here?
 - What does the author mean by it?
 - How does it relate to what came before it?
 - **Identify key words:** This may require the use of a dictionary to help you define words that are unfamiliar.
 - **Use other Scripture to help you interpret the passage:**
 - What does the immediate context (the verses around it) suggest?
 - What does the broader context suggest (book, type of book)?
 - What do cross-references suggest (related verses found in your Bible)?
 - **Make notes.** List any principles that you derive from the passage.
 - **Check available Bible study tools:** *There are many study tools online. You could provide your students with some websites, or refer them to church libraries or other tools at their disposal.*
 - **Write a brief summary statement that concisely captures the author's intent and message.**
- ❖ **Interpreting Together:** Let's look at the passage we discussed in the previous lesson. Look up Romans 12:1-2. Use the following questions to decide how to interpret it together.
 - **What do the terms** conform, transform, and mercy **mean?** What does Paul mean by "patterns of this world" and "renew your mind"?
 - **Look at some verses that may shed light on the phrases above.** Try the immediate context of the verses first, and then look at other passages that use the same phrase.
 - "Patterns of this world" – 1 John 2:15-16
 - "Renew your mind" – Colossians 3:1-4; Ephesians 4:22-24



- **What are the principles you can derive from the passage?**
 - We should be completely focussed on God, and act in ways that are pleasing to Him.
 - We should not get carried away by what everyone else is doing in this world.
 - We must constantly renew our minds so that we may fulfill God's Will.
- **If available, consult a Bible dictionary, handbook, or commentary to confirm your conclusions.**
- **What is a brief summary statement of Romans 12:1-2?** Living a holy life is actually an act of worship to God. Turning away from the world and towards God will help us see Him more clearly and understand His Will for our lives.
- ❖ **Application:** In the application stage we take the principles we have written down, the summary of the teaching, and apply them to our lives. We will answer the following questions:
 - **How does this truth apply to my life?**
 - **What specific changes would I like to make in my life because of this truth?**
 - **What plan do I have for carrying out those changes?**
- ❖ **Practising Application:** Look at the passage Romans 12:1-2 again. What application can we make in our own lives from the principles we derived in the interpretation stage? Some ideas might be:
 - I must consider my thoughts to see if they are pleasing to the Lord.
 - I must look at my actions to see if they are in accordance to God's Will.
 - I must be careful of what I speak because there is life and death in our tongue.
 - Our plans should be based upon the Word of God and according to His Will.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Have you tried the inductive Bible study method? If so, how has it helped in your walk with God?
- ❖ What roles do prayer and the Holy Spirit play in our study of the Bible?
- ❖ Why is interpretation and application necessary in Bible study? Why is it not enough to just observe what the text says?
- ❖ Who can you share this information about inductive Bible study with? Is there a possibility of beginning or joining a Bible study group?



PRAYER

Close with a time of prayer. Thank God for His gift of the Word of God. Pray that participants will make time to study God's Word and apply what they have learned in these lessons. Pray that their work would be fruitful and their study would result in a changed heart and increased devotion.