



# HOW TO LEAD A BIBLE STUDY

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## I. PREPARING FOR THE BIBLE STUDY

- A. **What to Study** - When leading a Bible study, the first step is to choose a book of the Bible to study. Ask the Lord if there is a particular book that is relevant to your community. Often He will highlight a book that will be valuable to where your community is. If this is your first Bible study, it might be helpful to choose a smaller book so that you can easily work through the book from start to finish.
- B. **How to Prepare** - Proper preparation is the first key to leading a Bible study. If you prepare properly, the meeting will be much easier and much more beneficial to those who attend. If you do not prepare, it will dramatically affect the meeting and people will stop coming. Discussion is a valuable component of a Bible study, but you should always come with a clear understanding of what needs to be covered and be prepared to teach. You may also want to consult the resource “How to Study the Bible” at <http://Luke18Project.com/resources> for tips on studying a Bible passage. Next we will consider some practical ways you can prepare for your Bible study.
- C. **Divide the Book into Manageable Sections** - Once you have chosen the book of the Bible you want to study, you should divide it into sessions so that each Bible study has a clear focus. Usually chapter breaks are the easiest way to divide a Bible study, but also look for topic divisions in case there is a more logical way to break up the book. Give these divisions to your group a week in advance so that they can read and prepare for the next session. If people read the text before they come to the study, it will save time and make it easier to study the book together.
- D. **Read and Outline the Passage** - The first thing you should do before you consult any other resources is to actually read the passage you are studying. As you read it, create your own outline for the passage. Also write down any thoughts on specific verses that the Lord highlights for you. Integrate these thoughts in your outline to create your teaching notes. The process of outlining will force you to work through the passage to identify exactly what the passage is communicating. The outline that you develop will become your notes for the Bible study. You can use these notes for yourself, but it will also be helpful to pass these notes out in the Bible study.
- E. **Write out a Summary of the Passage** - In addition to outlining the passage, you can summarize the passage in your own words. Write it out as if you were communicating it to a friend. If you understand a passage you should be able to communicate it using your own words. Avoid using unnatural language or simply repeating what you have heard others say.
- F. **Identify Specific Elements in the Passage** - Identify specific elements in each passage. There are several kinds of elements you can identify in a passage and the process of identifying them will help you better understand and communicate the passage. Here are a few of the different elements you should be looking for:
1. Instructions or Commands – The Scripture is full of clear statements that require a response of obedience. Find sections of the passage that specifically call for obedience, give specific



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instructions, or require a response. Ask the Holy Spirit for strength to obey.

2. Prayer and Worship – Note sections of the passage containing prayer and worship. These passages reveal what Holy Spirit inspired worship and prayer look like.
3. Attributes of God – Pay specific attention to sections where God reveals facets of His personality and His character. God has filled the Bible with information about Himself and our heart response should be to search out these treasures.
4. Attributes of Man – Notice what the passage reveals about mankind in general and believers in specific. Ask the Holy Spirit to develop each attribute of a believer in your own life.
5. Blessings and Promises – Many passages contain specific prophetic promises and other blessings. It is critical to know these promises so that our hearts become anchored in the hope God has given us and so we can partner with Him to pray these promises.
6. Obviously every passage will not have each element, but every passage will have at least one and often more than one element. When you lead the Bible study, these elements should be clearly pointed out to help others increase their understanding of the passage. These can also be included on your outline. Many of these elements require a response or a heart change and should be presented that way in a Bible study.

G. **Consult Other Resources** - Once you have developed your notes, you will want to consult other resources to gain additional information on the passage and to confirm what you have highlighted in the passage. When using a resource, you must always be aware of the perspective of the author because that influences how they view a passage. It is helpful to review multiple, respected commentators from different backgrounds on a passage as your study. Here is a list of a few references to get you started:

1. Good Study Aids with Overviews – Halley’s Bible Handbook, Unger’s Bible Dictionary
2. Free websites with many study tools - <http://studylight.org/> , <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/>
3. Free Resources from Specific Individuals - <http://mikebickle.org/>, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm> , <http://www.desiringgod.org/>

## II. LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY

A. In addition to preparing for each Bible study, you have a general format to follow for the Bible study. Having a format will help you to lead the meeting and keep it on track. As in any other meeting, you want to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit when He chooses to highlight something specific, but as the leader you should also prepare the lead the meeting. Here is a sample flow you could use when planning your Bible study:



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- B. **Open in prayer** - If your Bible study group is also a discipleship small group, you may want to ask each person there to share one positive thing going on in their life and one negative thing that needs prayer. You can also ask if anyone has a testimony from sharing what was covered the previous week with someone outside the group. This will help the group open up and connect relationally.
  
- C. **Ask what the Holy Spirit has Revealed** - Ask the individuals in the group to share anything the Holy Spirit has revealed to them related to the passage you have been studying or specific things that have been discussed in the Bible study. You want to encourage each member to begin to develop the skill of listening to the Holy Spirit personally rather than relying only on a teacher or leader to teach them the Scriptures.
  
- D. **Read the Passage** - Read the passage out loud. Rotate through the group having different individuals read a few verses at a time. This will engage the group in the reading process. Since different individuals also will have different translations, it will provide different perspectives on the passage. At the end, you may want to ask someone to summarize the passage in their own words. Note that reading the passage may not work in all contexts.
  
- E. **Retain Focus on the Scripture** - As you review your outline, make sure you keep the focus on the Scripture. Try to avoid long quotes and external references. Even if you used them to prepare and reference them on your outline, try to keep the focus of the Bible study on working through the actual text of the passage rather than on secondary resources.
  
- F. **Make it Interactive** - Unless your group is large, make the Bible Study interactive by posing many of your points as questions. Engage people that often do not speak up on their own and be aware of individuals who might want to dominate the conversation. Make sure you keep the study on track and focused.
  
- G. **Review the Passage** - When you finish going through the passage review summary points. Many of these would be the specific elements you identified above. Specifically note elements of the passage that require obedience or cause us to live in a different way. Ask the group for ways they can obey the passage in the week ahead. Provoke the members of the group to share what they are learning with others outside the group during the week. Specifically provoke them to speak to unbelievers. Ask if the Holy Spirit has revealed anything else to anyone in the group and close in prayer.