

Inductive Bible Study

How to Study Through the Scriptures Effectively

Designed Especially for
Pastors and Church Workers

PUBLISHED BY:



P.O. Box 109
Mentone, California 92359 USA
(909) 798-0451

email: info@icmbible.org
www.icmbible.org

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL
All Rights Reserved
Rev. 11/08

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

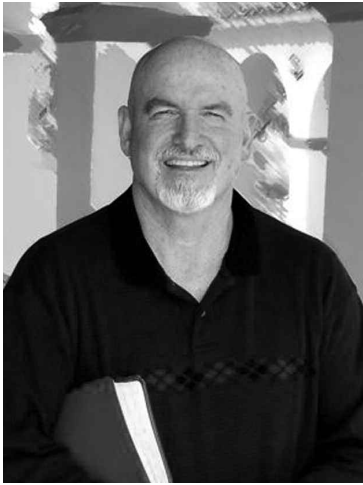
This manual was developed over many years working with thousands of pastors and Christian workers in the Philippines by Pastor Dan Finfrock. It was designed to help leaders learn to study the Bible without any other outside resources such as Bible commentaries, Study Bibles, etc., which are frequently absent from Third World Leader's libraries.

With a good translation of the Scriptures, participants are taught how to carefully observe, interpret and apply God's Word. The Scriptures come alive through this exciting Inductive Bible Study system. The IBS is a very thorough, methodical study of the Scriptures.

This manual can be used to teach anyone interested in learning how to study God's Word more effectively. It is being used in many countries and has been translated into more than thirty-five languages around the world.

PLEASE NOTE:

This manual is meant to be a workbook and is designed to work with either our cd or dvd sets, in order to help develop your study skills.



A B O U T T H E
A U T H O R

Pastor Dan Finfrock grew up in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church in Redlands, California. He later attended Simpson Bible College of the Alliance. After graduating from the University of Redlands, he began working with Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship for six years on college campuses teaching Inductive Bible Study. He then went into the pastorate and ministered in five churches. The last church he pastored and pioneered was Calvary Chapel of Banning.

Pastor Dan Finfrock

In 1985 Dan moved his family to the Philippines and founded Intensive Care Ministries. He saw the great need to train national pastors in how to study the Word. The Inductive Bible Study system worked extremely well and could be learned quickly. In 1991, he moved his family back to the United States and soon began establishing the work in many other countries. Dan travels extensively in Third World countries and Russia has become a focal point over the past twelve years. ICM has ten Russian staff members now working in various regions. Dan resides in Mentone, California with his wife Debbie and their youngest son Aaron. They have three married children, Nathan, Lela, Corrie and six grandchildren.

Statement of Faith

1. We believe that God's love is for all mankind and that because of His love, He sent Jesus to die on the cross for man's sin and that He was resurrected on the third day.

THEREFORE:

We proclaim forgiveness of sins and a resurrected Lord.

2. We believe that all Scriptures are inspired by God and are profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequately equipped for every good work. II TIMOTHY 3:16 & 17

THEREFORE:

We give emphasis to the teaching of the Word.

3. We believe God has raised up "gifted" men and women to equip the body of Christ, that it might mature and grow up in Christ. EPHESIANS 4:11-16

THEREFORE:

We seek out gifted men and women in order to equip them in the teaching of the Word.

4. We believe in the soon-return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

THEREFORE:

We go and make disciples of all nations. MATTHEW 28:19

5. We believe that there is only one body in Christ and that though there are many variances in His church, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are all one through Christ.

THEREFORE:

We are diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit.

EPHESIANS 4:3

UPDATED
VERSION
9/20/2004



STATEMENT *of* VISION

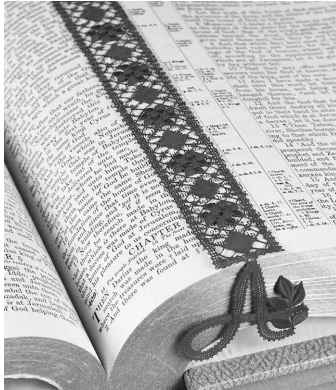
Intensive Care Ministries was founded to equip national pastors and Christian workers for the work of service. Our purpose is two-fold:

- (1) To teach them how to study the Word, and
- (2) To motivate them to feed their people through systematic Bible study. Our vision is to set up training programs within various countries to accomplish these purposes.

TABLE
of
CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Seminar Overview | 7 |
| Books of the Bible | 8 |
| Methods of Bible Study | 9 |
| Definition of: Observation | 10 |
| Interpretation | 11 |
| Application | 16 |
| Personal Bible Study Chart | 17 |
| <u>ASSIGNMENTS:</u> | |
| #1 – Narrative Texts | 22 |
| #2 – Poetry | 27 |
| Outlining Text | 28 |
| Charting Text | 33 |
| #3 – Epistles | 40 |
| #4 – Hebrew Poetry | 50 |
| #5 – Inductive Questions | 60 |
| #6 – Parables | 72 |
| #7 – Prophecy | 82 |
| Example of Expository Sermon Outline..... | 88 |
| <u>OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS</u> | |
| John 13 (Narrative) | 99 |
| Philemon (Epistle) | 104 |
| Isaiah 55 (Prophecy) | 111 |
| <u>APPENDIX</u> | |
| How to Start and Lead a Bible Study | 123 |
| How Do I Prepare? | 124 |
| Evaluating Your Leadership | 125 |
| Some General Considerations | 128 |
| Small Group Dynamics | 131 |
| Case for Expository Teaching..... | 136 |

Seminar Overview



Written Forms of the Bible:

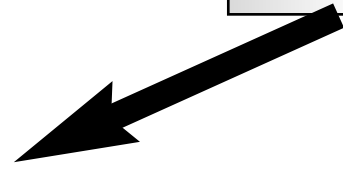
1. Narrative
2. Epistles
3. Parables
4. Poetry
5. Prophecy



1. xxxx xxxx xxxxx xxx
a. xx xxx xxx xx xxx

Outline Main Ideas from Passage

4. xxx xxxxx xx xxxx



Chart

| <u>Observation</u> | <u>Interpretation</u> | <u>Application</u> |
|--|--|--|
| 1. xxxx xxxx xxxxx xxx a. xx xxx xxx xx xxx b. xxxx xx xxx | 1. xxxx xxxx xxxxx xxx a. xx xxx xxx xx xxx b. xxxx xx xxx | 1. xxxx xxxx xxxxx xxx a. xx xxx xxx xx xxx b. xxxx xx xxx |
| 2. xx xxx xxxxx xx | 2. xx xxx xxxxx xx | 2. xx xxx xxxxx xx |
| 3. xxx xxx x xxx x | 3. xxx xxx x xxx x | 3. xxx xxx x xxx x |
| 4. xxx xxxxx xx xxxx | 4. xxx xxxxx xx xxxx | 4. xxx xxxxx xx xxxx |



Sermon Outline

1. xxxx xxxx xxxxx xxx
a. xx xxx xxx xx xxx
b. xxxx xx xxx

2. xx xxx xxxxx xx

3. xxx xxx x xxx x

4. xxx xxxxx xx xxxx



Sermon

Inductive Questions

1. xxxx xxxx xxxxx xxx
a. xx xxx xxx xx xxx
b. xxxx xx xxx

2. xx xxx xxxxx xx

3. xxx xxx x xxx x

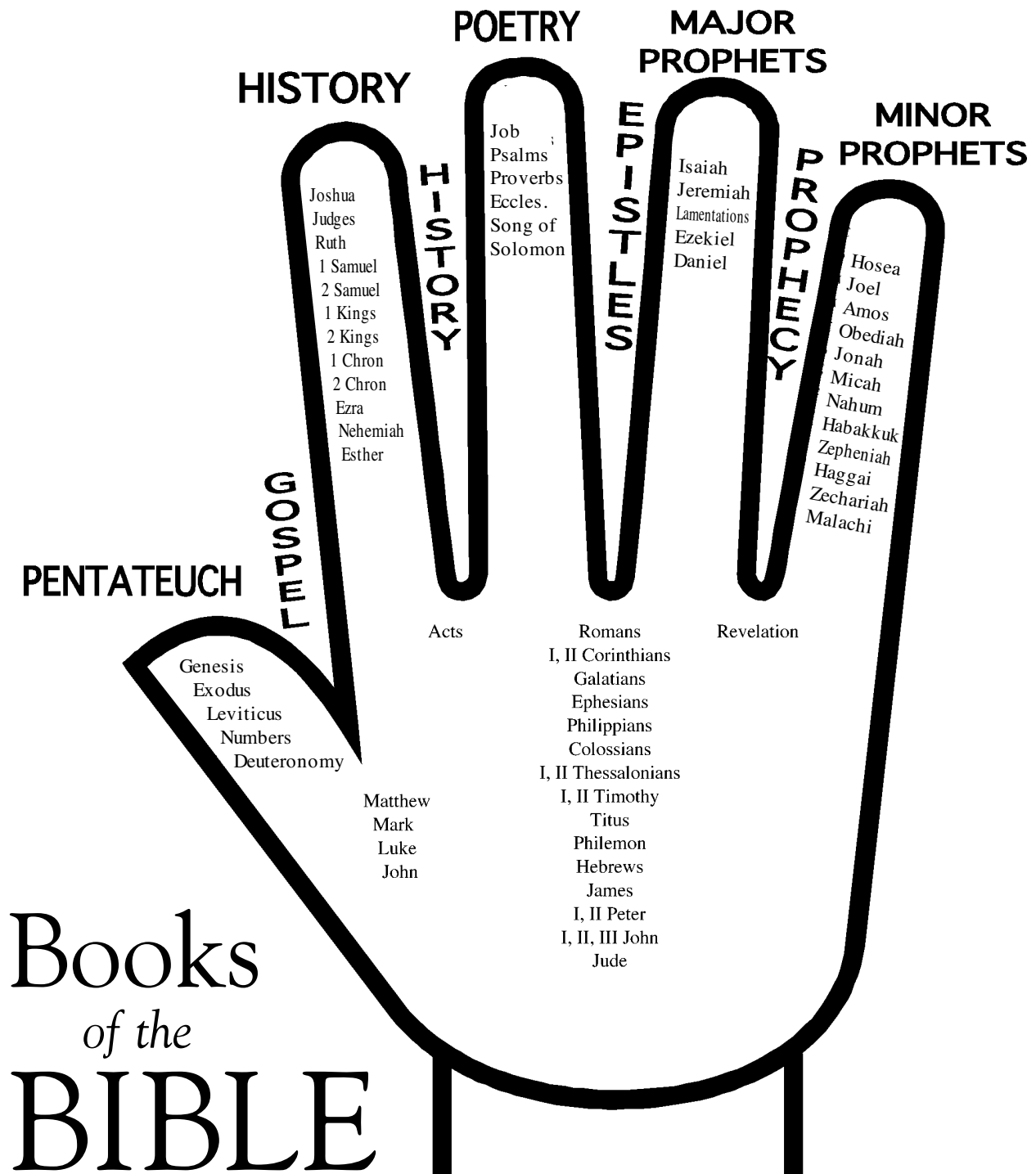
4. xxx xxxxx xx xxxx



Bible Study

TEACH THE WHOLE BIBLE

Remember Paul's farewell sermon to the Ephesian elders,
"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."



Books of the BIBLE

Methods of Bible Study

Three of the most commonly
used methods of Bible Study are:

Inductive *“Pulls out facts”*

Deductive *“Starts with premise”*

Springboard *“Shares opinion”*

Definition of

Observation

Interpretation

Application

WHAT DOES TEXT SAY?

- ◆ **Read Text Several Times**
- ◆ **Record First Impressions**
- ◆ **Record Who, What, When, Where and How**

Definition of

Observation

Interpretation

Application

WHAT DOES TEXT MEAN?

- ◆ Interpret Literally
- ◆ Study in Context
- ◆ Let Scripture Interpret Scripture
- ◆ NT Takes Precedence

Further Guidelines to Interpretation

In order to understand the Word of God properly, it is necessary to follow certain guidelines. Observing these guidelines will not always guarantee correct conclusions, but ignoring them frequently leads to error.

**Here are some basic rules
that are frequently neglected.**

I. INTERPRET YOUR EXPERIENCE BY THE SCRIPTURES: DO NOT INTERPRET THE SCRIPTURES BY YOUR EXPERIENCE.

When people interpret the Scriptures by their experience, their experience becomes the standard authority. God's Word is the standard and our lives are under the Scriptures' authority.

Whenever a Christian universally applies a method to others that has worked for him, he is in danger of transgressing the principle, even though the method itself may be a good application of biblical commandment. A good example of this is the man who had difficulty with deficit spending and who abolished all forms of buying on credit. He was so successful in overcoming his problem that he insisted that anyone owning a credit card or buying on time was violating the scriptural injunction, "Owe no man anything..."

(Romans 13:8). In this situation the individual had interpreted the Scripture in the light of his experience, making his experience normative rather than the biblical principle.

II. DO NOT BE DOGMATIC WHERE THE SCRIPTURES ARE NOT.

There are many areas in which the Bible is not conclusive. Be careful not to say more than the Bible does. In many issues such as personal experience, style of dress, standard of living or church government, a person needs to arrive at his own conclusions, even though the Scriptures are not conclusive. In these situations a stand may be taken, but do not be critical of those who accept a differing view. We still must love those who view things differently.

III. DETERMINE WHEN A PASSAGE IS FIGURATIVE RATHER THAN LITERAL.

You should consider a passage figurative when the Bible says the passage is figurative. Many times the Bible indicates in the text that a particular passage is to be taken figuratively. Occasionally the events, situations or places may be literal as well as figurative. Galatians 4 states that Mt. Sinai is a symbol of bondage and Jerusalem is a symbol of grace. These are literal geographic locations which are also symbols of spiritual truth.

You should also consider a passage figurative when the statement is out of character with the thing described. For example, a statement may be considered figurative whenever an inanimate object is used to describe a person or animate being. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is referred to as “the Door,” “Bread,” “Water,” etc. These words are all used in a figurative sense.

In Philippians 3:2, Paul warns, “Look out for the dogs.” He is describing a group of heretics teaching the necessity of circumcision for salvation. Thus, “dogs” is to be taken

figuratively. Jesus says in Luke 13:32, “Go and tell that fox...” when He is referring to Herod. Thus it can be assumed to be figurative.

There are times when the same word is used figuratively, but has different meanings in different places in the Bible. For example, “lion” in 1 Peter 5:8 refers to Satan, but “lion” in Revelation 5:5 refers to Jesus Christ. Generally, the correct meaning of the figure can be determined by the context.

A word will not have a figurative and literal meaning at the same time. When a word in a sentence is given a figurative meaning, it supersedes the literal meaning. If the literal interpretation fits, it should be used unless the context makes it impossible.

IV. DO NOT RATIONALIZE THE SCRIPTURES.

Do not attempt to interpret biblical statements by current philosophies and contemporary scientific theories. These thoughts often change with the passage of time. The Bible, however, is eternal and never changes. For many years secular historians discredited the Bible’s accuracy because there was no archeological evidence for the existence of the Hittite nation referred to in Scripture. Then in 1907, archeologists discovered tablets in Turkey which confirmed the existence and location of the Hittites.

It is never necessary to apologize for the biblical statements that science cannot confirm or to reinterpret Scripture in the face of current scientific evidence. Because the Bible is God’s Word and literally true, every miracle and every statement must also be considered true.

V. DO NOT SPIRITUALIZE THE SCRIPTURES.

In an attempt to find so-called “spiritual truths” in every verse, many people “read into” a passage a true conclusion that is determined by an invalid process. When a person uses a wrong method to arrive at a true conclusion, he opens himself to being deceived by that same method on other occasions.

For example, Acts 28 related how Paul was miraculously healed after being bitten by a poisonous viper. Someone spiritualizing this account might say, “The serpent, who is the devil, always attacks righteous men, but is always defeated.”

This conclusion may be true and may be taught elsewhere in Scripture, but Acts 28 does not teach this conclusion. This is an erroneous handling of God’s Word.

Adapted from Search the Scriptures

[Colorado Springs, CO: Navigator Press, n.d.]

Definition of

| | | |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Observation | Interpretation | Application |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

- ◆ **Examples To Follow?**
- ◆ **Sin To Forsake?**
- ◆ **Errors To Avoid?**
- ◆ **Promises To Believe**
- ◆ **Commands To Obey?**
- ◆ **Actions To Take?**

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY CHART

| Forms | Story Forms <i>(Narrative)</i> | Instructional & Exhortive Forms <i>(Epistles)</i> | Poetic, Parables, Prophetic Revelation Forms |
|--|---|--|--|
| E X A M P L E | <p>History <i>account of events</i></p> <p>such as: Gospels, Acts, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, etc. and records of the Old Testament Kings.</p> | <p>Logical development of a subject.</p> <p>Paul's Letters – Galatians, Romans, Titus, etc.</p> <p>The writings of Peter, John, James and some accounts of Jesus' teachings.</p> | <p>The arrangement of ideas into patterns. They used symbols and analogies to express the idea.</p> <p>such as: Psalms, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Parables of Jesus, etc.</p> |
| <p>Main Features</p> <p><i>of the Forms</i></p> | <p>People, places, events, and emotions.</p> | <p>Ideas, words, verbs, subjects, objects and arrangements of the passages.</p> | <p>Look for symbolism, parallels, analogies, etc.</p> |

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY CHART (Cont'd)

| Forms | Story Forms <i>(Narrative)</i> | Instructional & Exhortive Forms <i>(Epistles)</i> | Poetic, Parables, Prophetic Revelation Forms |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>BASIC TOOLS <i>for</i> OBSERVATION</p> | <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Who? ☛ What? ☛ When? ☛ Where? ☛ How? <p>Retell the event</p> <p><i>Find the relationship between characters.</i></p> <p><i>Try to feel the emotions.</i></p> <p><i>Place yourself in the shoes of each character.</i></p> <p><i>What do you see?</i> <i>What do you Feel?</i> <i>What do you Think?</i></p> | <p>Outline the development of ideas in the passage.</p> <p>Note repeated words.</p> <p><i>Look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Comparisons ☛ Contrasts ☛ Transition words <p>Such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ therefore ❖ in order that ❖ because ❖ for ❖ since <p><i>Every word becomes important in understanding the whole.</i></p> | <p>Hebrew poets used parallelism, one idea said two different ways.</p> <p><i>A proverb is a type of statement where human behavior is compared to something in nature.</i> E.g. Proverbs 5:3</p> <p>A Parable is an art form Jesus used to deliberately hide the truth from those who did not want to hear.</p> <p>Prophetic revelation tells divinely inspired revelations of future and present events.</p> |

**PERSONAL
BIBLE STUDY CHART (Cont'd)**

**BASIC
TOOLS**

for

INTERPRETATION

**Tools for interpretation
are the same for all three forms:**

*It is an attempt to determine what the passage meant to the people
who originally hear it.*

1. What does the author mean to make him write this way?

- ☛ see
- ☛ feel
- ☛ think

2. Why does he write this?

**3. What would it mean to the people
who heard it in biblical time and culture?**

There are some tools that are good
for instructional and exhortive forms.

- (a) What is the reason for the idea?
- (b) Why did the author use it?
- (c) Could he have used another word?
- (d) What does the idea mean?
- (e) What is the relationship of this idea to events
before following ideas?
- (f) Context is most important.

**PERSONAL
BIBLE STUDY CHART (Cont'd)**

**BASIC
TOOLS**

for

APPLICATION

Tools for Application

are the same for all three forms:

1. Appeal to Holy Spirit for teaching.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

2. Apply the main point to your life, like:

Is there an example.....I/We should follow?

Is there a sinI/We should forsake?

Is there an errorI/We should avoid?

Is there a promise.....I/We should claim?

Is there a commandI/We should obey?

3. So what?

What do I plan to do about it?

What difference will this make in my life?

What specific plans can I make in my life?

What will I do?

How will I do it?

Assignments

Narrative Text

A s s i g n m e n t # 1

The Scriptures contain many books written in narrative form. These stories are fairly easy to understand. In the Old Testament, narrative books include the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) and the History books (Joshua through Esther). In the New Testament, narrative books include the Gospels and the Book of Acts.

For this first assignment, you will answer various questions that relate to the text. These questions are designed to illustrate each type of inductive questions: Observation, interpretation, and application. In a later assignment, you will practice formulating your own inductive questions.

- 1. Read the text (Mark 2:1-12) several times. Take your time and observe carefully.**
- 2. Answer the questions on the following page. Be sure to finish the assignment. Don't get so involved in any one question that you run out of time.**

MARK 2:1-12

(Text)

1 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house.

2 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.

4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. And when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,

7 "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 And immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?"

9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?"

10 "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic,

11 "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go your way to your house."

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

(From The New King James Translation)

ASSIGNMENT LEGEND

O - Observation

I - Interpretation

A - Application

A s s i g n m e n t # 1 (Cont'd)

I 6b. Why were they so persistent?

I 6c. Whose faith was Jesus talking about at this moment?

I 7. Why did Jesus say: "Son, your sins are forgiven."?

I 8. What are the scribes questioning about the statement of Jesus?

I 9. When did Jesus begin to answer their questions?

I 10. Read verses 9-11 again. Which is easier to say? Why?

I 11. What are the parallels between sin and paralysis?

I 12. Someone who is paralyzed is really like what?

I 13. What does Christ do for sinners?

Inductive Bible Study

A s s i g n m e n t # 1 (Cont'd)

ASSIGNMENT LEGEND

O - Observation

I - Interpretation

A - Application

I 14. What is the main point of the text?

A 15. Do you have the faith to carry someone spiritually paralyzed to Christ?

List specific ways you would do it.

A 16. List the obstacles that you experienced in bringing people to Christ.

How would you overcome them?

A 17. List some practical ways you can show that you care for sinners.

A 18. How can you work with others in bringing people to Christ?

**YOU ARE A MESSENGER GOING OUT TO THE PEOPLE.
REMEMBER THAT SIN PARALYZES!**

Poetry

Hebrew poetry is filled with figurative (non-literal) language. Such language conveys ideas through the use of words and phrases that create “images” for the reader.

The distinguishing mark of Hebrew poetry is a correspondence (parallelism) between one line and the following line, or between one section and the following section. This repetition of thought through parallelism helps clarify the author’s meaning. You will explore the various kinds of parallelism in a later assignment.

In this assignment, you will study a simple poetry text. But first, we need to introduce two very important tools that you will use continually in your Inductive Bible Study (IBS). These tools are **outlining** and **charting**.

THE
INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY
M E T H O D

OUTLINING A BIBLE PASSAGE

General Idea

Outlining an Epistle

Outlining Other Forms

CHARTING A BIBLE PASSAGE

General Idea

A Charting Example

I. OUTLINING: The purpose of outlining is to begin examining the text very carefully. There are many different ways to outline a text. The purpose is to break the text into the ideas being presented. One must isolate each idea the text presents to understand it more clearly. In this training, we are presenting two (2) forms of outlining.

(A) The “Simple” form of outlining, which can be used for any book of the Bible.

(B) The “Epistle Outline” form, which simplifies working with most epistles.

A. SIMPLE OUTLINE FORM.

The simple outline form can be used for any book in the Bible. You simply go through the text and look for the ideas being presented – finding where each thought begins and ends.

First, read the text carefully several times – then begin looking for the main ideas. Find the main theme (the general idea of the whole text). These are the two basic steps of the “simple outline” form:

STEP 1 – Write a short description of the main theme of the text.

STEP 2 – List all the main ideas of the text giving the verses of each section of text.

Always go in sequence from verse to verse.

SIMPLE
OUTLINE
EXAMPLES

PSALM 128

THEME: *The fear of the Lord is good.*

- I. The Fruit of fearing the Lord (Vs. 1-4)
- II. The happy results (Vs. 5-6)

EZRA

THEME: *Rebuilding the Temple.*

- I. Rebuilding under Zerubbabel (Ch. 1-6)
 - A. The first return of the captives (Ch. 1-2)
 - B. Rebuilding the Temple (Ch. 3-6)
- II. Reforms under Ezra (Ch.7-10)
 - A. Second return of the captives (Ch. 7:1-8:32)
 - B. Reforms “Rebuilding the people” (Ch. 8:33-10:44)

B. EPISTLE OUTLINE. Most epistles follow a very logical sequence since they are written in a letter form (except Hebrews and I John). As you read through the epistle, look for the Introduction of the letter – the greetings at the beginning (often followed by a thanksgiving section). This will be followed by a Statement of Purpose, the Main Teaching and a Closing.

1. Introduction.

The first few verses of the text will be the introduction and greeting. This is often followed by a “thanksgiving” section.

2. Statement of Purpose.

(Why is this letter being written?) You will find most often in one to three verses a statement of the purpose of writing. It is usually very brief and will almost always come after the introduction (greeting and thanksgiving statements). Look carefully for this information for it is the key to the letter.

3. Main Teaching.

The heart of the epistle is found here. You will find different ideas or topics being developed through several verses. Some times an idea will only cover a few verses, and other times it will be expressed through a whole chapter (or several chapters) – covering many verses. Remember – the chapter and verse divisions given in our Bibles are not necessarily accurate in their “break down” of ideas. Look for the ideas. For example, in one epistle it may be that vs. 5-10 talk about love, vs. 11-16 talk about judgement, or joy, etc.

4. Closing.

The text will always conclude with some closing or concluding thoughts. Some times these are used as benedictions in our churches.

EPISTLE OUTLINE EXAMPLES

Book of Titus

I. INTRODUCTION

Ch. 1:1-4 Paul writing to Titus

A. Ch. 1:1-4

Greetings

B. (None)

Thanksgiving

II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

(Reason for writing)

Ch. 1:5 (Two-fold) To set in order the ministry in churches: and to appoint elders.

III. MAIN TEACHING

Ch. 1:6 thru 3:14 Appointing elders and setting the church in order.

Three Main Ideas:

A. Ch. 1:6-16

Elders qualifications and work.

B. Ch. 2:1 – 3:11

Christian duties in Church and Sound Doctrine.

C. Ch. 3:12-14

Personal Concerns

IV. CLOSING

Ch. 3:15

II. CHARTING:

Once you have outlined the text you are ready to break the text apart further by charting it. Charting is used to look very carefully at the text throughout OBSERVATION – INTERPRETATION – APPLICATION (IBS) system. Take each section of the outline and go through it verse by verse – noting important words, phrases, and ideas – for all of the text.

(The following is an example to show you how this works.)

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-6

Charting Example

| Observation (O) <i>(State Facts of Text; Important Words and ideas)</i> | Interpretation (I) <i>(Explain meaning here)</i> | Application (A) <i>(Make general & specific application)</i> |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1.) Idea Vs. 1-2 <i>These verses are the introductions to the book.</i></p> <p>Vs. 1 Paul and Timothy</p> <p>Servant of Jesus Christ</p> | <p>Almost all epistles have an introduction</p> <p>Paul is the writer of this text, but includes Timothy's name.</p> <p>Paul recognizes that he is alive to serve Jesus</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>NOTE: make application by showing how to put what you have learned into action: WHAT will you do? HOW will you do it?</p> </div> <p>I/We want to be a servant of Jesus Christ. How?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a servant's attitude. 2. Teach Sunday School. 3. Volunteer to help in Church. |
| <p>To saints in Christ Jesus →</p> <p>Vs. 2 Grace and Peace →</p> | <p>Paul is writing to believers. A saint is not a statue but someone born-again.</p> <p>Terms used for greeting one another and are trademarks of Paul's letter.</p> <p>Grace – favor from God Peace – freedom from fear and anxiety in our hearts.</p> | <p>I am a saint because of Jesus in my life. So I will live in a holy, Christ-like style.</p> <p>I have the grace and peace of God in my life. I do not have to live in fear. His grace and peace mark my life.</p> |
| <p>2.) Idea Vs. 3-6 <i>These are summarizing verses telling <u>purpose of letter</u>.</i></p> <p>Vs. 4 Prayer and Joy</p> | <p><i>Paul has great joy not because of his circumstances but because of the work of Christ in his life.</i></p> | <p>I can have joy regardless of my circumstances because Christ is at work in me.</p> |

Poetry

Assignment # 2

1. Read the text (Psalm 1) several times.
2. Outline the text using a simple outline form.
3. Chart the text using your outline.

Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

(From the New King James Version)

I. THEME: _____

II. OUTLINE: (Write Idea)

1. Vs. _____

2. Vs. _____

3. Vs. _____

III. CHART:

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Epistle

A s s i g n m e n t # 3

In this assignment, you will study an epistle using the basic tools of outlining and charting. Refer back to material on outlining and charting (pages 28-34).

- 1. Read the text (Jude) several times.**
- 2. Outline the text using the epistle outline form (as illustrated on page 31).**
- 3. Chart the text (as illustrated on page 34).**

Jude

1) Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

2) Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

3) Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

4) For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

5) Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

6) And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgement on the great Day.

7) In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

8) In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

9) But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

10) Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals – these are the very things that destroy them.

11) Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion.

12) These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm – shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted – twice dead.

13) They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

14) Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones

15) to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

16) These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

17) But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

18) They said to you, “in the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.”

19) These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

20) But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

21) Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

22) Be merciful to those who doubt;

23) snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear – hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

24) To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy –

25) to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!
Amen.

I. OUTLINE:

A. Introduction Vs. _____

B. Statement of Purpose Vs. _____

C. Main Teaching Vs. _____

1. _____ Vs. _____

2. _____ Vs. _____

D. Closing Vs. _____

II. CHART OUTLINE

Jude Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Hebrew Poetry

A s s i g n m e n t # 4

1. **Read the text (Psalm 139) several times.**
2. **Outline the text using the simple form.**
3. **Chart the text.**
4. **Determine what kind of parallelism is being used.** (*More than one type of parallelism may exist in a passage*).

Hebrew Poetry

I. GUIDELINE: USE THE PARALLELISM OF HEBREW POETRY TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE MEANING OF THE TEXT.

- A. Poetry is filled with figurative language, therefore, we must learn to understand the meaning of non-literal or “picture” language.
- B. The distinguishing mark of Hebrew poetry is a correspondence in thought (parallelism) between one line and the following line, or between one section and the following section (re: section of the outline).
- C. Hebrew poetry uses much repetition. This is of great help in understanding its meaning.

II. THERE ARE THREE BASIC KINDS OF PARALLEL THOUGHT IN HEBREW POETRY.

- A. **SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM** – An idea may be expressed a second or third time in a similar way.

EXAMPLE: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech listen to my speech!”
Gen. 4:23

“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” Psalm 51:2

- B. **SYNTHETIC PARALLELISM** – The poet adds to the original concept.

EXAMPLE: Psalm 1:1

Each phrase in the verse adds an additional thought. To walk with the wicked may be the first stage; to stand with sinners is even worse; and to sit with scoffers would seem to be the ultimate.

- C. **ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM** – The poet contrasts one idea with another.

EXAMPLE: “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable; But the mouth of fools spouts folly.” Prov. 15:2

The second phrase generally gives a negative of the thesis (anti-thesis) of the first phrase.

A s s i g n m e n t # 4

PSALM 139

1) O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

2) You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

3) You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.

4) For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

5) You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.

6) Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

7) Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

8) If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

9) If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

10) Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

11) If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," even the night shall be light about me;

12) Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

13) For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother's womb.

14) I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

15) My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16) Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

17) How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

18) If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

19) Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

20) For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain.

21) Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

22) I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

23) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;

24) And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

(From the New King James Version)

Psalm 139

Theme: _____

Type of Overall Parallelism: _____

OUTLINE:

TYPE OF PARALLELISM

| | | |
|------------|-----------|-------|
| I. _____ | Vs. _____ | _____ |
| II. _____ | Vs. _____ | _____ |
| III. _____ | Vs. _____ | _____ |
| IV. _____ | Vs. _____ | _____ |
| V. _____ | Vs. _____ | _____ |
| VI. _____ | Vs. _____ | _____ |

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive / Questions

A s s i g n m e n t # 5

- 1. Read text (Mark 6:45-52) several times.**
- 2. Chart the information.**
- 3. Try to ask as many observation, interpretation and application questions as possible, then go back to see which questions would be best to help participants work through the text in an orderly manner. It is important to ask questions that will bring about a good working flow through the text.**
- 4. Write out your questions in the order you will ask them. Next to each question, mark it with an O for observation, I for interpretation, or A for application.**

Formulating Inductive Questions

When you are learning to write inductive questions, you are learning a skill. As with any activity, your skill level in developing questions will improve with practice. The first big step is doing a thorough and methodical study of the passage. Through your questions the study group will find what you found. Surface study will yield surface questions and discussions; thorough study will yield questions which involve the group with the strong truths of the passage, so they are moved to God and His ways. This kind of result is well worth the time and effort of careful study.

- I. Study with yourself in mind first: “What does God want to teach me?” Then with others in mind: “What can we gain for our lives as we study together?”
- II. When you finish studying, look over your chart and mark points of special significance that you want to be sure to include.

III. Formulating questions.

Your questions should lead the group into the main stream of thought in the passage so they will discover the major points and apply them to their lives. It is important to remember what type of group you are working with: new converts, more mature, young, older, etc. The group will not need to go through the detailed analysis you did; your questions will assume for them certain basics of structure, etc., which you dug out in preparation study.

- A. Start with “survey” questions that will get them acquainted with the whole passage. (Who is involved? Where are they? What are they doing?, etc.)
- B. Through your questions, lead them in sequence through the passage from beginning to end. You may want to lead them to study section by section, and as they move along, get them to see connections between paragraphs.

- C. **You will want to ask:**
 - Observation (fact) Questions.**
 - Interpretation (meaning) Questions.**
 - Application (action) Questions.**

1. Observation Questions

- Get the group to observe what's there.
- By various means lead them to see who, what, when, where.
- They may describe some people or scenes.
- Help them get "into" the scene themselves, reliving an event or conversation, or putting themselves in the place of people in first-century Ephesus, receiving a letter from the Apostle Paul.
- Lead the group to see some structure you found:
"What is the contrast between...?"

2. Interpretation Questions

- Get the group to analyze and ask "Why?", so they will find major truths.
- They will need to define some key words or phrases.
- Help them to see the reasons behind some of the structure.
(Ask questions based on your own work from the interpretation column of your charting. This is also a way of leading them to see connections between paragraphs.)
- When they find a main truth, your question should help them think it through.

3. Application Questions

- These get the group to think about and plan change which needs to be made in their personal lives – attitudes, relationships and actions.
- Application questions should flow naturally from the meaning of the main points, and they should appear after a crucial point has been made clear. Keep in mind, though, that it is more effective to have a few good application questions scattered throughout the passage than to have too many.

Mark

6:45-52

45) Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.

46) And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.

47) Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land.

48) Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

49) But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out;

50) for they all saw Him and were troubled. And immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

51) Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.

52) For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart were hardened.

(From the New King James Version)

FORMULATING INDUCTIVE QUESTIONS DIAGRAM

Working from the chart you have already completed, develop questions from each of the columns. This work is actually the “answers” for your questions. In other words, the information in the columns should match the questions you write.

| “O” Observation | “I” Interpretation | “A” Application |
|--|--|--|
| Idea #1 - vs. 1 - observation - observation - observation vs. 2 - observation - observation Idea #2 - vs. 3 - observation etc. | Interpretation of observations here. - interpretation - interpretation | Application work here. - What should I do? - How do I do it? (give specific examples) |

(Seperate Sheet of Paper)

List of questions (taken from charting of text).

vs. # First Idea of Outlining/Chart

- 1. Observation question (Who is involved? What were they doing? etc.)
- 2. Observation question (What was their location?)
- 3. Survey question (What happened?)

(After a few observation questions ask one or two interpretation questions)

- 4. Interpretation question (Why did Jesus say...?)
- 5. Interpretation question (What id Paul mean when he said...?)

(After asking some Observation and Interpretation questions it is good to ask one or two Application questions. The Application questions should draw from the previous Observation and Interpretation questions' conclusions.)

- 6. Application question (The answer should be some action or list of actions to take. What can I do to be more like Jesus?)
- 7. Application question (What steps can I take?)

(Continue working from your chart throughout the text, idea by idea, verse by verse.)

DEVELOP:

Observation questions from your “O” column,
Interpretation questions from the “I” column, and
Application questions from the “A” column.

Question tips:

List your questions in sequence (1, 2, 3, etc.).
Work directly from your chart and the text.

The questions should be simple and clear,
leading people to the text for answers.

The questions should generate discussion;
which leads to a clear understanding of the text.

The questions should “flow” from
one to the next in a logical way.

Questions must be answerable
from the text (you should be able
to answer your own questions.)

Each question should
truly be “O”, “I”, or “A”
(refer to lesson 5).

MARK 6:45-52

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Questions Worksheet

Make a list of as many questions you feel are necessary to work through the text.
You may not need all 30 spaces.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Inductive Questions Worksheet

Make a list of as many questions you feel are necessary to work through the text.
You may not need all 30 spaces.

- 16. _____
- 17. _____
- 18. _____
- 19. _____
- 20. _____
- 21. _____
- 22. _____
- 23. _____
- 24. _____
- 25. _____
- 26. _____
- 27. _____
- 28. _____
- 29. _____
- 30. _____

Parables

A s s i g n m e n t # 6

- 1. Read the text (Mark 4:1-20) several times.**
- 2. Outline the text using a simple outline.**
- 3. Find the central point of emphasis of the parable.**
- 4. Chart the text using your outline. Be careful to interpret the parable using the text's explanation (if given).**
- 5. Formulate your own questions of observation, interpretation, and application.**

A parable is a short story that uses a physical or practical example from everyday life to illustrate a spiritual truth. Jesus often taught in parables so it is critical for us to understand this special kind of literary form. When Jesus taught with parables there was an additional purpose. He wanted to obscure the truth from the unresponsive, at the same time making it plain to the responsive.

Note that although historic events can be used as illustrations, a parable is a special story form designed specifically to teach a particular truth. Although by definition, a parable is not the record of a historic event, to be a parable it must be true to life.

THE FOUR BASIC GUIDELINES NEEDED FOR UNDERSTANDING PARABLES:

1. **Begin with the immediate context:**

- a) What is the occasion for telling the story? (Luke 15:1-2)
- b) What is the explanation of the parable's meaning?
(Luke 15:7 & 10, Matthew 24:44, 25:13)

2. **Identify the central point of emphasis:**

Look at the context of the passage before and after the parable.

- a) Luke 15:4 - *One lost sheep*
- b) Luke 15:8-10 - *One lost coin*

3. **Identify irrelevant details:**

Details that are not intended to teach truth (Luke 17:7-9)

- a) Luke 15:4 - *99 safe sheep*
- b) Luke 15:8 - *9 safe coins*

4. **Identify relevant details:**

Those intended to teach some truths will be reinforced in the central theme (story of the Prodigal Son – was lost but now found).

Adapted from Bernard Rams - Protestant Biblical Interpretation

MARK 4:1-20

1) And He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very great multitude gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2) And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching,

3) “Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;

4) “And it came about that as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

5) “And other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

6) “And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7) “And other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

8) “And other seeds fell into the good soil and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.”

9) And He was saying, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

10) And as soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.

11) And He was saying to them, “to you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables.

12) “in order that WHILE SEEING, THEY MAY SEE AND NOT PERCEIVE; AND WHILE HEARING, THEY MAY HEAR AND NOT UNDERSTAND LEST THEY RETURN AND BE FORGIVEN.”

13) And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? And how will you understand all the parables?

14) “The sower sows the word.

15) “And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

16) “And in a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy;

17) “And they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

18) “And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,

19) “And the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

20) “And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it, and bear fruit, thirty, and sixty, and a hundredfold.”

(From the New American Standard Version)

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

MARK 4:1-20

I. OUTLINE OF PARABLE

A. _____ Vs. _____

B. _____ Vs. _____

C. _____ Vs. _____

D. _____ Vs. _____

II. WHAT IS THE CENTRAL POINT OF EMPHASIS?

III. CHART OF PARABLE

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Parable - Questions Worksheet

Make a list of as many questions you feel are necessary to work through the text.
You may not need all 30 spaces.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____

Parable - Questions Worksheet

Make a list of as many questions you feel are necessary to work through the text.
You may not need all 30 spaces.

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

26. _____

27. _____

28. _____

29. _____

30. _____

31. _____

Prophecy

A s s i g n m e n t # 7

Prophecy can be found in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

- ☛ In a total of 23,210 Old Testament verses, 6,641 (or approximately 28%) contain predictive material.
- ☛ In a total of 7,914 New Testament verses, 1,711 (or approximately 21%) contain predictive material.
- ☛ In a total of 31,124 verses in the entire Bible, 8,352 (or approximately 27%) contain predictive material.

The fact that the Scriptures contain so much predictive material indicates something of the importance that God places upon prophecy.

- I. The first step for any Bible student is identifying the type of prophecy being studied.

There are two types of prophecy:

A. PREDICTIVE - foretelling the future; and

B. DIDACTIC - dealing with moral, ethical or theological truths.

Some prophecies have both mixed together. In Zechariah 1:1-15, it is didactic, but the following vision is predictive 1:16-21. Most of Zechariah 7 is didactic, but the preceding and following sections are predictive. Most prophecy though, is predictive.

II. Here are some guidelines for dealing with predictive prophecy:

A. LITERAL LANGUAGE. Take the passage in its most simple, direct and ordinary meaning, unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise. Predictive passages should be taken as literal, unless there are strong reasons to understand them in some figurative sense. Always begin by looking at the simple, straightforward meaning – what it says is what it means.

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE. Learn to identify figurative passages, but follow the ordinary rules of language in making distinction between literal and non-literal.

1. Some language must obviously be taken figurative. To do otherwise would be absurd. For instance, Joel 2:31 – the moon turns to blood; Isaiah 11:1 – a branch growing out of a human being; Zechariah 4:7 – a mountain being removed.

2. We call these illustrations “picture language” as we see in Daniel: a lion with wings, a leopard with four wings, etc.
3. The goal is to discern what the figure points to, because the thing being figuratively represented is to have a literal fulfillment in history.

Examples:

Daniel 7:17 – the four great beasts signified four kings who would arise from the earth; John 2:19 – Christ’s prediction of the temple, “destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up”, is explained as Christ referring to the temple of His body.

C. A WORD OF CAUTION:

Determining the type of prophecy in some prophetic passages is difficult.

Example: Amos 9:13-15. There is indication this passage is to be taken figuratively. But, we must begin with the assumption that a prediction is to be understood literally. However, a great deal of prophecy is indeed figurative and we must learn to distinguish between literal and figurative writing.

- D. Prophecy includes past, present and future. Often prophecy does not follow a sequential (successive) pattern. The passage may jump from one idea to another, or from one time period to another.

A s s i g n m e n t # 7

- 1. Read the text (Isaiah 1:1-31) several times.**
- 2. Outline the text (use a simple outline).**
- 3. Distinguish types of prophecy of each idea in the outline.**
- 4. Find the main theme of the prophecy.**
- 5. Chart the text using your outline.**
- 6. Formulate a sermon outline that you will use to exposit the text. Take the first idea and develop it verse by verse. State the first idea and begin explaining each verse that covers it. You might want to explain key words and phrases in the text that you observed, interpreted, and applied. Then move on to the next idea and develop it. Try to think of illustrations and stories to express the idea.**

ISAIAH 1:1-31

1) The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2) Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me;

3) the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

4) Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward.

5) Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints.

6) From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.

7) Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8) So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9) Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah.

10) Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah:

11) "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats.

12) "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts?

13) Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.

14) Your New Moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.

15) When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

16) “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,

17) learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18) “Come now, and let us reason together,” say the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19) If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;

20) but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword;” for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

21) How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.

22) Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water.

23) Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; Everyone loves bribes, and follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them.

24) Therefore the Lord says, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, “Ah I will rid Myself of My adversaries, and take

vengeance on My enemies.

25) I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy.

26) I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”

27) Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness.

28) The destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

29) For they shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees which you have desired; and you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens which you have chosen.

30) For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades, and as a garden that has no water.

31) The strong shall be as tinder, and the work of it as a spark; both will burn together, and no one shall quench them.

(From the New King James Version)

EXAMPLE

Expository Message Outline

(using Psalm 1 as an example)

☛ **INTRODUCTION** – to get the attention of your listeners and provide direction for your message.

- 1) Give some brief background of the text... setting, time, etc.
- 2) State the overall theme of the text... using an illustration to relate it to present day life/situations.

Example:

“This is a Psalm of instruction written by an unknown Psalmist concerning the two ways to life... obviously set before us as a choice... that we may take the right way which leads to happiness... etc.

☛ **BODY** – the “heart” of the message based on your outline of the text... using the “main ideas” (sections of your text outline) as your “main points”. Use “highlights” of one or two verses in each section of the outline to emphasize your main idea – taken from the “observation” and “interpretation” columns of your chart. Use illustrations and examples to clarify your point and make it relevant to the main theme. See example below (refer to Psalm 1 answer sheet).

- I. The Blessed Man – vs. 1-3: We see in these verses the description of a godly man (what he is, what he does and what he becomes). In vs. 1, He is a “blessed man”, one who experiences true happiness (inner, spiritual way), “does not walk... nor stand... nor sit...” avoids the

companionship of evildoers (a definite illustration of Hebrew parallelism) and instead, “delights in the Word of God.” “He is like a tree planted by streams of water,” giving us a picture of the kind of nourishment and prosperity God gives his people.

II. The Wicked Man – vs. 4-6: “The Wicked are not so...” a description of the ungodly is being shown in vs. 4. They do not delight in the law of the Lord. Whereas the righteous are like valuable fruit trees, they are like chaff which the wind drives away, no worth at all in God’s account. In vs. 5-6, we read the fate of the ungodly and the different future awaiting the righteous.

☛ **CONCLUSION:** Here we want to draw our message to a close by drawing everything together in the main theme and teaching with a general application using an example or illustration to state how to put into action what was shared and learned in the message.

Example:

“May we possess a desire for the Word of God, the blessings that the righteous man receives should encourage us to seek God, share His Word with the lost, etc.

NOTE: All of the main ideas or main points, verse “highlights”, examples and illustrations should relate back to the main theme – emphasizing it, making it easier to see and understand.

Isaiah 1

Theme _____

| <u>OUTLINE</u> | | <u>TYPE OF PROPHECY</u> |
|----------------|-------|-------------------------|
| I. | _____ | Vs. _____ |
| II. | _____ | Vs. _____ |
| III. | _____ | Vs. _____ |
| IV. | _____ | Vs. _____ |
| V. | _____ | Vs. _____ |
| VI. | _____ | Vs. _____ |
| VII. | _____ | Vs. _____ |

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Sermon Outline

Using your outline and charting, you are now ready to prepare your sermon outline.

Title: _____

Book: _____ Chapter & Verse: _____

I. Introduction to text.

i.e. Possibly start by telling a story, poem, humor, joke to set the stage for the text. Should coordinate with the introduction verses of your text your speaking on.

II. Body of the Message

i.e. Using your outline and charting, work through the text expositional verse by verse. Follow your outline, and use the information from your chart to explain your text.

PLEASE NOTE: *Not every observation will require an interpretation or application.*

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

(Repeat for each verse or group of verses if necessary)

Body (Cont'd)

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Narrative Text

1. Read the text (John 13:1-20) several times.
2. Answer the Inductive questions on page 101-103.

John 13:1-20

- 1) Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.
- 2) And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,
- 3) Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,
- 4) rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.
- 5) After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.
- 6) Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"
- 7) Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."
- 8) Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."
- 9) Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"
- 10) Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

11) For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.”

12) So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you?”

13) “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.

14) “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15) “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

16) “Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

17) “If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

18) “I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'

19) “Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.

20) “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT # 1

ASSIGNMENT LEGEND

O - Observation

I - Interpretation

A - Application

INDUCTIVE QUESTIONS

O 1. Who are the people involved in the story?

O 2. What event was about to happen?

I 3. What is the Feast of the Passover?

O 4. Describe in your own words the events of the Passage.

O 5. What did Jesus know about Himself mentioned in vs. 1?

I 6. How much did Jesus love His disciples?

I 7. Was Judas Iscariot included in this love?

I 8. How could Jesus love someone who was about to betray him?

O 9. List facts of what Jesus knows about Himself in vs. 3.

I 10. Why did Jesus wash the disciples' feet?

I 11. Whose job is it normally to wash feet?

O 12. What is Peter's response to Jesus about foot washing?

I 13. Why does Peter not want Jesus to wash his feet?

O 14. How did Peter respond to Jesus' answer in vs. 9?

I 15. Explain what Jesus meant in vs. 10.

A 16. How would you answer Jesus' question in vs. 12?

I 17. Why does Jesus say we should wash one another's feet?

I 18. What did Jesus mean by His statement in vs. 16?

I 19. Why is it not enough to just know things, (see vs. 17)?

I 20. Who is Jesus talking about in vs. 18?

I 21. Please interpret vs. 20.

A 22a. Please make application of the main teaching in this message.

A 22b. What specific things can you do?

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT # 2

1. Read the text (Philemon) several times.
2. Outline the text using the Epistle Outline form
(as illustrated on page 31).
3. Chart the text (as illustrated on page 34).

Philemon

- 1) Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer.
- 2) to the beloved Apphia, Archippus or fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:
- 3) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4) I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers,
- 5) hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,
- 6) that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.
- 7) For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.
- 8) Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting,
- 9) yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you - being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ -
- 10) I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains,
- 11) who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.
- 12) I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart,
- 13) whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.

- 14) But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.
- 15) For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever,
- 16) No longer as a slave but more than a slave - a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
- 17) If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me.
- 18) But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.
- 19) I, Paul, am writing with my own hand, I will repay - not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides.
- 20) Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.
- 21) Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.
- 22) But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.
- 23) Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,
- 24) as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.
- 25) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Amen.

(From the New International Version)

Inductive Bible Study

OUTLINE: _____

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

ISAIAH 55 - Prophecy

- 1. Read the text (Isaiah 55) several times.**
- 2. Outline the text (use a simple outline).**
- 3. Distinguish the types of prophecy in each idea of the outline.**
- 4. Find the main theme of the prophecy.**
- 5. Chart the text using your outline.**
- 6. Formulate a sermon outline that you will use to exposit the text. Take the first idea and develop it verse by verse. State the first idea and begin explaining each verse that covers it. You might want to explain key words and phrases in the text that you observed, interpreted, and applied. Then move on to the next idea and develop it. Try to think of illustrations and stories to express the idea. (See example on page 88-89)**

ISAIAH 55

1) “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

2) Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

3) Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

4) See I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples.

5) Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy one of Israel for he has endowed you with splendor.”

6) Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

7) Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD and he will have mercy on him, and to

our God, for he will freely pardon.

8) “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.

9) “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10) As the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

11) So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

12) You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

13) Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed.”

(From the New International Version)

I. THEME:

SIMPLE OUTLINE FORM

II. OUTLINE:

1. Vs. _____

2. Vs. _____

III. CHART:

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Inductive Bible Study

| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | |

Sermon Outline

Using your outline and charting, you are now ready to prepare your sermon outline.

Title: _____

Book: _____ Chapter & Verse: _____

I. Introduction to text.

i.e. Possibly start by telling a story, poem, humor, joke to set the stage for the text. Should coordinate with the introduction verses of your text your speaking on.

II. Body of the Message

i.e. Using your outline and charting, work through the text expositional verse by verse. Follow your outline, and use the information from your chart to explain your text.

PLEASE NOTE: *Not every observation will require an interpretation or application.*

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

(Repeat for each verse or group of verses if necessary)

Inductive Bible Study

Body (Cont'd)

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Verse(s) #: _____

O _____

I _____

A _____

Appendix

HOW TO START AND LEAD A BIBLE STUDY

Starting a Bible study can be a very enriching experience for the leader and the participants. If you have never led a group before, it might be wise to start small and build slowly. Have just a few studies at first, like one every week for a month. This will enable you to learn as you go and continue improving. If you start a long series, people might lose interest and quit coming before you have developed sufficiently, and this can lead to discouragement.

Who Should I Invite?

Before you invite anyone, spend time in prayer. You must be convinced that God is preparing some people who are hungry for His Word. The truth of the matter is, He has been preparing some people even before you thought of having a study! As you pray, He will bring certain people across your path that you know should be invited. Start with just a few people, two or three is all you need. As you develop, the group can grow, but it is important to start small.

How Much Time Is Needed?

Experienced Bible study leaders have found that anything which goes over one hour is too long. Some participants will lose interest and begin to drop out if the study is consistently too long. Choose a time to meet that is good for everyone, and keep to a comfortable time-table. Sometimes you will go longer, but be sensitive to the group.

How Do I Prepare?

Good Bible studies never “just happen” by accident - they are carefully prepared. First, allow God to speak to your heart as you study. Let His Word sink deep inside and minister to you. Second, give yourself enough time for serious study so that you feel comfortable with the text and can lead the group effectively. If you rush through your study time, the study will probably lack the impact God intends for it. When you are thoroughly prepared and have been really gripped by God's truth it is more likely that your group will experience this too.

After reading the text several times, begin by using an outline to break apart the ideas. Look for where paragraphs begin and end. Ask yourself if this is a complete thought, or is it carried on in the next paragraph. What is the idea here?

After outlining the text, begin charting all your observations, interpretations, and applications. Once this is accomplished, you are ready to formulate questions. Ask questions that draw the main idea out of each section of the text. Your questions should follow the order in which the text is written. Remember, we are studying through a text in a methodical, systematic way.

How Do I Lead?

Once you have developed the questions from the text, you are ready to lead your group in the study. Remember never answer your own questions. If the group does not understand the question, then rephrase it. Always draw the group back to the text for the answers.

Remember to approach the Scriptures as you would a text book, one that we open to learn from. As much as possible, let the text speak for itself.

Evaluating Your Leadership

After a study, you might want to go through this checklist on your own, or invite another Christian in your study group to consider it with you. Before you begin, why not thank God for specific answers to prayer in the study you just led. However you think the study went, you can thank Him that He can use His Word significantly with each person who was there.

YOUR PREPARATION

1. Do you think you took adequate time in preparation?
2. Were you able to get a firm hold on the main teachings. Did you let the teaching get a hold of you?
3. Your preparation in prayer: Do you want to make changes in what you pray for as you get ready for the next study?

YOUR ATTITUDE

1. Did you expect God to work in the study?
2. Were you able to show interest in individuals so they know that they are welcome, and so that someone with a question or problem would want to talk with you?
3. Were you willing to learn from others in the group?

THE ATMOSPHERE

1. Was it informal and natural?
2. In general, did people seem free to contribute?
3. In what ways were you able to support people and encourage their participation?

THE TIMING

1. If you were to lead a study in this passage again, would you change the pace of it?
2. Were you able to start and end as planned?

THE DISCUSSION

1. List the things you learned about leading a discussion. Then consider:
 - a. Did your group understand the guidelines for discussion?
 - b. Did the group get into the text to find the answers?
 - c. Were you able to refrain from answering your own questions? (But did you share now and then, as a member of the group?)
 - d. Did you rephrase questions when needed?

- e. Were you able to encourage more than one reply to most questions?
- f. Is there anything you would like to ask the Lord to do in individuals which would help participation?
- g. Is there someone you might help with participation? Talk with them personally.

THE PURPOSE

1. Did the discussion point up major ideas in the passage? Were these spelled out so people could take them into their thinking and actions?
2. Were leading ideas tied together at the close to give a sense of the whole?
3. Are you satisfied that the study reached its goal - did some people seem to be taking hold of the truths for themselves?

SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ☛ Expect the text to answer questions that will come up, rather than the leader.
- ☛ Try to stay in the passage under consideration. There are occasions where background information is needed, but learn to work with the immediate context.
- ☛ Stay on the point of discussion - It is easy to detour and miss the point.
- ☛ It is important for each person to contribute for the group's learning. Those who can talk more freely need to be considerate of the quiet person and provide opportunity for that person to contribute.
- ☛ When new people enter the group, it might be helpful to review the guidelines again.

When asking questions, be sure to give the group time to find the information in the text. Sometimes there will seem to be a long period of silence after a question. Be careful not to rush, because they will be searching the text for an answer.

Many questions will generate more than one response, so feel free to wait for more responses from the group. After the first response, you can encourage additional comments by saying, “That's helpful”, or “Good insight”, “Does anyone see anything else?”

Remember that your discussion might develop slowly the first few times you meet, but it will improve as everyone gets acquainted and accustomed to the format. For some, it might be the first time they ever discussed the Bible in this manner.

Do not worry if some contributions are somewhat strange or different. Remember, God is working and the leader is not responsible to straighten out everyone's ideas. Your responsibility is to get everyone in the Word and let the Word straighten them out! Some people have a tendency to be problem-raisers. Ask them to hold their questions until after the discussion when you can talk to them personally. However, be sure to talk to them later.

Sometimes, during the course of the discussion, a participant will unexpectedly bring up the answer to a question you have not yet asked. In this situation, discuss the issue at the time it is brought up by the class. For emphasis, you can still mention the question in proper order on your teaching outline and refer back to the earlier comments and discussion of the subject.

There are times when a discussion gets very involved, and you suddenly realize everyone is off the subject and the time is gone. You want good discussions, but you also want to allow God to speak through the passage. If you get only half the passage, the group might get only half the point. Learn to bring the group back when they get off the subject, and move on to the next question.

After each of your studies, strengthen your leadership by going over the evaluation questions for leaders which have been provided in this material on pages 127-129.

God can work through a Bible study which has only a few people in it, or through a larger group. However, experience shows that when a group grows beyond 7 or 8, discussion will not be as fruitful and something is lost. If your goal is to have open, honest discussions in God's Word, it is best to keep the group small. If a group grows beyond a comfortable size consider dividing into two smaller groups and teaching someone else to lead the other group.

Small groups can be a real key to church growth, both spiritually and physically.

Taken From "Bible and Life" Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship

SMALL GROUP DYNAMICS

Understanding group dynamics is critical for every group leader. Often groups will start and meet with great excitement, but soon they fail. Why does this happen? There can be many reasons, such as an insensitive leader, personality clashes within the group, or no realistic plan.

If a group fails, there is always a reason. However, failure does not have to happen if attention is given to a few basic principles of group dynamics. Some groups function without giving a thought to what makes a group work. They survive because they are unconsciously practicing correct principles of group dynamics.

OBJECTIVE VS. SUBJECTIVE

Groups function on two basic levels: **objective and subjective**. Unless these two complement each other, the leader will have trouble.

The objective side of the group is defined by the task at hand, the Bible study, the prayer meeting, the board meeting, choir, etc.

The subjective side relates to the inter-group relationships, as well as the individual person feeling part of the group. Groups are made up of people that have emotions, prejudices, needs, and private goals.

Every person in the group will ask themselves silently, “What is my position in this group? Will people accept my views? How can I get this group to see I’m brilliant, kind, spiritual, or whatever you consider attributes that make you worthy of respect? Will you accept me if I come across different?” Until a person finds answers to these questions, they’re not really free to get on with the task (Bible study, prayer, etc.).

This subjective level is where the real problems occur, and we need to pay close attention to it.

Have you ever noticed how some groups never accomplish anything? They start out with Isaiah 1, but only get through the first two verses, or they plan a service, but a half hour later have only decided to invite the regular worship leader. Instead of getting on with task, members will argue, joke around, everyone talks at once, or no one talks at all!

Every group must pay attention to both objective and subjective sides. Groups who concentrate blindly on the task are in great danger. Sooner or later, the group relationship will frustrate the accomplishment of the objective goal.

As a leader, you need to learn how to deal with group tensions and difficulties. Learn to quickly detect problems on the subjective level. Try to sense feelings, because they are rarely shared verbally in a group. People will not say, "I am bored with this Bible study," rather, they stop participating, slump into a chair or stare out the window. They will be communicating in some way other than through words. Be assured, the sleeper is saying something! Even words can contradict our feelings. I can be angry, with a red face, and insist that I am not angry. People communicate in all sorts of ways, so we must learn to become sensitive to the meanings of the unspoken communications.

Perhaps the surest way to know what is going on in the group is to ask yourself a question: "What am I feeling right now?" If I am upset, irritated or defensive, then something is wrong. If the problem is apparent, then bring it out into the open and deal with it. "I sense some of you are upset. Would you like to talk about it?" Once the subjective feelings are expressed, it can become a positive rather than a destructive experience for the group. It is not uncommon for the most profitable times in a group to take place when attention is shifted away from the objective (Bible study, etc.) to the subjective.

A young lady was an active member in a small group Bible study. She freely shared in each meeting. One day she came and sat silent through half the study. The leader noticed her silence and stopped the study to find out what was wrong with her. The young lady burst into tears and shared how her mother was seriously ill. The group immediately joined in prayer for the

mother and ministered to the lady. The group changed from an academic study to a caring, loving group. Out of such situations which seem potentially disruptive, we learn deeply valuable lessons about ourselves, relationships, conflict, love, forgiveness, and honesty. In other words, we learn in experience the meaning of the words we have often spoken about from Scripture.

PATTERNS OF INTERACTION

When in groups, people act in certain predictable ways. Some of the ways they act are helpful and others hinder. Here are the types:

- ☛ **Over-talkative** – always has something to say about everything
- ☛ **Shy person** – rarely will say anything
- ☛ **Observer** – watches everything, but does not participate
- ☛ **Comic** – always has something funny to say
- ☛ **Side-tracker** – well-informed member who brings in irrelevant contributions
- ☛ **Argumentative** – has strong opinions and does not easily give up his ideas
- ☛ **Hidden agenda** – has something else on his mind but does not express it

DEALING WITH DIFFERENT TYPES

Over-talkative

Take this person aside and talk with him personally without confronting or embarrassing him. “Paul, I need your help with our group in getting them to talk more. I really appreciate the ideas you share, but help me get the rest of the group involved. When I ask a question, don’t try to be the first to answer it. Let’s encourage the others to join in and share their thoughts.”

Shy

Using their first names, address a direct question to that person. This will often begin to get them involved. Make positive comments about their answer, like: “That’s a good observation”, or, “Good insight!”

Observer

Try to draw this person in with a direct question. Sometimes people observe because they are not sure if the group will accept them. Therefore, draw them in with gentleness and acceptance.

Comic

This person can be very helpful to a group to ease tensions and get people more relaxed. Yet, sometimes the humor is badly timed. If this becomes a problem, take the person aside and express your appreciation of their gift of humor. But, help them to see they must be sensitive with the use of it.

Side-tracker

This kind of person can be a real problem to a group if it is not skillfully dealt with. Learn to bring this person back to the text and topic. You might make a comment such as, “That’s an interesting topic. Maybe we can talk more about it another time.” Without giving the person any time to respond, lead the group back into the text with another question.

Argumentative

If a person is a continual problem, take him aside and talk to him. Value his ideas, but stress the importance of allowing other group members to express differing opinions without him feeling it is necessary to continually challenge other ideas through argument. If the leader allows this type of person to continue, the group will stop sharing because of fear of being challenged. If this person starts an argument, or any two members have a disagreement that develops into an argument, it is important that the leader takes control of the situation. Recognize the value of both ideas, and share that others also have strong opinions about these issues. Tell them to hold their argument and go on with the study.

Hidden Agenda

If you sense a person is hindering the study then it is important to deal with whatever is bothering that individual. Before you take any action pray silently for them. Sometimes this is all that needs to be done. However, if you find it necessary to minister to that person during the group time a statement and a question can be helpful, such as: “June, you are very quiet tonight. Is something wrong?” Or, “You seem to be very far away tonight, is there something we can pray about with you?”

GROUP ATMOSPHERE

The atmosphere of any group is very important. If people feel warmth, love, and acceptance, the group will be healthy. With the right atmosphere, the group will probably avoid severe problems or disruptive behavior.

Each person in the group must feel acceptance and a non-judgmental attitude before they will be free to participate. Problems often enter in when an individual considers himself to have “arrived” spiritually, or have special insight into God’s will which few others share. When this happens, we cannot help but stand in judgement of others. When we begin to see ourselves as we really are (sinful, fallen people who are nevertheless loved by God), then we not only are able to drop our judgmental natures, but we can also become honest.

Author and Source Unknown

The Case for Expository Preaching

BY EARL PALMER

It is a great privilege to be at this conference. I want to share with you, from my own experience as a pastor, what I believe to be the importance of Bible study and expository preaching in the church. This isn't really a sermon, though I do have a text. It's a wonderful text and I am going to save it until the end. What I would like to do is make the case for expository preaching.

I want to begin by being autobiographical, to tell you something about my own personal journey. I think it is important for you to understand how my own sense of priorities was set in the ministry that I now have at the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, and the ministries that I had at Union Church in Manila and the University Presbyterian Church in Seattle prior to that. Then you can understand not only the theological perspectives, but also my own theological formation, which is so fundamental to a person's ministry.

I am a third-generation Californian and I was brought up near Mount Shasta. My family was wonderful, free-wheeling, enthusiastic, encouraging, but not particularly religious. I stopped attending church toward the end of my high school years, and continued to refrain from attending during my first two years at the University of California at Berkeley. It just was not part of my life.

During my sophomore year at California I lived in Barrington Hall, which was then and still is an outlandish place. We had the reputation of being the only dormitory in America that was on the House Un-American Activities Committee list as an un-American activity. About 250 men lived in Barrington Hall at that time, and I eventually

became president of the hall. I drove by Barrington the other day; it's still there. To give you a little of the present flavor, there is graffiti all over it right now because there is a lot of protesting going on in Berkeley. One piece of graffiti that I thought was symbolic of Barrington Hall was right over the front door, written in big, black, spray-painted letters: "Go Away!"

In the middle of my sophomore year I was invited by a friend to go to a Bible study group. This little group was meeting once a week in a student's room and they were studying a book from the New Testament; it was that simple. They met for about an hour to have a quasi-inductive time of shared discussion on a New Testament book. I can still remember my first impression when I attended that Bible study group.

I was shocked to see young men my own age, young adults, reading the New Testament through adult eyes and talking about it seriously. It was a stunning experience.

I did not have a Bible at that time, so I had to look on with somebody else. I was so impressed that I said, "I want to keep coming to this Bible study group." So I went out that week and bought a Bible. We had Bibles at home, of course, but I did not have one at Berkeley with me. Not knowing the different translations, I ended up buying the wrong one, a King James. The following week when I went back to the study group, they said, "We're not using that Bible; we're using the RSV." I had to go back out and buy another Bible. There I was, not even a Christian yet, and I had already bought two Bibles in one week. I got an RSV and began to regularly attend that little group.

I started to attend the college group at the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley that spring, and that summer I went to a conference at Lake Tahoe where the two speakers were Edward John Carnell, from this Seminary, and Robert Boyd Munger. I will always remember the turning point in my life when, at that conference, Bob Munger posed the issue. He said, “When you are convinced of the trustworthiness of Jesus Christ so that you are willing to trust in his trustworthiness, then you are ready to become a Christian.” He said it to the

“If I can get people to consider the text seriously, it will do its own convincing.”

group as a whole, not me in particular, yet in a way he did say those words to me. I can remember going down to the lake and deciding that I wanted to trust in the trustworthiness of Jesus Christ.

This took place at the beginning of my junior year. When I returned to Berkeley, I rose fast. I had become more involved in the Barrington Bible study group and as already mentioned, finally became president of Barrington Hall, as well as president of the college group at First Presbyterian. During this same time I was also becoming more active in that small Bible study group.

We saw amazing things happen toward the end of my senior year at Cal. We saw men in that hall, almost one a week toward the end, becoming Christians. It just happened, one way or another. They were simply coming out of the woodwork, and the Lord honored that ministry.

In the middle of my senior year, although I was pre-law/political science major, I was so turned on by what was happening in that Bible study group and by having chances to witness as a Christian that I said to my pastor, Bob Munger, “You know, this is what really turns me on. I wonder if I should be a minister.” He replied, “Why don’t you apply at Princeton and see?” So I applied to Princeton Seminary. I am sure that I was the rawest, greenest recruit they ever had.

First Church-Berkeley arranged for me to have Lynn Bolick, a staunch Calvinist, as my roommate. He helped me a great deal in my first year at Princeton. Others who were worried sick that I would be lost to liberalism made sure that I went to a Navigator conference that fall at Star Ranch, before I went to Princeton. Then, when I went to Princeton, I had what was for me a renaissance experience. I made all kinds of discoveries that were theologically important to me; I also discovered John A. MacKay, the greatest preacher that I had ever heard. I had three great years at Princeton and then went into my ministry. But what had first happened to me at Barrington Hall in Berkeley left an indelible mark.

At Princeton in those days we were all supposed to go out in gospel teams, which I despised. It wasn’t my thing to out to churches and read the scriptures in worship services, and then talk to the youth and be farmed out to families for lunch. We were representing the Seminary and we were doing good, of course, more or less. I did that about four times before I sort of dropped out of the program; but the next-to-last time I went out, it was to Jenkintown outside of Philadelphia, and I had lunch with the Kelly family. There was a young son in that family named Glen, a freshman at Princeton University, who happened to be home at the time. Talk about divine appointments – I really believe in them.

I said, "Oh, you're from Princeton University. I'm from Princeton Seminary. How interesting. We ought to get together up there." He said, "Great." So the next week we got together and I told him, "You know, Glen, when I was at Berkeley I got involved with a small Bible study group and it really meant a lot to me. I don't have one of those here at Princeton. Do you think you guys might be interested in one?" He said, "I'll ask my roommate." So that began a little Bible study group at Princeton.

I ended up involved with about seven of those groups at one time, because different groups began to ask me to help them out. That was my ministry all through my three years at Princeton. The groups met at either 10 p.m., 6 a.m. or 4:30 p.m. They were always about one hour long and I used exactly the same format that we used at Berkeley, a simple quasi-inductive Bible study looking at different books in the New Testament. Some weeks the apostle Paul won and some weeks he lost. But I didn't worry about that. I simply tried to look at the text with the other students and to understand what was in the text. What I discovered here was the same thing that I had discovered at Barrington. Given time, if I could get somebody to look at the text, it would sooner or later win their respect.

Investigative Bible study groups is what I called them. I don't like the term "Evangelistic study groups." Once, when I was talking to some InterVarsity student leaders, I said, "Don't call your Bible study groups 'Evangelistic Bible study groups', let's call them 'Investigative Bible study groups'." Why carry special baggage to the Bible study group? Let's study the text because it deserves to be studied and let God do the evangelizing if He chooses. Today in Northern California, InterVarsity calls those Bible study groups Investigative Bible study groups.

I saw several young men at Princeton become Christians in those Bible study groups. I never put any pressure on them or made any great move to try to get them to become Christians; it just happened. This discovery shaped my whole style of ministry in a very basic way, as well as my theological method. I can honestly tell you that my ministry in Seattle, in Manila and in Berkeley has really been founded upon this basic premise: if I can get people to consider the text seriously, it will do its own convincing. That principle took much pressure off me, and I did not have to try to be clever or have elaborate programs. All I needed to do was to get people to consider the text, although it sometimes takes a little skill to get people to do that. I became convinced that the best theology is always a theology that begins with the text. It is not taking the world-questions and then trying to see if you can find something in the Bible to speak to the world, but rather drawing your ethics from the text and then confronting the world with them.

In Helmut Thielecke's remarkable two-volume work, *Theological Ethics*, he draws the distinction between the theologies of Paul Tillich and Karl Barth, and he uses this very basic approach to contrast the two theological methods. He points out that Paul Tillich, whose main concern was correlation, begins with the categories of the world. That is why his theology is basically existential and speculative. He begins with the categories of the world, and then asks questions of existence and moves toward their theological implications. Thielecke points out that in contrast, Karl Barth begins with the text and moves toward the world to see where the collision occurs. He uses as an example of his theological modeling, the Barmen Declaration of 1934 written by Karl Barth, Martin Niemoller and Wilhelm Niemoller. It is interesting to note that each of the seven articles of the Barmen Declaration begins with a text and moves from the text toward the world. For example, Article 1

begins with John 14: "I am the Way, the truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by me." Then comes the Article: Jesus Christ is the one word we have to obey, both in life and death, and then the negation: "We reject the false doctrine that there are other words with equal authority we have to hear and obey apart from this one word, Jesus Christ." Notice that Barth started with the text, moved toward the Nazi Germany of 1934, and then saw the collision. He did not start with the existential setting and then try to speculate possible correlations. In other words, he began as a Biblical theologian. Barth as the theologian took the same journey: he began with his Romanbrief, his commentary on Romans, then went on to systematic theology.

Theologically and ethically I became convinced from my own experience with the Bible study groups, and then my own theological formation took that Biblical/theological direction. I think that is why I would rather be an angular Biblical theologian than a smoothly synchronized systematic theologian.

I became convinced that the best evangelism would grow out of the uncomplicated low-agenda setting found in investigative Bible study, where you are almost unconscious of the fact that you are evangelizing. My whole philosophy of evangelism is a thousand single steps which happen in friendship, in natural settings. Most of the people in Berkeley who are won to Christ are from small study groups, investigative Bible study groups, prayer groups, relationships in which people get a chance to observe Christians thinking and loving, to observe Christians in their day-to-day lives. Then their curiosity is piqued, they inquire and they become Christians.

Finally, I became convinced that the most meaningful preaching and teaching over the long

haul would be Biblical exposition. I guess I owe you a definition of Biblical exposition. I have slightly refined my definition from the first time I wrote it down, which was in an article for Fuller's Theology, News and Notes. That was my first printed article concerning my feelings on that subject. In that article I offered a definition of Biblical preach-ing, which is essentially this: Biblical preaching, as I see it, is the task of enabling a text in the Old or New Testament to make its own point within the whole witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to affirm that message with persuasiveness and urgency to people in the language of today. There is a theological side to preaching of course. Preaching is not simply saying what the text says; you also have to say what the text means.

As I see it, this involves for the pastor or teacher a journey from the text understood to the discipleship implications affirmed. That is Biblical preaching, and I am convinced that it is what the church needs. I am convinced that it is the most persuasive, evangel-istically and ethically. I am very concerned about relevant ethical preaching, but I really believe that the best ethical preaching is that which comes out of the text.

I am going to end on a positive note, but let me be negative for a moment. Let me reflect on what I will call the crisis in contemporary preach-ing. It seems to me that there is a crisis in preaching and teaching in the church today. I am not just talking here about the crisis of theological liberalism or fundamentalism. It is a crisis through the whole of the church. It is a crisis in preaching. I think that is one of the reasons why the Committee on Biblical Exposition has been formed. I think there are two main forms of this crisis. The first form is the crisis of what I am going to describe as the thematic domination of preaching. I think that most preaching in the church today is thematic.

What I mean is that the source of the proclamation comes from the great themes of our faith that are explained and illustrated by the teacher for the listeners, but the listeners do not watch and discover these themes as they come to the surface of a text that is uncovered. They just hear it told by an authority figure, by the preacher or teacher who says, "This is what we believe." They do not see where it comes from, nor do they discover it for themselves. They are simply told, and that is the thematic domination of preaching. The pastor says, "God loves you." They do not find it in the text. They do not get to see it come out of the text; they are simply told it.

I am trying to be as charitable as I can with the modern preaching dilemma as I see it, but the gospel message that is being preached by far too many preachers comes from three main sources.

(1) First is the concern of the pastor and teacher. In other words, the burden of the Lord that the pastor feels is the source of the message: it is what I feel based on my own walk with the Lord.

(2) The second source for the preaching message is based on the experience of the pastor. I am a little worried about this new fascination in the seminaries of America about story/ narrative preaching, where you tell your story and it is supposed to convey the gospel to somebody else. This means that the pastor's experiences, his or her walk with the Lord this week, now become the source of the message. The better storyteller you are, the more autographs you are going to be asked for. Remember that line from the play *Mass Appeal*? It's where Father Tim says to Mark, the young seminarian, who was not too impressed with Father Tim's sermon. "You didn't like my sermon, did you?" And Mark says, "No, I didn't." So Father Tim says, "Don't you know they ask for auto-graphs after I preach? They ask for

Autographs!" Father Tim is the masterful storyteller. His message comes from his walk during the week.

(3) The third source, and this is probably the most dangerous of all, is what I call a sense of general Christian truth that everyone is supposed to know, but no one actually discovers. We all know wonderful truths, but that is how things become blurred in civic religion: The young Christian in particular does not know where they are found.

I repeat: the source of the message is threefold in the thematic domination of preaching. First is the pastor's own burden, and I thank God for that burden. Many times the burden is from the Holy Spirit, I don't doubt that. Second is the pastor's experience, and the third is what I call a general sense of Christian truth that everyone is supposed to know.

All of this causes a subtle shift away from the gospel "extra nos" to the gospel "intra nos", and a theological disaster begins to take shape. Luther's great concern was for the gospel "extra nos" – the gospel outside of us, with its own integrity. It can be studied; it can be examined. It is a historical faith. God did speak and can be understood. But when that becomes blurred, the gospel becomes captive to my experience. Let me give you an example of this.

A couple years ago, my family and I were on a trip and unable to go to church, so we listened to a pastor preaching on the radio. He announced that he was going to preach on the theology of hope, using as his text a passage from Romans 8. That excited me because I love that book, especially the eighth chapter. The text he read was about the whole creative order being consigned to futility. In other words, it was consigned to boundaries not by its own decision, but by the decision of God. You

would expect the text to say that he consigned it to boundaries “in judgement,” but Paul surprises his readers. The actual words are that he consigned it to boundaries “in hope”. That is where the word “hope” appears. This pastor read that text at the begin-ning of his sermon and I can honestly say that it was the most moving reading of a text I have ever heard. It was magnificently read and I was glued to the radio when the sermon began.

The pastor preached his sermon on hope, but what took place was a series of very moving anecdotes from his own life. He told about various incidents in his life and things he had observed. One of them was so moving it brought me to tears; I am a very emotional person. Several other incidents were shared and then the sermon closed in prayer.

I did not want to say much, but I was terribly disappointed. Not once during the entire sermon did he make any reference to that text so magnificently read from Romans. Not once during the sermon was the text allowed to say anything. In no way did it shed any light on the sermon. The sermon was instead a narrative of his own experiences in which he learned hope in life.

My daughter Anne asked me, “Dad, what did you think of that sermon?” I wanted to say something positive because, after all, we clergy-men have got to stick together. I said, “Well, I’ll tell you one thing, Anne. I was brought to tears with one of those illustrations.” And that was the truth. But that did not satisfy my daughter, who said, “You know, Dad. I didn’t like that sermon.” Her answer when I asked why was something that I hope I never forget. “What was wrong with that sermon, it seemed to me, was that the pastor said, ‘You should have hope because I have hope.’ And that was his message. That’s not the gospel.” She has been in too many Bible study groups. She has been exposed to two years of Paul Byer’s manuscript

study of Mark, and also his manuscript study of Habakkuk, so Anne was simply not ready to take that, because she was used to seeing the gospel come out of the text.

She was also bothered because the text never had a

“Preaching is not simply saying what the text says: you also have to say what the text means.”

chance to speak. Here is the greatest text on hope in all of Paul’s writings and not once was Paul allowed to say a word. Instead, there was only a series of moving stories. Believe me, the autographs would be asked for that day. Father Tim could not do any better. That was story telling at its best.

The tragedy of the sermon is not the tragedy of orthodoxy, because it was an orthodox sermon. There wasn’t a single thing, theologically, that I would disagree with, and, after all, isn’t that the main test? The tragedy of the sermon is that the people who heard it did not get a chance to see and discover the hope rooted in the text, in the gospel. They only heard about it in the pastor’s experience.

I have to ask you a huge question. If you have an experience this week, maybe an experience with the Holy Spirit, perhaps a dream or a vision, will you preach that on Sunday?

Not if you are in the Reformed tradi-tion, you won’t. For your experiences you are grateful, but

you preach the gospel. The gospel and your experiences are two different things. Your experiences may bear witness to the gospel, and as preachers we should use such experiences as illustrations to help make connections between us and the people. That is what illustrations are for, and what the stories from your life are for. But they are not the message. If the illustration becomes the message, it is no longer a connector that binds the people to the text. As a matter of fact, it deflects the people from the text. What about the times when you don't have hope, or

sermon without, at the end, rattling off as cliché's the most precious truths of the Christian faith. This seems to occur because they feel that they have to bring the people to a decision. So a pastor will give a perfectly good sermon from the text, giving the text a chance to speak. Then he or she gets the last five minutes of the sermon and along comes a flood of automatic phrases that are not going through his or her mind nor through the listeners' minds. No, by that time the people are putting their papers away; they know that they and the sermon are coming in for a landing.

“The Gospel and your experience are two different things.”

“The task of preaching is to make the point and make it stick.”

when you don't care? Experience, illustrations, stories from one's life – they are not enough.

Thank God for Mother Teresa, but she is not the gospel. Her great love seen in Calcutta is not the good news. It is a wonderful witness to the good news, but the good news is Jesus Christ himself. The gospel is “extra nos”.

The gospel is in the text, and what a marvelous thing it is when a person can discover the theology of hope from the text. Then the illustrations fit in wonderfully.

Let me give another example of this problem. There are many pastors who cannot preach a

When you finish saying what is in the text, stop. As I have already stated, I think the crisis of preaching today is the thematic domination of preaching. The opposite danger is what I call the non-discipleship exposition, where the results of research are shared, but without urgency and without soul, without the sense of the burden of the Lord. A person sometimes justifies this problem with, “Well, I told them the truth. I told them the gospel.” But you have to remember in homiletics and preaching that just because you stated the point does not mean that you made the point. The task of preaching is to make the point and make it stick. That takes work and skill. Ultimately, it takes the mystery of the Holy Spirit to confirm the gospel and the text.

The best way to make a point stick is to allow people to discover it for themselves. The task of expositional preaching is to help a person see, “Ah, the text says it. I see where it is.

I found it... I saw it.” In other words, the point of expositional preaching is to enable a text in the Old or New Testament to make its own point.

Whether it's in leading a Bible study group or in preaching expositionally, I really think that's the preaching the church needs. I will admit it is not always the preaching that the church wants, but I

do believe that it is the preaching the church needs. I am advocating that you as pastors get involved in small Bible study groups. I told my class today, “The first rule of being a communicator is to avoid the Peter Principle,” wherein a person is elevated to the point of his or her incompetency. We have to be very careful of that in preaching. If you are not teaching the youth-communicant’s class, why not? If you are not teaching and involved in a small Bible study group or in some sort of a mentor Bible study group with some people who are holding you accountable, why not? Why have you allowed yourself to be elevated above those very places where you learn what the text is saying, and where you put yourself under the text for its own sake and not simply to preach it? I would advocate, both for ourselves and for our people, that we try to start investigative Bible study groups in the lives of our churches.

Finally, I am advocating the serious expositional goal in regular preaching. I honestly believe that the best expositional preaching is where you invite people to think with you over a long period of time, through textual material, through a book, through the entire Bible. Encourage your people to dialogue with you. I have a text, taken from Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians. The first books of the New Testament which Paul wrote were letters he sent from Athens to the church at

Thessalonica, at that time the capital city of Macedonia. He wrote two letters to that church because they were confused over several points, but he also paid them a tribute by asking for their help. This text is found in the third chapter of II Thessalonians: “Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph as it did among you.” I love that line; that’s the mystery of preaching. The mystery of it all is that the Holy Spirit will use us, and we must pray for that above all else.

The Reverend Earl Palmer has been minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California, since 1970, after having served churches in the Philippines and Seattle, Washington. A widely published writer, he received his B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley and his B.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary.

December 1985

THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES

Reprinted by permission

of Fuller Theological Seminary

Inductive Bible Study

How to Study Through the Scriptures Effectively

*On behalf of the staff and I at Intensive Care Ministries,
I want to thank you and may God bless you as His Holy Spirit
reveals a deeper understanding of His word.*

Pastor Dan Finrock