

The Bible

“Mining God’s Word”

Lesson # 16 of 27

Memory Verse

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Psalms 119:103 (NIV)

Lesson Goals & Objectives

Goal The students will reach an understanding that:

- They can read and understand the Bible,
- The Bible has something to say to them
- The Bible can inform how they live their lives.

Objectives

- Each participant will have access to several different translations of the Bible (or printed portions of the Bible) and will listen to the same story from each version. They will then discuss what they think the Bible is saying to them.
- The students will also share about how this portion of the Bible applies to their own lives.
- Allow each participant take home some of these different translations. The students will look these over and then indicate which version they understand best.

Introduction and Background for the Teacher

In many ways this lesson and the learning experiences of the past weeks give the students elements of spiritual growth they can take with them for life! In each session you and your students have been actively using the Bible. But, in this session the goal is to have the participants realize that: **they can do what you’ve been doing with the Bible for themselves!**

This is especially important because the Bible is just a “Church Book” for so many Christians. In Session #3 you presented God’s Word and how it reveals who He is to all people. In Session #15 you again looked at the Bible and saw that it is God’s revelation or “showing us” about who He is and how we can

relate to Him. In this session your goal is to have the participants appreciate that the Bible is something they *can* read and that they *want* to read. This task might seem intimidating for you as the teacher; maybe you haven't been a "Bible Person" yourself in the past. So let's get you comfortable first. The notes below provide the **method**, that is, ways in which we might study the Bible, and also give you information in order to be able to **understand the differences among translations**. These notes are for you, as the teacher, in order to help you become comfortable with reading and understanding the Bible. (*Please do **not** present the following notes directly to your class – they are for you, yourself.*)

METHODS OF STUDY & TRANSLATIONS: There are many methods for studying the Bible. You can use the one presented in this module anytime. One of our prayers is that, as you learn this method, you and the participants will continue to put it into practice. The method has three steps: understand what the Bible says; then understand what it means; and finally ask how it applies to your life.

1. First understand what the text itself actually says – this gets you into the world of Bible translations and here are a few pointers about them:
 - a. Before I give you a long list of translations, let's try to organize them into three groups:
 - i. There are those translations that seek to translate the original Hebrew/Greek literally word for word; they are called "formal equivalence" translations. However, often there is no exact equivalent in one language for a word in another. The challenge in using this type is that there are words today that don't mean what they had meant in the past and some words that are no longer in use at all. Language is dynamic – think of a word that you know meant something completely different 40 years ago, e.g. "dude".
 - ii. There are those translations that seek to keep the same meaning of the original Hebrew/Greek but then work them into English phrases that communicate the same essential meaning: they are called functional equivalent translations. The challenge here is to know if the translators really understand the original meaning and so are using adequate English phrases that genuinely convey the same intention.
 - iii. Finally there are those translations that seek to communicate the essential ideas of the original in the idioms and catch-phrases of our day; they are called free translations or paraphrases. The challenge here is that these idioms in our language change as well. Paraphrases may depart too much from the original.
 - b. Here are some familiar Bibles in their groups:
 - i. Formal Equivalence: King James, New King James, English Standard, American Standard Bible, Revised Standard.
At this point someone usually asks "What do you recommend" – The English Standard Version is a very readable "formal equivalence" Bible
 - ii. Functional Equivalence: New International, Good News, New American Bible, New Revised Standard
Again, a recommendation – New International
 - iii. Free or Paraphrase: The MESSAGE, Phillips, Living Bible

No specific recommendation here and while these can be helpful for people, please have a Bible from one of the other two categories with you so you can see the translations.

- c. This is Session #16 and so you've been using a Bible or two for a while now and probably have some translations you prefer.
 - d. You can go to www.biblegateway.com and printout a variety of versions.
2. After understanding what the text says, our second step is to ask *what it means*. This raises two questions:
- a. What is the historical context of the section of the Bible you are reading; meaning when was it written and/or what was going on at that time.
 - b. What is the literary style of the text; meaning is it poetry, a story, a list or a drama?
For this session pick a story.
3. After reading what it says and figuring out what it means, we then ask how does it apply to me?
- a. The point of doing #1 and #2 before #3 is that the Bible cannot mean today what it never meant in the past. We use this method to help us stay on track and be consistent in how we study the Bible. However, the Bible is always relevant to our own lives. We seek an authentic application of what we have read.

(For a fuller treatment of how to read the Bible see How to read the Bible for All Its Worth by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, Zondervan Publishing ~ \$18.00.)

That was a lot to digest, but we pray it helps you. Think this over, and remember you should always be able to talk with your priest.

Materials Needed for Lesson

- A white board, or chalk board, or flip chart/newsprint
- Enough copies of Bibles of different translations, or copies of a portion of the Bible (the portion you are going to use) different translations for the story.
- Paper & Pens
- A BIG Phone Book

Opening Prayer (5 min.)

(Over the course of this program we have learning both to use the Book of Common and to pray extemporaneously. At this point in the program we recommend making use of both types of prayer at either the opening prayer or the closing prayer or both of them.)

Here is a prayer from the Book of Common Prayer, page 236: Blessed Lord, who causes all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN.

(Give the students an opportunity to add their own prayers, concerns and thanksgiving)

Review of the Previous Lesson (5min.)

- Holy Scripture contains genuine, accurate information about God in order to make it possible for us really to know God in a loving relationship with Him
- In our last session, you were asked to write a short paragraph summarizing a passage of Scripture. Collect these from the students. You may want to have a few of them read out loud.
- What did these pieces of Scripture tell us about the way in which the Bible was written?

Introductory Activity (5-10 Min.)

*(These ideas are intended to ensure a lively and exciting atmosphere for the beginning of this lesson. It is fine for each parish to approach this differently if you wish to make use of your own games or other materials. It is best **not** to eliminate doing any activity at all.)*

Choose ONE of the following activities:

Idea #1 – if you have access to a computer and the internet then “google” the website called, “Bible Rap”. There are some very funny videos that your class may like.

OR

Idea #2 – have 66 index cards and on each card have a name of a book of the Bible. Have all the cards mixed up and then ask the class to sort them by Old Testament and New Testament.

OR

Idea #3 – if you are in a rural area ask the kids how cows digest their food! Cows “chew their food over and over” an image of “inwardly digesting” – we are to chew Scripture over and over – this works with farm kids.

Lesson (20-25 min.)

(Hold up a phone book and say) “If I want to know all the people in (fill in your city, town or village name) who own red cars, do I look in this book for the answer? How about if I want a list of everyone who needs a church, do I look in this book?” No – why not? Because those questions are not the purpose of the phone book.

Exactly – we’ve looked at the Bible twice now. What is the purpose of the Bible?

This is what it says in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 which has been our memory verse twice before: But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, ¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:14-17 (NIV)

What is the purpose of the Bible? Actually there are two:

1. “...you have known the Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through Jesus Christ”. The Bible shows us who God is and how to be in a relationship with God, which is the real purpose of Salvation; (We’ve talked about that in Session #3 and #15.)
And –
2. The Bible is useful for “...teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness”.
What is righteousness? Answer: right living; living according to God’s Will.

So the Bible has specific purposes, and when we read it, we need to keep those in mind. In this session we are going to talk about the second purpose – how it can help us live our lives.

Read Romans chapter 12 verses 1-2. Using a chalk/white board or a flip chart, divide the space into three parts and write: “What Does it Say?, What Does it Mean?, and How Does it Apply?”

Take each category one at a time and let the participants shout out their answers. They may need some help, so here are some questions for “what does it say?”

- 1) What do these verses actually say?
 - What do these verses say we are to do with our bodies?
 - What does it say worship is?
 - What are you to do with your mind?
- 2) Ask them if this book is intended to be a story, or poetry, or history, or a letter? The answer is that it is a letter and we all receive letters (or emails) – who is the letter written to? Answer: the Church in Rome – so “the context” is that this is advice to people inside the Church.
- 3) So on to the next category, “What does it mean”?
 - Here they will have many ideas, at the end as an Addendum is a table that has both the NIV version and The Message version side-by-side.
 - This passage would imply that “worship” is more than Sunday – it’s everyday.
 - And that we are not to be given over to things of this world that aren’t of God.
 - So how do we know what isn’t of God? Renew our Minds!
- 4) Last category – “How does it Apply?”
 - How would you “renew your mind?”
 - How would you “offer your body?”
 - Ask them, “So are there things in your world that you wonder if they are OK to do?” This Scripture says that if you have renewed your mind you will be able to “test them”.

Reflection (10-15 min.)

Have them make a private list of the things in their life that they are being asked to “conform to” – have them divide the list into things they know are wrong, and things they “wonder” if they are wrong.

Take-home Activity (5 min.)

Read the rest of chapter 12 of Romans, and remind them that this is a letter to a church concerning issues and questions in that church. The students will write a short “letter back” in response to one or two ideas presented in chapter 12.

Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Begin by giving thanks to God for giving us the Holy Scriptures. Allow the students to add their own prayers of thanksgiving and petition.

Scripture References

Psalm 119, verse 103

Romans 12:1-2

II Timothy 3: 14 – 17

Optional Parallel Scripture Text

Romans 12:1-2 New International Version	Romans 12:1-2 The Message
<p>Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.</p>	<p>So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.</p>