

## HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON #6

### Teacher's Tip

---

**Quote:** "By practice we trade a talent of knowledge, and turn it to profit. This is a blessed reading of Scripture, when we fly from the sins which the word forbids, and espouse the duties which the word commands. Reading without practice will be but a torch to light men to hell." *How to Read the Scriptures with the Most Spiritual Profit*, pgs. 68-69,

### Outlining Hebrews 4:12

For **(The "For" refers to the near context which is talking about the need to hear God's voice through the preaching of the Word and be saved).**

the word of God is		<b>(Subject being discussed – the word of God)</b>
	living	<b>(God's Word is living)</b>
and	active	<b>(God's Word is energized)</b>
and	sharper than any two-edged sword,	<b>(The Word of God is able to cut effectively in both directions)</b>
and	piercing	<b>(God's Word is penetrating)</b>
	as far as the division of	<b>(God's Word divides as it penetrates to the spiritual level)</b>
	soul	<b>(God's word divides the soul)</b>
	and	
	spirit,	<b>(God's Word divides the spirit)</b>
	of both	
	joints	<b>(Joints located in the center of our skeletal structure)</b>
	and	
	marrow,	<b>(Marrow is in the center of the bones which are in the inner portions of our bodies)</b>
and	able to judge	<b>(God's Word judges)</b>
	the thoughts	<b>(God's Word judges the thoughts)</b>
	and	
	intentions	<b>(God's Word judges the intentions)</b>
	of the heart.	<b>(The location of the thoughts and intentions)</b>

### Teaching Outline:

#### "WHY YOU SHOULD USE YOUR BIBLE TO EVANGELIZE THE LOST"

- |      |                                    |   |
|------|------------------------------------|---|
| I.   | <b>YOUR BIBLE IS LIVING</b>        | <b>(To Convict the Lost)</b>                    |
| II.  | <b>YOUR BIBLE IS ACTIVE</b>        | <b>(To Work on Lost Souls)</b>                  |
| III. | <b>YOUR BIBLE IS SHARP</b>         | <b>(To Cut Through the Excuses of the Lost)</b> |
| IV.  | <b>YOUR BIBLE IS PIERCING</b>      | <b>(To the Innermost Being of the Lost)</b>     |
| V.   | <b>YOUR BIBLE IS ABLE TO JUDGE</b> | <b>(The Hearts of the Lost)</b>                 |

# HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

## LESSON SIX

### HOW TO STUDY NARRATIVE

---

This study will be devoted to studying narrative. Large sections of the Scriptures are narrative e.g., Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua - Job, the Gospels, Acts and other portions of other books. In our first lesson we learned that narrative books are books which tell of historical events usually in chronological order. They are not history books but theology books which communicate theology through history. God chose specific events in history to relay theological truths to those in the present. Studying narrative requires a specialized approach. In this study we will discuss how you can discover sound doctrine and God's will for your life through the narrative portions of Scripture.

#### I. HOW TO STUDY NARRATIVE

Narrative portions of Scripture are many. Often it is hard to teach narrative because of the size of individual sections. If a person focuses on one or two verses, the thrust of the story as a whole is lost. If we attempt to teach the entire story, then one has a problem of just getting through so much material and finding practical application.

- A. **Genesis 37-50** deals with the Joseph story. All of these chapters are a single unit all focusing on God's sovereign dealings to preserve Israel through Joseph. If you only teach a few verses you may miss the purpose or thrust of the whole story. If you decide to teach the whole story you are plagued with a mountain of material and miss many of the practical lessons in the narrative.
- B. You are studying the book of **Job**. You realize the book is a story with a beginning, middle and end. The book has one central message and each part of the story contributes to that central message. How do you teach the smaller sections without missing the intended meaning of the whole? How do you teach the whole book and not confuse people with too much material?

#### II. POSSIBLE OPTIONS IN TEACHING NARRATIVE

- A. **Teaching a small section out of a large narrative.** If you decide to teach a small section, let's say two or three verses out of a large portion of narrative, certain things must be remembered.
  - 1. Your purpose should be to teach what God intended to teach and what the author meant to teach to the original audience by what they wrote. You are trying to teach your specific section in light of the grand theme of the narrative.
  - 2. You must be careful not to read N.T. truths into O.T. texts. Putting N.T. truths into O.T. passages is eisegesis (reading into the text) and the goal of Bible study should be to do exegesis (reading out of the text). It is important when studying narrative to remember the hermeneutical principle of "Progressive Revelation" which states that God reveals truth

progressively and we must interpret each passage in light of what the audience of the book knew up to that time, not what we know now. After you examine and interpret a text in its historical context, then you can consider how other texts help you understand the text in its context (cross reference).

3. Always show how your section fits into the big picture God intended to reveal. When teaching a small section of a large narrative it is necessary to show how your small section is a building block of the whole. This can usually be done in just a few sentences.
4. If you are going to use a small piece of narrative as an illustration or example, make sure you explain that you are using it as an illustration or example. This is a legitimate use of narrative (**see Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:1-11; Heb. 11; I Pet. 3:1-6**). It is okay to take application from people and events in narrative, as long as we make clear the purpose of the narrative and that we are looking at the text as an illustration or example.
  - a. In **Gen. 39** Joseph resisting Potiphar's wife is an excellent example of how to flee immorality, a truth clearly taught in both the Old and New Testaments (e.g. **Eccl. 7:26; I Cor. 6:18**). Yet the Joseph story was not written to teach us about moral temptation. The many episodes in Joseph's life show us how God preserved the nation Israel, through Joseph. A person may use Joseph's flight from Potiphar's wife as an illustration of fleeing moral temptation but he must point out that it is an illustration not the primary intent of the passage.
  - b. In **Job 25:4-6** we read, *"How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman? If even the moon has no brightness And the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less man, that maggot, And the son of man, that worm!"* Does this text teach we are maggots and worms or that we are worth as much as maggots and worms? Does this teach that no one can be just before God? Is the son of man here Jesus? Who is speaking? Why? What is the theme of Job and how does this passage fit into the theme? Would it be okay to take this passage and "use it" to teach worm theology?

**B. Teaching a large section of narrative.** One may decide to teach a large section of narrative. If this is the case you should follow these guidelines.

1. Determine the theme or intent of your passage as a whole. Your smaller section must support the theme. Your interpretation of what the author meant to teach must be part of and fit the theme of the book or section.
2. Ask yourself, "Can I teach the story in summary fashion and deliver a clear and practical message?" Stories are strong communicating tools. Don't feel you can't make an impact on people by just telling the story well.

Remember that two people can tell the same story and one person can make it boring and the other very interesting.

3. If the section you are studying teaches a specific truth like redemption (Exod. 4-13), you may want to summarize the story, pointing out that the main point is God's redemption of Israel from Egypt. Then, using cross references explain in more detail what the Bible says about the doctrine of redemption and its importance for the Christian using your text as a focal point. In this way you teach the theme, the story, and accentuate the main doctrine associated with the main point of the text.
4. Whenever teaching a large section attempt to communicate the main thought. Don't get caught up in the mountain of details. Only focus on the details which point to the main theme or thought. There will be many good points you will not be able to mention. Just mention those which support the main theme that the author is trying to communicate.
5. One of the hardest things for new teachers to do is force themselves not to try and teach everything that they have discovered in their study. Remember, it is better to clearly explain one to four truths, show the application, and discuss the implementation, than to do an unclear job explaining many points and not getting into the application and implementation. Tell yourself that it is impossible to teach everything that can be taught when studying any text, especially a large one, and that things must be left out.

### **C. When Teaching or Preaching Work at Making Narrative Come Alive**

1. *Verbally paint the landscape of the preceding context leading up to the text you are preaching.*
2. *Describe what is said in the text you are preaching in more detail.*
3. *Work at drawing your listeners into the text.*
  - a. Use the word "Imagine" and its synonyms frequently.
  - b. *Speak to people as if they are there.*
  - c. *Employ rhetorical questions.*
  - d. *Use direct address in your preaching.*
  - e. *Strive to create a sense of investigation as you work your way through the text.*
  - f. Narrative provides good opportunity to teach the Word of God in an engaging, practical, memorable way. Work at making it interesting.

### III. SUMMARY PRINCIPLES FOR STUDYING NARRATIVE

#### A. Teaching a Small Section out of a Large Narrative

1. Teach your text in relation to the theme of the story.
2. Don't read N.T. truths into O.T. passages.
3. Show how your passage fits into the theme of the whole book or section.
4. If you use a narrative story as an example or illustration, make sure you point out that you are using it as an example or illustration.

#### B. Teaching a Large Section of Narrative

1. Determine the theme.
2. Can you teach the story in summary fashion and still have it be clear and practical?
3. You may want to use your text as a focal point for communicating a doctrinal truth from the theme.
4. Make sure you relay the main thought of the whole narrative or select one truth which teaches or supports the main thought.

#### C. Regardless of the size of the text, work at making narrative come alive.

### IV. HOME WORK

Let's say you are going to teach **Genesis 22:1-19**. Using your Bible study skills and hermeneutical principles answer the questions below.

- A. What is the theme of Genesis?
- B. How does **Gen. 22:1-19** fit into the theme of the book?
- C. Explain in a short paragraph how you might teach this section of Scripture in the following ways:
  1. Summary method
  2. Doctrinal spring board method

3. Illustration method

- D. If taken by itself, is the story clear and practical? What lesson/s (those that fit the theme) can be learned from this passage?
- E. If you were teaching this passage, what major truths or doctrines would you focus on and why?
- F. Try and find at least five cross references from the New Testament which you might refer people to when teaching this text which would help explain the text's meaning or theological significance.
- G. Write out a vivid, engaging description of the events leading up to and including Abraham sacrificing Isaac (maybe a paragraph or two).
- H. **Read and Examine II Timothy 3:16.**
  - 1. Develop a lesson title and outline for a study you might teach on this text.
  - 2. Make sure the title and main points of the study contain either a command or the second person "you" or "your" in them.
  - 3. Summarize the context of the text as if you were going to teach it and wanted others to understand how it related to what comes before and after it.