

Bringing the Bible to Life
Draft #1
Teaching Notes

This is a first attempt at what may develop into our leading edge material. It is arranged in a teaching format, but obviously has lots of holes. It originated from some church training I did about a year ago on the topic of Bible Study for Life change. It was originally formatted for use in 7 one hour Sunday school sessions. Handouts used for each session follow that session. At the very end is a short guide to writing Bible study questions using this format. It is very brief, but at least a starting point in moving from doing bible study to leading bible study.

There is lots to add – articles to read, exercises to try, facets to Bible study that aren't even addressed. Please feel free to begin editing, filling in the blanks, re-formatting, etc.(For example, there is almost nothing on leading a bible study) There is not any background on what inductive study is or philosophy of bible study – I recommend a look at Bob Grahmann's Bible Study enhancements article. It is excellent.

Session 1 – Overview

Welcome with 1st Bible study story : Love and the concordance. I told a story about the first Bible study I ever went to. We took concordances and looked up every verse with the word love and then copied them all down on a sheet of paper. It was – as you can imagine – a lot of work. Then we patted ourselves on the back for being such good bible scholars, and we went home.

Reflection Sheets : Use the following reflection sheet with some small group discussion to get a gauge on who is in the class.

Introduce the Issues: Use the Acts 2 sheet as an overhead. With the large group, read the passage and then the false conclusions. This is a common experience people seem to have – they meet people who make bad Scripture interpretations, but can't explain why their logic is faulty. As the leader, I defend the faulty conclusions and make the group provide reasons why my thinking is bad.

Introduce concentric circles of context. (This is the way out of the Acts 2 problem)
We interpret from verse to sentence to paragraph to chapter to book to testament. You can see these as concentric circles of context. The example helps connect with a felt need for increased bible study skills.

Brief into to various approaches to Scripture study:

Systematic Devotional Inductive: our focus is mainly here, with some overlap

Introduce Inductive Method Components: Each of the next sessions focus on these components, then a couple sessions on putting it all together.

Observation
Identification
Interpretation
Response

Bible Study Quiz

1. What is the best Scripture study you have ever been in? What qualities made it great?

2. What is your worst Bible study experience?

3. Describe how you learned to study Scripture. Who helped? What did they do for you?

4. Think about your times in Scripture. Where do you get stuck?

Acts 2: 42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to breaking the bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Everyday they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Conclusions from Acts 2

1. All the believers lived together in one house.
2. The new believers shared everything and that would include spouses.
3. So, Christians today should never live in single family homes. We should always live with other Christian families and share everything, including our spouses.

Session 2 – Observation

Introduction to Observation:

Review the 4 components of inductive study.

Comments about observation as a skill.

Easiest to skip – seems obvious, not as interesting as interpretation

Takes more discipline, most necessary to clarify confusions.

Observation = see what it says, the basic facts. Be a good detective.

Practice observation:

Hand out Luke 10 passage with instructions to write out 25 observations

Ex: Jesus entered a village.

After a few minutes, pause and read some observations. Keep going for 25.

Fish and Aggaziz: Pause again and read the story (Found elsewhere one Lydia)

What did you learn? How do you feel about you"fish"?

Basic Laws of Observation:

Contrast, repetition, tense, who, what, where, when, metaphor, genre, characters, moods, facts, context

Introduce these and have them go back to looking at text.

Discussion of exercise:

Read some more, who got most

How did it feel? Frustrations? Why?

Why do Observations first? What if don't?

Who wants to jump ahead to interpretations? Why? Results if you do?

All observations vs key observations?

Which ones are key to this passage? Why? How can you begin to tell which observations are most important?

Before moving on to next component, summarize rest of text to provide some vision for what's ahead.

Observe – Make a list of 25 observations

Luke 10:38 Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. 40 But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; 42 there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

1. *There was a woman named Martha*

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Session 3 – Identification

Introduce to Identification:

Review the 4 components of inductive study.

Comments about identification as a skill.

Helps Bible study be more than educational, walk in shoes of people

Sets the table for good response, make connections between you and text.

Practice Identification:

Get 1 volunteer per table.

They are now paralyzed, must lie on table or floor next to your group

Do all the following activities with paralyzed person in your group.

Hand out manuscripts of Mark 2 (Make sure paralytics get copies too)

Make a list of observations

Go back and place a star next to the key observations.

Make each group move to a new spot in the room for discussion

(They will need to carry their paralyzed person with them.)

Discuss observations they found as a small group.

Work as a group on last two questions on the handout.

Discuss identification:

Make a list of how felt to be paralyzed

Make a list of what it's like to have a paralyzed friend.

Heal the paralytics and get a report.

What did you learn about paralysis? Feelings?

How did the exercise help you identify with the passage?

Normally, do identification by use of imagination.

Explain use of imagination has a place in Scripture study.

Often an under utilized gift from God

Helps bring your whole person to scripture.

Move to our lives:

Key is to identify with the text and relate to similar experience in our own life.

How have you had similar feelings this week? How have you felt paralyzed?

- 2 steps - what characters feeling, experiencing,
- how you felt/experienced same today?

Summarize rest of components to frame what we are doing and where we are going.

Mark 2:1-12

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.² So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them.³ Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them.⁴ And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay.⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,⁷ "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"⁸ At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts?⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?"¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--he said to the paralytic--¹¹ "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home."¹² And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Make a list of observations

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Put a star next to observations that seem key to understanding the text.

Make a list of what it feels like to be the paralytic, or one of his friends.

How have you felt like a paralytic this past week?

Session 4 - Interpretation

Introduction to Interpretation:

Review 4 components of inductive study

What have you learned so far?

Interpretation is about finding meaning, making connections

Learning to ask good questions – takes practice

Examples of good interpretive questions:

Why? What if? What did you expect? Definitions, significance of? Meaning of?

Interpretation Exercise:

Need 5 volunteers- take out of the room

Have everyone else look at this sentence and discuss what it means.

“Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted about many things, but only one thing is needed.”

Meanwhile, have 5 volunteers each practice reading the sentence in the following tones.

Encourage sharp contrast, exaggerated emotions.

Read the following sentence with great joy, anger, sadness, surprise, sarcasm

Bring them in for the readings

Ask folks in the room who discussed the passage

How do the various tones effect your interpretation?

This is the issue of interpretation: how do you discern meaning when reading a report of events, but you weren't there?

Practice Interpretation:

Hand out Luke 7 passage.

Write down only questions that you do not immediately know the answer to

Try to fill your sheet.

After some time, let them work as a small group to get one full sheet.

Go back to each question and jot down a possible answer.

Discuss as a group.

How did you feel trying to get the chart full?

List some of the questions

What will you need to answer these questions? (observe and identify)

A hypothesis: perhaps this is the answer, go check observations and see if it holds up.

Send them back to observe, identify: how do these help you answer your questions?

Some guidelines to help sort out questions:

Context – verse, paragraph, chapter, book, Bible

Genre – letter, narrative, poetry, proverb, apocalyptic, prophetic

From clear to unclear – ie: baptism from dead example

Example of good interpretation:

Help wrestle through the many questions raised here.

Focus on verse 47-50 :

why was the woman forgiven? faith or works? how do you know?

paragraph says faith. why Jesus say this? point is? faith is seen

saved by faith that's visible = loves much, opposite true for Simon

increase love = increase forgiveness

Notice how observation, identification add insight to help make good interpretation.

Notice how some interpretations you can be sure of, others must hold more loosely.

Luke 7:36-50

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.³⁷ When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume,³⁸ and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner."⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.⁴¹ "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty."⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair."⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet."⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Make a list of questions from the passage -- that you do not know the answer to.

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Session 5 – Response

Introduction to Response:

Review 4 components of inductive study

Response is the goal. Purpose of good Scripture study is to draw us to God

Easy to skip, think study is end in itself.

Key skill here is often courage:

to look at self, hear feedback, ask questions that require change in my life.

Looking at Response in Scripture:

Hand out mark 4 passage.

Hand out page 1 –

Look at top half of the page individually.

Discuss as a group. What response does Jesus get? What's he hoping for?

How would you respond if this is all you heard?

Read the bottom of the page as discuss as a small group

Discuss as a whole group. What is the secret?

Look at Jesus interpretation of his parable

Discuss page 2 as a small group

Discuss the soils as a large group

What are the main differences? What is Jesus telling us about response?

What does it look like to be each soil during a bible study? Sermon?

Look at the soils – hear and accept, to heed. Jewish version of to know = to do.

Inseparable.

why is the parable key? >> learn to listen and heed

In this case, disciples respond 1st and get insight 2nd.

Opposite of our “normal” approach to Scripture

Targets to aim for in your response to Scripture:

Be Honest – avoid superficial, fake, or overly simple responses like

“I learned I just need to trust God”

Be Specific – avoid general responses that any nice person could do even if they weren't a Christian

Be Risky – look for responses that cause you to need God, not to just exercise will power

Be Praying - Ask regularly as you study a passage, “God what are you saying to me here?”

Session 6 – Step by Step: Putting it All together

Review the 4 components of inductive study

Questions about what we've done so far?

Hand out passage on Mark 7

Go through all the components of inductive study on your own (30 minutes)

Have a small group discussion about the passage (30 minutes)

Jot down observations or questions others saw that you missed

Discuss passage as a whole group (30 minutes)

What did you observe? What prompts the argument? What are the contrasting views?

How did you identify with people here? What do you think disciples feel?

Why does he call them dull? What's interesting about the parable?

How do you see this argument in church today?

What questions are you wrestling with? What are the implications of Jesus' spirituality?

limits of Pharisees spirituality?

Where does evil come from? growth?

Define evils.

How is God speaking to you here? Which are your temptations? Why? When? How? How do you try to "fix yourself"? Does it work?

A Final Look at the process:

Of the 4 components to inductive study:

Which is easiest for you?

Which is hardest for you?

Take a minute to get into groups by which component you found easiest.

Look around and take note of who can help you.

When do you feel stuck? What can you do to get unstuck?

Mark 7:1-23

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and ² saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is, unwashed. ³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) ⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?" ⁶ He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁷ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' ⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men." ⁹ And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' ¹¹ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that." ¹⁴ Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵ Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'" ¹⁶ ¹⁷ After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. ¹⁸ "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't

you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? ¹⁹ For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") ²⁰ He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' ²¹ For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Observations: The facts: who? What? When? Where? Commands, tense, metaphor, genre, Characters, moods, context, repetition, contrasts	Identifications: what are the characters feeling, experiencing? How do you feel similiar? How do you connect?	Interpretations: Why? What if? What did you expect? Definitions, significance of? Meaning of? What is troubling or confusing?	Response: What is God saying to me? Honest? Risk? Specifically: How to pray?
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Bible Study Prep: Starting from scratch

Luke 10:38-42 Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴² there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Observe – *Make a list of 20 observations*

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Identify – Put yourself in each characters shoes. What do they feel? Identify a time when you have felt similarly

Martha:

Mary:

Jesus:

Interpret – Make a list of questions you don't know the answer to. Try to answer them all

Respond – Ask the Lord, what are you trying to say to me?

Writing Questions – In advance and on the go

Go back to your observations. Put a star next to most important ones. Turn the statements into questions.

Now look at your identifications. Which feelings are most central to the passage? Ask a question about that character. Ask another question that helps the group share their feelings.

Look at the interpretive questions. Pick out the ones that led you to the main point.

Write 2 or 3 response questions

Write a few discussion starters. (Sue, you've been quiet, what do you think about this?)