

Session 6

... And in the Word

Aim: To encourage the group to read their bibles.

Objectives:

At the end of the session the group should:
Understand the importance of the bible study and knowledge in relation to evangelism.
Recognise that bible reading is not limited to evangelism!

Personally Speaking...

Bible reading is like prayer - difficult at times. I sometimes think I will never be disciplined enough to read the Bible every day.

When I was baptised I was given a book called 'The life of Christ - everyday through one year'. I have had the book since April 1988, I don't think I have got beyond the first two months worth of readings.

I know the importance of reading the Bible. I know how good it can be. I know it is God's word. Still I don't read it enough.

Volumes have been written on Bible reading. Bible notes are published by the shed load. You can buy bibles for every occasion - I am surprised no one has published a 'Pregnant Lady's Bible' or a 'Computer Nerds Bible'.

[Note: since writing this my wife has become pregnant and I spend too much time on the internet :-)] When it comes down to it though you still have to pick it up, read it and try to understand it. As yet I've never wrestled with my Bible, I would probably lose.

When I became a Christian I didn't come with an inherent love of the Bible. I prefer comics. Sometimes I only read the Bible through sheer determination. It is not always like that though. I am starting to look forward to reading the Bible and finding out more about God. The Bible contains everything I need to know about God. It is an epic story with many facets and styles. The revelation of God in his Word has as much to say to me today as it did when it was written.

The Session:

In this session we are going to be looking at bible reading. Last time we looked at prayer. Without prayer our evangelism is powerless. This time we will see that without knowing the bible it is likely to be directionless. It would be very easy for 'the leader' to stand up and say 'You should read your Bible'. We all know we should. But often we don't! How can we be encouraged to actually pick up our bibles and make a start?

Warming Up - Bible Facts.

Hand out the 'True or False' handout and ask the group to guess which 'facts' about and from the bible are true and which are false.

The answers to the sheet (not that you will need them):

Paul was shipwrecked on Malta. True.

There are 39 books in the bible. **False, there are 66.**

John sank when he tried to walk on water to Jesus. **False, it was Peter.**

Joseph had 11 brothers. **True.**

Peter denied Jesus three times. **True.**

Jesus raised Zacchaeus from the dead. **False, he raised Lazarus.**

God told Jonah to go to Ninevah. **True**

David committed adultery with the Queen of Sheba. **False, it was with Bathsheba.**

Matthias was Judas' replacement. **True.**

John the Baptist was hung by Herod. **False, he was beheaded by Herod.**

The first disciples Jesus called were Simon and Andrew. **True.**

Paul tells us there are 3 items that make up the armour of God. **False, there are 6.**

Jesus was 12 when he first visited the Temple. **True.**

1 Corinthians is a letter from Paul and Sosthenes. **True.** Jesus was born in Nazareth.

False, he was born in Bethlehem.

Jacob had two wives. **True.**

Hezekiah was the 19th Old Testament prophet.

False, he was a King.

John wrote Revelation. **True.**

God created the world in seven days. **False, he did it in six and had a day off.**

In Romans we are told that some fall short of the glory of God. **False, all fall short.**

The handout isn't a rigorous test of their biblical knowledge and shouldn't be treated as such.

The Biblical Perspective - God's Words.

2 Timothy 3:16-17.

2 Timothy is probably the last letter that Paul wrote before he died. It is to Timothy who Paul saw converted at Lystra. It is a letter of instruction and of encouragement. The passage above comes right near the end and exhorts Timothy to keep on with the scriptures.

Point out to the group that the passage says that 'All' scripture is God breathed - that is that it comes from God, not just that it was written by men and God put a stamp of approval on it. God gave it to men to write down. Some versions have the word 'useful' replaced with 'profitable'. What God has given us in the scriptures is for our benefit, so that we can get the best out of life on God's terms. This passage shows us how scripture is useful or profitable in four areas:

Teaching - telling us stuff that we need to know but didn't know.

Rebuking - telling us off; it points out where we go wrong.

Correcting - telling us how to go the right way.

Training in righteousness - telling us how we can be right before God.

Explain these four meanings to the group and then ask them to spend five or ten minutes in groups of three or four talking about the four uses of scripture. Ask them to think of examples when they have seen scripture used in these ways in their own lives or in others lives. Don't worry if they can't think up examples for all four.

They need to be able to explain the situation, the scripture used and how it made them feel. Was the experience a positive one that helped them or one that hindered them?

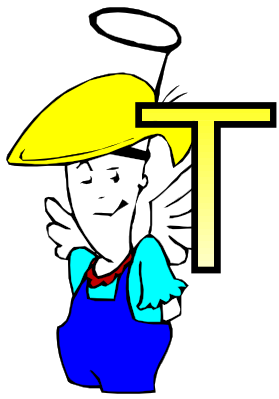
Sum up what everyone has said - hopefully along the lines that most of their experiences of scripture being applied in their lives has had a positive outcome!

Pulling It Together.

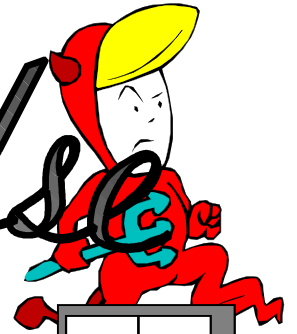
Ask the group to think about how often they read their bibles. Do they read it:

- Every day.
- 2-3 times a week.
- Once a week.
- 2-3 times a month.
- Less than that?

They don't have to answer out loud, just think about it. Challenge them to read their bible more often. The expectation is not that they suddenly become great biblical scholars, but that they do a bit more than they currently do. This isn't an opportunity to lay on a guilt trip or harangue the group about commitment - it is a chance to encourage. Maybe share your own experience of bible reading and study, whether good or bad.



True or False



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True False