

## 6. Sharing One-to-One in Growth Bible Studies

In our last topic, we focused on sharing one-to-one for the purpose of follow-up. Today, we will continue our focus on sharing one-to-one. The focus today will be sharing one-to-one in growth Bible studies. Evangelistic Bible studies are designed to reach people for Christ. Follow-up Bible studies are designed to give those new Christians a basic foundation for growth. Growth Bible studies are Bible studies that build on the foundation of evangelistic and follow-up Bible studies, because growth Bible studies move the focus to helping people grow and mature by helping them become familiar with the entire Word of God.

Today, many growth Bible studies happen as two, and sometimes more, Christians get together for Bible study while they are having breakfast or lunch or in some other Bible study. Christ taught two growth Bible studies on the day of His resurrection. One of these was with the two on the road to Emmaus, and the other was a larger group growth Bible study that evening with the disciples.

In Luke 24:27, we read, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” In this verse, we see some key lessons about growth Bible studies. We see that:

- The focus was on the Word of God not a book about the Word of God
- The teaching was progressive because it started with the books written by Moses
- The teaching was a thorough summary of the entire Old Testament
- The purpose was to give the two a better understanding of what the Scriptures taught about Christ
- The Bible study covered all of the key passages that talked about Christ

In Luke 24:44-45, we read, “Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” We see that:

- ◆ This Bible study included a review of what had been taught earlier
- ◆ This Bible study showed how Christ fulfilled the things that were written in the Old Testament
- ◆ This Bible study included a summary of the entire Old Testament
- ◆ This Bible study was designed to open their understanding of their minds both of the Word of God and of the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ (The word that is translated understanding is the same word that is translated mind in Romans 12:2, where it says: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”)
- ◆ This Bible study was designed to help them comprehend the Scriptures (The word that is translated “comprehend” is the same word that is translated “understand” in Ephesians 5:17, where it says: “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.” This word shows us that true Bible study should produce understanding of the will of God.)

When Paul gave his final instructions to the leaders of the church at Ephesus, he talked about some of the things he had done at an earlier time to help those leaders at the time that they were growing.

Acts 20:20 says, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house.” In this verse, we see that Paul had earlier had Bible studies with these men and that he had:

- Shared all that was helpful (All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable...2 Timothy 3:16) to help them in their growth
- Made known (translated “proclaimed” in verse 20 and “to declare” in verse 27) the Word of God to them - In John 16:13-15, this word is used three times to show that the Holy Spirit is the One who is the real source of revealing the truth that we teach from the Word of God.
- Done this in public Bible studies.
- Done this in Bible studies from house-to-house.

Then, in Acts 20:27, Paul summarized the extent of his Bible teaching when he said, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” In this verse, we see that Paul:

- ♦ Was not timid about sharing the Word of God (“shunned” means *to be timid and draw back from sharing the Word*).
- ♦ Taught the Word so that the Holy Spirit could give them understanding.
- ♦ Taught the whole counsel of God. (Paul taught the entire Word so that they would know the full purpose of God.)

However, growth Bible studies do not stop when they have helped a person know the Word of God. The true purpose of growth Bible studies is to help people learn to obey what they have learned. In Matthew 28:19-20, we have what we call the Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*’ Amen.” This verse contains one command: Make Disciples. Then, it gives three participles that tell us how to carry out this command. The three participles are:

1. Going (evangelism happens as we are going not as we wait for people to come to us – Acts 8:4, 11:19-21)
2. Baptizing (there are eight kinds of baptism in the New Testament and all have one thing in common – identification)
3. Teaching them to observe all things (the word that is translated observe is used seven times in 1 John to speak of keeping Christ’s commandments – 1 John 2:3-5, 3:22 and 24, 5:2, and 5:3 which says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”) We have only really taught people the Word of God when we have taught them how to obey it or put it into practice in their daily lives.

Most Christians today know a lot more of the Word of God than they know how to put into practice. The reason for that is the fact that the western world has largely adopted the Greek style of learning rather than the Hebrew style of learning. The Greek style of learning is to put people in a classroom and give them formal instruction primarily by lectures. The Hebrew style of learning was illustrated by Christ, when He said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

In a lecture, it does not matter whether you have ten people or ten thousand people, as long as you

have a sound system that makes it possible for all to hear. When Christ had large crowds come to hear him speak, He would often use a hillside, or speak from a boat so that the hill or the water provided a natural acoustics system. In Mark 4:1-32, we see one of these situations where Christ taught from a boat. We see that He spoke to the multitudes in parables. Christ spoke to the multitudes in parables so they would not understand (Luke 8:10) because they were not ready to understand and obey.

However, when Christ was alone with the disciples, He would explain the parables to them. Mark 4:33-34 says, “And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.” When your goal is to help people understand and learn how to obey, it usually requires explanation one-to-one or in a small group.

As the disciples were following Christ, they heard Him teach. Then, they heard the teaching explained in a small group. In addition, they were also being shown how to obey what they were having explained. A third thing that happened, as the disciples followed Christ, is that He was able to help them grow in godly character as they saw how He handled rejection. Luke 9:54-56 says, “And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save *them*.’ And they went to another village.”

Christ also showed the disciples how to minister by example rather than through a lecture as He took the disciples with Him as He went to minister. Christ showed the disciples how to minister to children (Mark 10:13-16), to a young man (Mark 10:17-22), to a foreign woman (Matthew 15:21-28), to a dishonest tax collector (Luke 19:1-10) and to many others.

Many times, we are so busy preparing our sermons and lectures that we fail to spend time with people where they live, work, and spend their free time. As a result, they may know the Word of God, but they may not know how to apply what they know to their daily living. As the parable of the two builders, in Matthew 7:24-27, so clearly illustrates, the foolish are those who hear the Word of God and do nothing about it. The wise are those who hear the Word of God and obey it. As we have one-to-one and small group growth Bible studies, we have the opportunity to help people learn how to obey what they are learning. May the Lord richly bless you as you show people how to obey the Word of God by your example.