

ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTIONS

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful engagement with this course, the class member can expect:

- To appreciate the significance of careful Bible study
- To be introduced to and informed about the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method
- To participate under guidance in each step of the method
- To become more diligent, consistent, and effective in *discerning* scriptural truth
- To become more confident and effective in *communicating* scriptural truth
- To become more intentional in *applying* scriptural truth

INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPER

Terry Boyle was born in Windsor, England. He moved to the United States in 1981. Although he began his professional life as a research biochemist, Terry holds a ThM in pastoral ministry and a PhD in biblical studies from Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas, where he also served as a fellow at the Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership. Terry was senior pastor of Skillman Bible Church in Dallas until he and his family moved back to the UK in 2007 to take on his role with Insight for Living United Kingdom.

Terry now serves as chairman and pastor of Insight for Living UK. His ministry there involves hosting Chuck Swindoll's weekday and weekend *Insight for Living* broadcasts, helping listeners, and providing a personal and local approach to Chuck's ministry in English-speaking Europe. Since 2007, Terry has preached in churches and spoken at conferences across the UK and Europe, and he has written and produced broadcast and print resources for Insight for Living UK.

Terry was asked to develop this pastor-training curriculum to contribute to Insight for Living Ministries' commitment to obey Christ by making disciples in all the nations.

Terry and his wife Rosie have three grown children, Hannah, Emily, and Terence.



MODULE ONE

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The methods taught in the seminar are founded on three principles that will be established and explained in this first module. Author and pastor Warren Wiersbe states the importance of laying a foundation of principles:

Certainly, we need methods to serve God, but we must remember that methods work because of the principles behind them.¹

FIRST PRINCIPLE

The Bible and the Centrality of Christ

Because the entire Bible points to Christ, Christians should endeavor to study the Scriptures in obedience to God.²

The Old Testament was written in _____ of Christ's work on earth while the New Testament was written in _____ of it. The entire Bible focuses on the events of the first Easter.

REVIEW CHARTS

- Appendix One: Survey Chart of the Bible
- Appendix Two: Old Testament Scrolls and New Testament Scrolls
- Appendix Three: Bible Overview: Know What's in There

Content of Scriptures

It's helpful to remember this: the Bible is put together much like a newspaper.³

Centrality of Christ

The Bible possesses a singular theme threaded throughout its entirety that extols the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Jesus took them
through the writings
of Moses and all the
prophets, explaining
from all the
Scriptures the things
concerning himself.
(Luke 24:27)*

Character of Scriptures

Article 1 of the *Doctrinal Statement* of Dallas Theological Seminary offers these statements on the character of the Scriptures.

We believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture.

We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings—historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic—as they appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that the whole Bible in the originals is therefore without error.

We believe that all the Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming so that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read or understood until it leads to Him. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction (Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16; 17:2–3; 18:28; 26:22–23; 28:23; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).⁴

DISCUSSION: Inspiration, Inerrancy, and the Canon

Three basic summary statements about the Bible are:

- The Bible is inspired by God. (The writings are the work of God's Spirit.)
- The Bible is without error in its original form. (It is exactly what God intended to say.)
- The Bible is complete and finished as it comes to us. (What's in there belongs there; what's not in there does not belong there.)

See Appendix Four for a brief explanation of why Insight for Living Ministries holds these three statements to be true.

SECOND PRINCIPLE**The Bible and Spiritual Nourishment**

Because the truths in the Bible provide spiritual nourishment, the study of the Scriptures encourages spiritual growth and maturity.

KEY THOUGHT

You need to eat. Develop a taste for solid and wholesome food!

Maturity

See **Hebrews 5:12**.

We take it for granted that childish ways are expected of children, but nevertheless, children are expected to mature to adulthood. In the same way, it is senseless to stay stuck in Christian immaturity.

*When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child.
But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things
imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see
everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and
incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God
now knows me completely. (1 Corinthians 13:11–12)*

Wisdom

*My child, listen to what I say,
and treasure my commands.
Tune your ears to wisdom,
and concentrate on understanding.
Cry out for insight,
and ask for understanding.
Search for them as you would for silver;
seek them like hidden treasures.
Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD,
and you will gain knowledge of God.
For the LORD grants wisdom!
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding
(Proverbs 2:1–6)*

Wisdom is needed for living with skill and integrity in light of God's sovereignty. It informs our attitudes, priorities, and decisions. Wisdom is the mark of the mature believer, and it can be learned through the study of God's word.

*If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.
He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that
your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided
loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by
the wind. (James 1:5–6)*

Stability

See **1 Peter 3:13–16**.

Leaders in the church are required not only to possess stability but also to teach others so that they, too, become stable and sure-footed in their faith.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. (Ephesians 4:11–15)

THIRD PRINCIPLE

The Bible and Careful Preparation

Because orthodox spiritual growth is necessary, preparation and care are essential to ensure that the fruit of Bible study is both trustworthy and nourishing.

Those who carry forward the responsibility of teaching should do everything they can to present honestly the full and balanced picture of what God reveals to us in His Word. This means committing to:

Living a life that _____

Doing the hard work of _____

Allowing the Spirit of God to do His work _____ and
_____ the pastor's routine.

KEY THOUGHT

Preparation matters! Gather what you need to start!

The Right Heart: Integrity, Willingness, Passion, and Time

Paul encouraged Timothy to recruit reliable people who could be trusted to communicate the truth faithfully (2 Timothy 2:2). Several implications can be drawn from Paul's command to his protégé Timothy.

*You have heard me
teach things that
have been confirmed
by many reliable
witnesses. Now
teach these truths to
other trustworthy
people who will
be able to pass
them on to others.
(2 Timothy 2:2)*

1. The truths Paul taught Timothy were not solely for Timothy's benefit. It was important to Paul that others should hear them as well.
2. The teachings were not to be entrusted to just *anyone* for transmission to the next generation. Timothy was to find *trustworthy* people, people with the integrity to avoid corrupting the truth for personal gain or pragmatic convenience.
3. Those that Timothy recruited were to be *able* to pass on the legacy of Paul's teaching. That involved a commitment to invest energy and time into study and communication.

The Right Helps: Bibles, Dictionaries, Concordances, Maps, and Internet⁵

1. Bibles

Every person in Christian ministry should have access to a reliable Bible in a language they know well—preferably their heart language. A well-respected “study Bible” will be a great help.

In sermon preparation, it is helpful to use two different versions of the Bible if possible. There are important benefits to this because different versions are translated and edited according to different principles.

“And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’” (Acts 26:14 ESV)

“We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.’” (26:14)

2. Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

At times it will be necessary to seek clarity on unfamiliar words and ideas.

3. Concordances

A concordance contains a list of words in alphabetical order matched to the places where those words appear in the Bible text.

4. Maps

As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die. Jesus asked, "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?" The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little boy dies." Then Jesus told him, "Go back home. Your son will live!" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home. (John 4:46–50)

The Bible was written within the geography of the ancient Near East. The relationship between places has a bearing on how the Bible presents its truths.

5. Internet

The Internet is a vast and ever-evolving source of information, but its use requires careful discernment.

See Acts 17:10–12.

Your final reference point should be the Word of God, as revealed to you in the Scriptures and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

The Right Habits: Hearing, Reading, Studying, Memorizing, and Meditating

See Psalm 119:15–16.

1. Hearing

Listen to the Word spoken aloud, and in turn, learn to speak it well.

2. Reading

Read the words with fresh eyes each time.

3. Studying

Chuck Swindoll remarks that the key difference between reading and studying is pen and paper.

4. Memorizing

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
(Psalm 119:11)

5. Meditating

True meditation always has an object. It is not the ability to think about *nothing*, it is the privilege of sustained thought about one thing: God's Word.

MODULE ONE REVIEW

As we began our course of training together, we considered that careful, methodical Bible study is vital to the foundation of a personal life of faith. In turn, this personal foundation strengthens the church as we commit together to follow Christ and take our places as *living stones* in the work He is building (1 Peter 2:5).

MODULE TWO PREVIEW

In our next meeting, we will begin the process of learning the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method. As with any sensible method, there is a sequence to doing it well. This method begins with observation, where we ask the question, "What do I see?" It's time to think like a detective and try to notice the clues that are set out for us. Choose one of the passages suggested for you, and spend some time practicing your observation skills.

ASSIGNMENT**Preparation for Module Two: Observation**

Using only an unmarked Bible, make observational notes on one of these passages:

- Luke 4:16–21

(Worked example)

- John 3:1–10
- Ephesians 1:3–14
- Philippians 4:4–9