

Dear Bible Study Leader,

I am so excited about the privilege of beginning this study of the New Testament and the life, ministry, and miracles of our Lord and Savior with you. If you have been through the Old Testament with us as a group leader, you need to know that we are now more than halfway through our journey through the Bible. If you are just joining us now, welcome to what I call “The best books in the Bible!”

We have surveyed the 39 books of the Old Testament and now come to the challenge of surveying the 27 books of the New Testament. In this course we begin studying the four Gospels, which will challenge us to share God’s Good News. I have often said, “This is my favorite book,” or “This is the best book or section of the Bible.” I say this frequently because they are favorites or special to me when I am studying them. But now when we come to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, I can honestly, sincerely, and emphatically say that we are now coming to the heart of the Bible. I can say this because the Bible is all about Jesus, and these little books are the biographies of Jesus’ life. His life—everything He said and did—was the greatest revelation of truth the world has ever been given (John 1:18).

I remind you that we are doing a practical devotional survey study of the New Testament. We will only have time to look at some of the key passages. My prayer is that these studies will help you and those you will be leading to get into God’s Word and to get God’s Word into you in a way that will make it possible for wonderful and miraculous things to happen in your hearts.

It is so very important for us to study. Paul told his young disciple Timothy to “study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that will not be ashamed because he was rightly teaching the Word of God” (2 Timothy 2:15). If we understand the Greek word Paul used for “study” in this passage, we realize that it means “to exert yourself, to burn mental energy to be a workman when you study.” I want to challenge you to read and then study all of the New Testament as we survey this part of the Bible.

As we read and lead others through the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, we want to look for the devotional application of God’s Good News to our lives. As we study and teach others, we want to consistently be asking and answering the following questions:

- What does this say? (Observation)
- What does it mean? (Interpretation)
- What does it mean to me and to those I am leading? (Application)
- What does it mean to God? (Divine Perspective)
- Where else does the Bible teach this truth? (Correlation)

As we move through this study, it is my prayer that you will grow to know Jesus like never before and that you will be able to introduce Him to others who desperately need to experience the love, grace and power of His life in their lives.

God bless you and make you a blessing to others as you become a workman with no need to be ashamed at the judgment seat of Christ because you correctly taught the Word of God.

Dick Woodward
Pastor and Author of the Mini Bible College

LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Mini Bible College has prepared this devotionally practical survey of the foundational books of the Bible. Your role as leader is to guide your group through the study sessions and exercises, helping them to understand the truth, discover the eternal principles, and, most importantly, apply them to their lives. This is a survey study that will take about four months and is designed to be more than just a course. This study is part of a strategic plan to provide you with the tools to nurture and grow personally and to help your church grow both spiritually and numerically.

To help you, we have provided the following tools:

- This Leader's Guide
- Report forms
- Audio of Introduction – Matthew (Audio Lessons New Testament 1-18)
- A study booklet on New Testament Introduction through Matthew
- A set of workbooks for the students

Before class

- Personally start inviting people to come to this spiritual banquet. "Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find." So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests" (Matthew 22:9-10).
- Prepare yourself in prayer for those who will attend. If possible, pray for them by name. Only God can change the hearts of people, and prayer is the most powerful tool. "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1).
- Ask for help. Do not try to do everything yourself. Invite one or two people to help with music, singing, greeting, and keeping records.
- Review the lesson and understand the lesson objective.
- Become familiar with the material; listen, read, and study each lesson and memorize the Bible verse before class time.
- Be sure all materials are ready for each class.
- Make sure the meeting area is adequate and comfortable for the class.

During Class

(Remember to try to keep the class time to 1½ hours.)

- Greet everyone as they arrive. Remember how nice it is when you are welcomed? Extend God's welcome to all. Have someone serve as the greeter and introduce people to one another if they are not already acquainted.
- Open with a time of worship and prayer, asking God to help you and each one understand and apply God's Word to your lives.
- Recite the memory verse.
- Listen to the audio lesson.

- Work through the workbook, inviting discussion with a focus on application. We trust the questions will raise interesting discussion and understanding that will lead to application. If the group is large (more than 10), consider dividing it into smaller groups of three or four people to encourage discussion. Be sure to monitor the time and be careful that the conversation does not detract from the focus of the lesson and the study of God's Word.
- Thank all for coming and encourage attendance at the next class.
- Challenge the students to invite others to join the Bible study.
- Encourage the students to memorize the biblical passages of the lessons each week.

After Each Class

- Gather up all materials.
- Restore the meeting room to the proper order. Leave things more orderly than you found them.
- Fill out and file report forms.
- If you are meeting in someone's home, be sure to thank them for their hospitality.

Special Instructions for Teaching Auditory Learners

It is important to remember that those who cannot read and write learn and retain information differently than those of us who are literate. The auditory learners learn from listening and telling what they have heard. Illiteracy was not an obstacle in Jesus' day. It is good to remember and even tell those in your class that most of the disciples and the majority of the people who first shared and spread the Gospel could not read or write.

In many ways, auditory learners have a greater capacity to learn what they hear than we who must write something down to remember it. Take the time, therefore, to allow your students to hear the Scripture and the lessons, pausing the message and even going back to listen again to a portion if it was not understood, and then allow them to respond to questions. When auditory learners can "story back"—tell in their own words what they have heard and learned—it indicates that they have properly grasped the principle. Therefore, use the study questions to guide the study time as it will help in the learning process. Ask the questions out loud and encourage all to participate. This will lead them into a deeper understanding of God's Word and a stronger relationship with His Son, Jesus the Christ.

The Best Books in the Bible

Chapter 1

Audio lesson: New Testament 1



Objective: To introduce the New Testament and explain why the gospels are the central purpose of Scripture.



“Study to present yourself approved unto God, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.”

—2 Timothy 2:15

Jesus said, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.”

—John 5:39

Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

—Luke 24:27

The first four books of the New Testament are called “gospels,” which means “good news.” They are often referred to as biographies of Jesus because we get our biographical information on Jesus’ life from them. They are not typical biographies like we have today, however, because the people who wrote them were not trying to tell Jesus’ entire life story. Two of these gospels do not even mention His birth or the first 30 years of His life.

These four gospels tell us about Jesus’ works, His teaching, and the redemption He brought to the world. By the time we have surveyed and summarized these inspired biographies, we will have gained a comprehensive insight into the life of a Man who only lived for 33 years, but who impacted the history of our world more than anyone else who ever lived.

The gospels show us that the whole Bible—both the Old and New Testaments—is all about Jesus Christ. They are therefore the most important books in the Bible, the key to understanding all of Scripture. As we will see, Jesus declared that He is at the center of God’s plan from beginning to end. Everything in Scripture points to Him and His plan to redeem and save lost mankind.

The gospels declare God to us because they present Jesus Christ, God’s greatest revelation of truth. Everything that Jesus was, everything that Jesus said and everything that Jesus did reveals God to us; that is why this study is so important.



1. True or **false**? Unlike the Old Testament books, there is only one kind of book in the New Testament.
2. **True** or false? The four Gospels are considered the heart of the Scripture.
3. **True** or false? The Gospels are like biographies of Jesus.
4. True or **false**? It is not important to study the Bible as long as we know its basic message.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How does someone get faith?
 - a. **By hearing or reading the Word of God**
 - b. By waiting for the miracle of faith to come
 - c. By being born to parents who have faith
 - d. By going on a pilgrimage and doing good works
6. Who is the main character of Scripture?
 - a. Moses
 - b. King David
 - c. **Jesus Christ**
 - d. The apostle Paul
7. What is the main purpose of the Bible?
 - a. It is a scientific manual.
 - b. It is a thorough history of civilization.
 - c. **It is a textbook on salvation.**
 - d. It is a list of what we should and should not do.

8. Which aspect of Jesus' ministry accurately revealed the truth about God?
- What He said and taught
 - What He did
 - His personality and character
 - All of the above**
9. Why did God come to us in the form of a man?
- To show us that He too was only a man before He became a god
 - To communicate His message to us in a way we could understand**
 - So He could rule over us as a human king
 - To correct the teachings He had given in the Old Testament as a Spirit
10. What is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament?
- The Old Testament is for Jews, and the New Testament is for everyone else.
 - The Old Testament tells us that Jesus Christ is coming, and the New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ came and is coming again.**
 - The Old Testament is full of inaccuracies, but the New Testament is entirely true.
 - The Old Testament was written by men, but the New Testament was written by Jesus Himself.
11. What should we do with what we learn in the Bible?
- Study carefully
 - Rightly explain the words of truth to others
 - Teach others who can then teach others
 - All of the above**



Why is the Gospel good news to you personally? What difference has it made (or can it make) in your life? Who do you need to share the good news with?



Thank God that He sent Jesus to bridge the separation between human beings and God. Ask Him to give you great insight as you study His Word in the next few weeks. Ask God to show you and give you courage to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.



Going Deeper

1. In what ways are the four Gospels not typical biographies of the life of Jesus? _____

2. In what ways was Jesus Christ the greatest Revelation of truth this world has ever received from God? (Consider John 1:18) _____

3. Why are the four Gospels the most important books in the Bible? (Consider John 5:39; Luke 24:27; 44, 45) _____

4. According to Luke 24:45, what truth did Jesus share with the apostles that opened their understanding, or their minds, that they might understand all of the Scriptures? _____

5. According to the Gospel of Mark, “Jesus came.” What differences did it make to this world that Jesus came? _____

6. Describe the spiritual dateline when “Jesus came” into your life. _____

7. What differences has the reality that “Jesus came” to you made in your life? _____
