

**8:** Be courageous to **lovingly correct or rebuke a disciple that is choosing to live in sin**. Do not remain silent or timid. Show the love of a brother or sister in Christ by caring enough to say something. It may be hard initially but chances are they will thank you one day for loving them that much. And make sure to have that initial conversation in private.

**9:** We recommend **moving from discipler to coach after 2 years of discipleship**. We want disciples to begin making disciples. This also means that we will free their time up to do this by no longer meeting weekly. Instead we will meet up with them monthly and encourage and support them as they make disciples. (It is also common to be discipling students who are also discipling others. This is a transition period of finishing the discipleship journey with the disciple while they are beginning to disciple others.)

**10:** Pray regularly for one another.

**11:** Pray regularly for lost friends.

**12:** **Love each other deeply** as God has called you.

# YEAR 1



## WEEK 1: TELLING YOUR STORY

**Note:** Below is information on how to facilitate the sharing of backstories with discipleship candidates. Of course, if you are meeting with students who have already committed, you can be more straightforward in this process.

You may have already heard a student's backstory. However, at this point, it is likely that you have set up a meeting for coffee or lunch with two or three other students, and none of the three may know much about the others. Say something like, *"Hey, I thought it would be good to get to know one another. So let's each take a little time to tell about ourselves. One way is just to share about your highlights, hard times and heroes. After you finish, the rest of us will take some time to ask questions to help us know you better. Are you willing to do that?"*

Because your group will probably only have time for one, or maybe two, stories, say, *"Hey, time is running short and I know you've got things to do. Would y'all be willing to meet up again next week at this same time to continue? I really value being in life with you guys and going farther than just 'sup?"* This now allows you to get a second meeting with them at the same time. You are already beginning to carve out a spot in their schedule for a consistent meeting. Sometimes it takes three weeks to share these backstories and that's okay.

## WEEK 2: TELLING YOUR STORY

Allow the last student(s) to share their backstory with appropriate follow-up questions from the group. After these two or three weeks are over, friendships are already beginning to form, even if they are shallow. Cool! This is a great start.

**Note:** You might end this time by taking them to a passage in the Bible and talking.

**Note:** Finally, wrap it up by sharing how much you appreciated hearing their stories. Then add something like this:

*"Hey. Now that we have gotten to know each other some, let's meet up again next week to look at a passage of Scripture together and start encouraging one another to grow in our relationships with Christ. Sound good? Bring your bible next week."*

## WEEK 3: SALVATION

**Introduction:** If a person is not sure of their salvation they can experience a great deal of doubt, insecurity and anxiety. This lack of assurance often moves a person to pursue good works in order to feel they are “good enough” for God’s love and approval. This solution never works. Instead, people working for God’s approval tend to experience a joyless life of legalism, self-loathing and eventually despair. [Note: If you aren’t sure that the people you’re getting to know are Christians, feel free to use the Salvation: Knowing God Personally lesson to more fully share the gospel.]

**Opener:** There is no better place to begin our spiritual journey together than the gospel. Everything in our relationship with God and all of life revolves around this gospel story of God seeking to redeem and renew what is broken and lost. Our faith hinges on this story and we should never tire of it nor grow dull in learning new and wonderful aspects of the gospel.

**Big Idea:** A person is saved through no other means than faith in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Jesus our Savior has paid for our sins in full and offers all people new life and a relationship with God.

**Passage(s):** Titus 3.3-7; End the lesson by reading 2.Cor 5.17

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity’s brokenness?

**Grace:** How does this passage point me/us to Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on that this week?

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.

## WEEK 4: BEING & MAKING DISCIPLES & DISCIPLESHIP CHALLENGE

**Introduction:** Note: You can skip this step if your students have already agreed to a formal discipleship relationship. However, either way, this step can be useful in clarifying and deepening commitment.

It’s now time to talk about moving ahead with this discipleship group. In this important lesson, you will talk about what it means to be a disciple, and what it means to make a disciple. This lesson will end with a challenge to moving forward with this discipleship group. This is important to set a strong challenge so that they understand that there is a cost and expectations involved.

**Big Idea:** To make official your discipleship relationship, teach the Biblical basis for discipleship and make the expectation of this relationship clear.

**Passage(s):** [The documents “Being & Making Disciples” and “Discipleship Challenge” can be found in the Appendix]

**Note:** It is critical to have a formal introduction and invitation into continuing this weekly Cru discipleship group. This **Discipleship Lesson** and **Discipleship Challenge** in the Appendix are excellent ways to do this. Make sure you are prepared in advance with this lesson. You can read through the Challenge page together so it is clear to them what you are inviting them to.

# ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

**Introduction:** If a person is not confident of their salvation they can experience a great deal of doubt, insecurity and anxiety. This lack of assurance often moves a person to pursue good works in order to feel they are finally “good enough” to be accepted. But...it never does. The result tends to be a joyless life of legalism, self-loathing and eventually despair.

**Opener:** Have you ever been in a relationship where you felt like you were “on pins and needles”, needing to be careful with every word and action? Maybe you felt this with a parent, teacher, or coach. Maybe you even felt this way with a so-called “friend”; someone you liked, but they did not treat you with compassion or unconditional love. It’s an “I can never do anything right” feeling with them because they are so critical. Tell about this relationship. Over time, how did you begin to behave around them? How would you summarize your relationship with that person?

**Big Idea:** A Christian can have assurance that they have eternal life based on the trustworthiness of God and His Word.

**Passage(s):** 1 John 5:9-13 or use Life Concept 1 (Assurance)

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity’s brokenness?

**Grace:** How does this passage point me/us to Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on that this week?

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.



*and what you have heard  
from me in the presence of  
many witnesses entrust to  
faithful men, who will be  
able to teach others also.*

—2 Timothy 2:2

# PRAYER

**Introduction:** Connecting with God through prayer allows us to see Jesus more clearly and grow in our relationship with him. Jesus himself took time to pull away from the crowds and spend time with his father. Now, we share in that same privilege.

**Opener:** There are few greater privileges we have as believers than having direct access to God at any moment of this life. And moreover, God desires our presence and relationship with Him.

**Big Idea:** As believers in Jesus, we can confidently come to God as our Father. Furthermore, Jesus models to us this relationship of talking with God.

**Passage(s):** Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 6:12

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity's brokenness?

**Grace:** How does this passage point me/us to Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on these truths this week?

**Suggested Practice:** Share with the group an area about which you feel that feels like God is ignoring in your life with the group. Pray each day this week that God would let you see this area of your life as He sees it. Try praying in the following the A.C.T.S. pattern:

**Adoration** (what is lovely and worthy about God)

**Confession** (sinful thoughts or acts to bring before God)

**Thanksgiving** (gratitude for His mercy and goodness)

**Supplication** (requests to the Father for yourself or others)

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.

# CONFESSION IN COMMUNITY

**Introduction:** True fellowship isn't just eating a meal together. It's about being honest with yourself, God, and others. That It includes admitting your sin and bringing it into the light.

**Opener:** People naturally want friendships. What are some of the differences between a surface friendship and deep friendship?

**Big Idea:** Being vulnerable, admitting we have sinned, and sharing that reality with God and others brings our sin to the light so that we can more fully experience both God's faithfulness and justice in forgiveness.

**Passage(s):** 1 John 1:5 – 2:2 or use Life Concept 2 (Forgiveness); End the lesson by reading James 5:16

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity's brokenness?

**Grace:** How does this passage point me/us to Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on that this week?

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.

**Suggestion:** Have everyone in the group contemplate one confession they need to share with someone, either 1) a personal sin they have done or 2) a forgiveness to ask of someone for a wrong done. This could be to a parent, roommate, professor, someone in this group, or someone else.

# MISSIONAL COMMUNITY: JOINING GOD'S MISSION

**Introduction:** Christians often speak about and organize ministry in ways that segments community and mission as if they were independent realms from one another. Biblically, the two are intertwined. The community of Father, Son and Spirit are on mission from the opening chapters of Genesis (even before Genesis: Read Eph.1.4). Those rescued from sin because of His mission, become a community of God's people—who are in turn sent out to labor with Him in His worldwide mission. Each enriches and is an inextricable part of the other.

**Opener:** People have long asked the question, “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” Here’s a spin on that with regard to following Christ. Which do you think came first, the mission of God, or godly community? How does each relate to the other?

**Big Idea:** You cannot have biblical mission without community. Nor can you have biblical community without mission.

**Passage(s):** John 13:34-35

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity's brokenness?

**Grace:** How does this passage point me/us to Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on that this week?

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.

# ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE: STEWARDSHIP

**Introduction:** Biblical realism requires a grasp of the brevity of our sojourn on earth. It's the understanding that our hope is fixed not on the prospects of this passing world but on the promises of the everlasting God. A growing realization of our mortality, and that of others, should cause us to treasure present opportunities, while fueling a sense of urgency in reaching out to others.

**Opener:** Suppose your doctor tells you, after a routine examination, that you have a terminal illness—that at best you have one year to live. How would this news affect your vision of life, your roles, and your investments of time or energy during your remaining year?

**Big Idea:** Every life, system or culture that is not built upon Christ and His Kingdom will pass away.

**Passage(s):** Intro: Ps 39:4-7 and Ps 90:12; Main: Lk 12.13-34; End with: 2 Pet 3.10

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity's brokenness?

**Grace:** How does this passage point me/us to Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on that this week?

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach. Suggestion: Next week do a field trip to the San Marcos Cemetery. (See Appendix in Discipleship Training for more thoughts on this suggestion.)

# SHARING THE GOSPEL

**Introduction:** The most effective way to share Knowing God Personally is to simply read through it completely with the person you are witnessing to. Fold the booklet in half and point along with your finger or pen as you read the words. No extras are needed. Just read the booklet. With this in mind, the **Big Six Questions** can be found online and serve only to clarify what is already in the booklet. It's ok if this lesson needs a couple weeks to cover it all. You want this to be a discussion and allow the others to ask questions along the way that they have had for years.

**Opener:** One great skill we can develop in being effective evangelists is the art of asking good questions and listening well. Today we are going to learn 6 simple questions that help clarify the Knowing God Personally booklet. You can memorize them in 5 minutes. These questions will let you know if the person you're witnessing to really understands the message in the booklet. They have to tell you what the booklet means – that's the secret. They will understand the Gospel because you will give them three opportunities to review the Biblical message of the booklet.


**Big Idea:** These six simple questions will let you know if the person you're witnessing to really understands the message in the booklet.

**Passage(s):** Introduction to Lesson: Romans 1.16-17 and 10.9-14


**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach. Suggestion: Take disciples to share their faith next week. Either break into a couple groups of 2 and go share, or invite someone that is new to Cru (VIP) to join you guys that week so you can discern where they are spiritually (see "Spiritual Journey" chart in Appendix of Discipleship Training) and then share the gospel. It is essential that your disciples see you walk through the gospel – perhaps using the KGP – so they can best learn through a real life situation.



go  
therefore



and make  
disciples



of all  
nations



**QUESTION 1: How would you define sin?**

This can be answered in one hundred different ways. In fact, there's no wrong answer. Anything that's not pleasing to God is sin. The person you're witnessing to is defining sin in their own words by giving you one example.

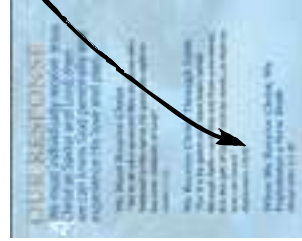
**QUESTION 2: Have you ever sinned before?**

This question on the surface sounds too simple, but it is perhaps the most significant in the booklet. To clearly and honestly admit that one has sinned, shows one's need for forgiveness. God's requirement to get into heaven is perfection, so because there's no humanly possible way to work back to perfection, the person you're talking to will be in a dilemma after they've answered this question.



**QUESTION 3: Why did Christ die on the cross?**

Don't answer this question for the person. Let them tell you first. The answer is found in the first five words of the next verse you'll read in 1 Corinthians 15:3-6. "Christ died for our sins..." That's the Gospel message — the good news. You will review this point again.



**QUESTION 4: What do you think this verse is saying? (Eph. 2:8-9)**

This is the big clarifying question. It allows you to see if they fully understand the first three points in the booklet. Go back and review by simply asking, "What is it that separates one from God?" Look at point three of the booklet and ask, "Once again, why did Christ die on the cross?" Ask, "Is there anything in our own power that we can do to get rid of our sin?" You've just reviewed the key points.



**QUESTION 5: What is the main difference between the circle on the left and the circle on the right?**

Again, give the person the opportunity to think about it and answer first. The answer is "the cross." In the circle on the left, Christ is outside of the life. In the circle on the right, Christ is in the life. Ask, "If Christ forgives someone of their sin, is there anything that would stand between them and God?" (Answer: no, Christ did it all on the cross.)



**QUESTION 6: What is the main thing that this prayer is saying?**

Yes, this is the third opportunity to let the person verbalize the message of the Gospel. (Answer: the third full line of the prayer; "I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord.")



# COMMUNION WITH GOD: SCRIPTURE OVERVIEW

**Introduction:** Helping your disciples develop a love of Scripture is one of the most important things you can do for them. If they fall in love with this book and begin to read it hungrily, it will change their lives.

You have two objectives in this lesson: 1. to explain the overall structure of the Bible so it's not so overwhelming, and 2. to motivate them to begin reading the Bible on their own.

**Opener:** Prayer is not the only way we connect with God. Prayer is how we speak to Him, but He also desires to speak to us. One of the most important ways He does this is through His Word, the Bible. The Bible is not a collection of religious stories, but the "inspired" Word of God, spoken and written through human servants through His Spirit.

Psalms 138 says that God has exalted His Word above all things. Since He values it so highly, it's imperative that we also exalt it. However, the Bible is pretty huge and can be quite intimidating. You may hear passages quoted from Habakkuk or Jude, but unless you have some context, those labels have very little meaning. Yet with just a little explanation of the structure and flow of the Bible, you will find that it is much less intimidating. What follows the big picture of the Bible. These points can serve as "hooks" upon which to hang the passages you read and messages you hear in the future.

**Big Idea:** All of Scripture is God's Word to us and is beneficial for every part of our lives.

[Open up your Bible with them, show them the table of contents and flip through the Word to explain the information below.]

**A Book of Books:** The Bible is actually a library of 66 books, written by around 40 authors in 3 different languages and on 3 different continents over a period of more than 2500 years. Yet the Bible has one central theme: God's rescue of His creation from sin through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Structure:** The Bible divides into two basic sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. "Testament" is another word for covenant or promise. Thus, the Bible is a book about God's promises to us.

**Old Testament:** There are 39 books written from about 2500 BC till about 400 BC. They are broken into 4 sections in this order: **1) Law [5 books], 2) History [12 books], 3) Poetry [5 books], and 4) Prophets [5 major, 12 minor].** The first section is the story of God forming His own people and nation. The second section continues the story of Israel's entrance, exile and return to their land. The third section is various poetic books of wisdom, prayer, praise, and lament. Finally, the fourth section is the prophets who spoke and wrote oracles of God to warn Israel to turn from their rebellion and to offer hope of a coming King and Kingdom that would set things alright.

**New Testament:** There are 27 books which were all written between about AD 40 and AD 90. These are also broken into 4 sections in this order. **1) Narratives [4 Gospels of Jesus and the 1 Acts of the Apostles], 2) Letters from Paul [9 to churches, 4 to individuals], 3) Letters from Others [9 letters], and 4) Prophetic [1].** The 4 Gospels (Matthew-John) tell of Jesus becoming King through the story of His birth, life, death on the cross, resurrection, and ascension to His throne by the Father. Acts continues the story of Jesus' Kingdom through the birth and spread of the Church, His people of the new covenant or promise. The letters of Paul usually address certain problems or needs of the early churches or church leaders. The next nine letters do the same, but are written by other early church leaders and apostles. Finally the Biblical story ends with Revelation, the apocalyptic story of how history comes to an end and gives way to a renewed heaven and earth.

Let's look at a couple of passages real quick from two different letters in the New Testament.

**Passage(s):** 2 Tim. 3:16-17

[Focus on points that every part of the Bible is: 1) "breathed" by God, His revealing of Himself; and 2) "profitable" or a great benefit to our lives. They will study this passage more in depth in a later lesson.]

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity's brokenness?

**Grace:** How do these passages point toward the redemptive work of Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on that this week?

**Practice:** Let's develop a pattern of regular devotional time ("quiet times") with the Lord—dialoging with Him through Scripture and prayer. We will continue the A.C.T.S. pattern of prayer, but now insert a time in Scripture in the middle so that your devotional time might look something like this:

### Talk to God

**Adoration:** "Lord, I praise you for ... (some quality of attribute of God)."

**Confession:** "Lord, forgive me for ... (for some sin or shortcoming)."

### Listen to God

Prayerfully read a **passage**. What does it say?

Prayerfully reflect on its **meaning**. What does it mean?

Prayerfully apply it to **life**. What does it mean for me?

### Talk to God

**Thanksgiving:** "Lord, I thank you for ... (some specific blessing)"

**Supplication:** "Lord, I ask you for ... (requests for self & others)."

Talk to God, listen to God, and then talk to God again. It's that easy.

If you get used to this basic template and meeting with God every day, you'll be feeling closer to God, living in his grace, growing in holiness, maturing in your understanding of his Word, experiencing his forgiveness—re-warding stuff. But, remember, the key to all of this is creating the habit and being intentional. Make time each day when this routine can take place.

[Challenge them to choose a Gospel or letter in the New Testament and read one chapter a day over the next week.]

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.

# GOD'S STORY & OUR STORY: WITNESSING

**Introduction:** The mission of God goes forward only to the extent His people are faithful to testify who Jesus is and what He has done. He has entrusted us with His message, and with sharing what He has done for us, what He continues to do in us, and what He will do. Every follower of Jesus is able and obligated to do this, yet only in the power of His Spirit within us.

[Feel free fill out together the worksheets in the Appendix taken from Cru-press Green on witnessing and the Holy Spirit]

**Opener:** What is something that only you possess, that grows more powerful the more you give it away, and has the power to change the course of other's lives? [Let them guess.] It your story, or—more specifically—God's story in and through you. We often call it your "testimony."

**Big Idea:** Being a witness is not an option, but how we witness is (i.e. our unique manner and story in the power of the Spirit).

**Passage(s):** Acts 1:1-9 (esp. 8)

**Know:** What is God saying in this passage?

**Brokenness:** What does this passage reveal about my/humanity's brokenness?

**Grace:** How does this passage point me/us to Christ?

**Do:** What is God wanting us to do?

**Response:** How will you act on that this week?

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.

# BIBLE STUDY SKILLS 1 — OBSERVATION: LETTING THE TEXT SPEAK FOR ITSELF

*i don't want to  
be loved or have a  
purpose for my life  
—no one ever*

**Introduction:** Please take a few weeks to work through this together. By and large, we are not good at listening. We often don't even grant the God of the universe the common courtesy of listening. He has spoken to us through His Word. As we learn to study the Bible such that the Scripture is allowed to "speak for itself," we grow in our ability to listen attentively to our Creator. We don't want to miss a word He has to say.

**Opener:** Today's lesson will help you become a better observer of Scripture, and not merely a reader. The better you are at observing God's Word, the better opportunity you will have to truly hear what He has to say to you. We want to give you **3** helpful tools to add to your Bible study toolbox: **context; emphasis; structure**. But first, let's have a little observation competition.

**Big Idea:** Better observation of God's Word enables better hearing of what He has to say to us.

**Passage(s):** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Turn to 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17. For 5 minutes (somebody time it) write down as many observations about 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as possible. No cheating or sharing thoughts yet. See who comes up with the most observations.

[Take a few minutes to hear from each person. Maybe "the winner" gets a soft drink. Discuss what makes for good observation and what might have surprised them about the exercise.]

In an earlier lesson, we looked at these verses and highlighted the point that Scripture—all of it—is "profitable," or helpful, to us because it is the very Word of God on a page. Every passage of the Bible is "God-breathed."

Today we are going to zero in on the first way Scripture profits the ones who

avail themselves to it—“teaching.” All Scripture is profitable for teaching. In other words, when we read a passage of Scripture, God wants to reveal something to us. Every time we open the Bible, we are encountering God’s Word to us. Developing your skills of observation will help you better discern God’s Word, or Revelation, to you.

There are a few tools of observation that are essential to begin your observation repertoire. From there you can continue adding more tools over time.

### 3 Tools of Observation:

#### #1: Context

In literature, and certainly in the study of God’s Word, context is king! What is context? Context is what comes with or around (“con”) the text in mind. Particularly, we are thinking about the words surrounding the word or verse or passage you are studying.

Why is context so important? The meaning of a text is determined by the text surrounding it.

Here is a simple (and goofy) example. The Bible says, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” But if you begin to quote that about yourself, you get locked up in a padded dorm with no furniture. But you were only quoting and applying Scripture. What would be so wrong? The obvious answer is that the two words just before this phrase make all the difference. “Jesus said…” Jesus is the Way, not you or anyone else. (John 14:6).

A word or phrase is within the context of a sentence. That sentence is within the context of a paragraph. That paragraph is within the context of a scene or, poem or chapter. And that chapter is within the context of the entire book or letter.

**Content Practice:** Take 5 minutes again to make observations, but instead of reading 2 Timothy 3:16-17 alone. Look over the whole chapter (or beyond) and make some contextual observations about what surrounds 3:16-17.

[Take a few minutes to discuss what they saw and what they think are some significant points of context. What do they believe is the biggest idea the author is trying to communicate here and why?]

#### #2: Emphasis

A significant question would be to ask if there is something the author is

trying to emphasize in 2 Timothy 3. The fact is, we might all have different ideas about what that is, but is there any evidence we can observe to get at what the author (and God through him) is trying to say in any portion of Scripture?

Absolutely! The answer is **emphasis**. How do writers give emphasis to their main ideas so the readers don’t miss them? There are several ways, but we will focus on two: repetition and proportion.

**Repetition:** This can simply be a word or phrase that is repeated (e.g. “love” through 1 John, “one” in John 17, or “strong and courageous” in Joshua). Sometimes it is not the exact word, but similar words or ideas. (e.g., the idea of “authority” pops up throughout the entire Gospel of Luke; similar ideas like “knowledge,” “wisdom,” “revelation” and “insight” in Ephesians 1).

**Proportion:** Sometimes it is not so much the repetition of a thought, but the amount of space given to a thought (as compared to the rest of the chapter or book) that is significant. For instance, why would Luke take so much space to list a genealogy after Jesus’ baptism in Luke 3 and before His temptation in the wilderness in Luke 4? Hmmm. It seems he wants to emphasize something.

**Emphasis Practice:** Take another 5 minutes look over 2 Timothy 3 and see if you can spot what the Apostle Paul (the author) seems to be emphasizing.

[Take a few minutes to discuss what they saw and what they believe Paul is emphasizing in 2 Timothy 3. Make sure they point to the text to show their “evidence.”]

#### #3: Structure

Structure is what gives order and movement to any medium of art or communication. For example, the structure of a movie is its plot, and we’ve all suffered through shows that seem to be missing one. Structure is what holds any work together including God’s Word.

Structure has many elements and can vary depending on whether it is a narrative, a letter or poetry, etc. We will limit ourselves to **2** main categories: **connectors** and **pivot points**.

**Connectors:** These are words and phrases that connect a line of thought. They reveal important relationships. Below are a few of the main categories of structure and typical words for each.

*Reason or Cause:* for, because, therefore, for this reason

*Contrast:* but, rather, instead, on the contrary

*Comparison:* like, as

*Purpose:* so that, to, in order to, (sometimes also, “for this reason”)

**Pivot Point:** A pivot point is when there is an abrupt shift in subject, scene or tone. It may be a shift within a few verses, like the shift between Psalm 1 verses 3 and 4. It also can be a larger turn in the direction of a whole book, such as Romans 12:1. Often connectors such as “Therefore,” “But” or “However” highlight a major pivot point, but not always. Keep your eye out for these because they truly help you understand what God is trying to say.

**Structure Practice:** One last time, take another 5 minutes look over 2 Timothy 3, but this time do it together. As one of you reads out loud the others point out significant connectors and see whether there is a pivot point in this chapter or not. (There will not always be a pivot point.)

**Practice:** This week everyone should take some time to read through the New Testament letter of 2 Timothy.

It is a relatively short book (letter). The first time, try to read it in one sitting without making any particular observations. Notice who is writing the letter. To whom is it written? Do we know (or have any clues) why he is writing this letter? This will help you get an overall idea of the context.

Each day afterward, try to read a chapter and make observations. We recommend you use a Bible you don't mind marking up with colored pencils or pens using symbols to indicate your observations. Here are some suggested symbols.

*Repetition:* Circle key words, phrases, or ideas that are repeated in order to identify what is being emphasized. Use different colors as there may be more than one repeated element in a passage. Sometimes there are several!

*Proportion:* You can simply draw a bracket down the margin indicating where the “them” or subject began and where it ends.

*Connectors:* Draw a box with a pen around connecting words to highlight the structure and flow of the passages.

*Pivot Points:* Draw a diamond in the margin next to pivot points to indicate a major shift in subject, scene or tone. (Note: There are rarely more than one or two pivot points, and sometimes there are none in a whole book.)

**Important:** Don't be content to simply make observations about the text, but ask God how He wants you to respond to what you are observing—and thus, hearing—from Him.

[Next week share with one another what you “heard” God say to you through this intensely personal letter.]

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.

# BIBLE STUDY SKILLS 2 — INTERPRETATION: HEARING THE MUSIC OF THE GOSPEL

**Introduction:** Our tendency sometimes is to approach the Bible as a “how-to” manual for life. Clearly the Bible has a great deal to say about good and wise living, but that is not its main purpose. Scripture is intended to show both our need for and the beauty of our Savior. It draws us to Jesus.

**Big Idea:** If we would live Gospel-centered lives, then we must learn to “hear the music of the Gospel” every time we encounter God’s Word.

[Feel free to read together the excerpt in the Appendix taken from “HEARING THE MUSIC OF THE GOSPEL Christ-Centered Bible Study” by Keith E. Johnson, Ph.D.; Crupress Green]

## **Passage(s):** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

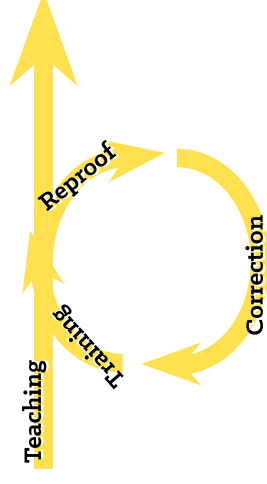
Let’s return to the passage we looked at before, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. To review, we have considered initially how all Scripture is “profitable” because every passage of the Bible is “God-breathed.” It is from Him to us.

Last week we focused attention on the first way Scripture benefits us, namely through “teaching.” Every passage is an opportunity to have God’s Word revealed to us. Over the past week(s), you practiced some skills of observation to develop your ability to discern what God is saying in the text.

[Take a few minutes for each of you to share one or two observations that really opened up some part of the letter of 2 Timothy for you. As you share, be sure to name what kind of observation you made (i.e., context, emphasis or structure) and in which verse or passage you found it.]

Today we are going to continue the process mapped out in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. You might think of the profitable aspects of Scripture in verse 16 as just a list. But look again. Do you notice how that list progresses? First it teaches,

then it improves, then corrects, and finally it trains in righteousness. It’s helpful to think of it as a person walking a path.



The Bible is like a map for life. However, it is not simply about getting us through this life efficiently and as comfortable as possible. It points us to the Author of Life Himself and to know Him and His will. And... it helps us to walk with Him. It teaches the way. It improves us when we stray. It shows us how to return and so corrects us. And finally, it trains us to walk in the way of Christ.

Teaching. Reproof. Correction. Training. That is the process and benefit(s) of God’s Word.

Last week we looked at Teaching. Today we will look at the next two together—Reproof and Correction. They represent the two components of the Gospel that the author of the article above is encouraging us to see—our brokenness and God’s provision.

## **2 Parts to “Hearing the Gospel”:**

### **#1 Brokenness (Fallen Condition)**

The term gospel literally means “good news.” It is the good news of Jesus’ rescue of a people and (eventually) His creation from the presence and effects of sin. Yet it is often observed that the Gospel isn’t good news until one has first acknowledged the bad news of their own sin, guilt and powerlessness to address it. Until we see that, we will not cling to hope in Jesus.

God’s Word is always pointing us to the Gospel of Jesus. That means part of its purpose is to reveal our desperate need for Him and His grace. Therefore, the Word of God is designed, not merely to teach you, but to expose the sinful condition of your heart (Hebrews 4:12-13).

All of us continue to struggle with wrong beliefs, motives and actions, even after we first experience the grace of forgiveness of God through Christ. This is what theologians call our Fallen Condition (FC), though one day it will be finally removed when Jesus returns. God is already begun in that process now, and Scripture is one of the primary ways He reveals those areas in our lives that still need the redemptive healing of the Gospel.

Thus, after taking time to observe a passage carefully and to discern the main the God seems to be saying to you through the text, the next thing you should do is ask a couple of questions.

First, is the question of the (FC). What does this passage reveal about my (or humanity's) brokenness and sin that requires the grace of God? The answer to that question is the reproofing aspect of God's Word.

## #2: **Grace (Redemptive Solution)**

Unfortunately, many Christians seem to stop there. They simply see the Bible as teaching some truths and telling us where we fall short. But wouldn't you expect the Father who sent His own Son for us to have a much greater purpose than that for His Word?

Scripture points us to Christ! If we miss this, then we have reverted back to religion and away from relationship. If we miss Christ, we step toward legalism and away from joy and life. Though Christ will not be explicitly mentioned in most of the passages of Scripture, Jesus Himself said they all point to Him (John 5:39). That is, all the Bible is continually pointing us to rely upon God's provision for our brokenness through Jesus Christ.

There fore, the second thing to ask regards the question of the Redemptive Solution (RS) in the passage (or surrounding context). How does this passage point me to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ?

[Take a few minutes to discuss how these questions might be answered from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and the surrounding context of Chapter 3. What brokenness or sin is stated or implied (FC)? Likewise, where do they see Paul pointing to Christ (or what He has provided) in these or the surrounding verse? Why do they think that?]

**Practice:** "Hearing the music of the Gospel" as you read Scripture is an art and skill you can cultivate over time, but it will take practice. We want you to begin reading Scripture with these two questions in mind: 1) what does

this passage reveal about my spiritual brokenness that requires the redemptive work of Christ?; and 2) how does this passage point me to Christ?

As a group, continue studying the letter of 2 Timothy together. Only now, take the observations you have already made into consideration as you move through each passage again. Each day you should keep a journal or notebook and write down: what passage you read (e.g., Galatians 1); what that passage revealed about your brokenness; and how it pointed you to Jesus.

Everyone should bring their journals next week and share some of the things the Lord is showing you.

**Pray:** Share updates and pray for 1-2 people you are trying to reach.