

## KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE: Series Intro, for Young People and Adults, 3 pgs

This series incorporates TRAINING [showing, demonstrating, and helping discipline - *my part. Your part* is practicing, exercising, working through] as well as TEACHING [instructing, directing your thinking (*mine*); thinking about it (*yours*)]. **There is much so-called Bible teaching that isn't actually derived from the Scriptures, but is imposed upon them by pre-conceived notions.** By the same token, there is teaching that doesn't represent the flow of thought or is disconnected from the conclusions. There are all kinds of Bible "lessons" that teach good things, but there is not so much that connects the life-lessons with the written word. Too often we only see isolated stories, bits and pieces of the whole. **This series is designed to help you discover the focus of all the Scriptures** - to reveal **the key that unlocks the whole Bible.** It is a bridge between Bible knowledge and understanding (the integration of the parts) which gets at the meaning of biblical events, persons, symbols, and teachings.

**Complete the following saying:** Give a man a fish and ... <sup>1</sup>

What is this saying about? Let's start by categorizing it [see apdx.1 of God's Training -1]. Is it a command? A blessing? A proverb? What? <sup>2</sup> [categories must be defined to be useful] **Expanding your frame of reference:** Your efforts to help someone are most effective when you teach [train & help] them to take care of themselves. Let's consider the saying more carefully. So, don't give people anything? *No, that's not the point!* The saying has to do with **the relative merits** of making someone self-sufficient as opposed to your regularly providing for their needs [this has many ramifications such as, you are not just helping him but by extension, his family, friends, and community because he can provide for and train others in turn]. *Do not give the devil an opportunity. The one who steals must steal no longer; instead he must labor, doing good with his own hands, so that he will have something to share with the one who has need* [a complete reversal of motives and goals], **Eph.4:27-28.**

**Love is giving to the basic needs of another.** *When the girl possessed by the devil continually disrupted Paul's meetings, he could have become angry and frustrated by her disturbances. Instead her disruption made him keenly aware of her spiritual needs and resulted in her healing and the authentication of Paul's Gospel to the glory of God, Acts 16:16-18.*

**The second line in the saying** is more accurately stated as *train* a man to fish ... because he needs you go with him to get the right gear for the type of fish he will be going for, a casting net, traps; buy, find, or trap bait; set up the line, bait the hook(s) or traps; show him where to fish, the best conditions, time of day, etc. He needs more than you're telling and showing him. He needs to **practice, coaching, and perhaps financing** to get him started and build his skill level. **This is HOW we love one another and where the blessing for us lies.** Taking a support role in helping them overcome obstacles and achieve their goals will result in joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment for us, **Phil.2:3-4.** So, in answer to our first question, Is it a command? A blessing? A proverb? **Or a principle?** YES, all of these elements are represented by the saying.

Does anyone disagree with this? I've never heard of anyone disagreeing with it in principle, but in practice, we often revert to giving away fish because it is quick and easy. I liken **giving** fish to *teaching*, meaning that knowledge and wisdom gained through study, research, and hard work is

freely conveyed to others who have expended no effort of their own. **The key to learning and becoming proficient at almost anything** – plane geometry; a second language; playing a banjo; boxing; pruning peach trees; etc. involves both **instruction and focused supervised practice**, and that takes your time and personal involvement. It is through these that one makes a start and gains proficiency. Without the discipline of the exercises, there will be little progress. **Improvement and competence are the expectations of practice.**

There is **a basic assumption at the root of this course** – the Bible discusses real truth, not something vaguely religious which seems to work psychologically. This means that when we consider the Gospel or witness to someone, we are talking about real moral guilt before the God who is there. We are not merely offering him relief from guilt-feelings. When we read the Bible, we are reading history. The death of Jesus is not just an ideal or a symbol but a space-time event, the meaning of which the NT explains.

One of the goals of this series is to gain a clear understanding of what you believe and why you believe it to be true. Relating this to Christianity practically means learning to believe God and trust him. Our approach will be (1) examine what the Bible says and (2) think through what it means by what it says. To these 2 criteria let us add a third: Ask yourself How do I apply the teachings and principles (3) What is God calling me to do or stop doing? To merely address a needy person's immediate concerns? or to use that occasion as an opportunity to speak truth and God's love to their hearts? For example let's say I'm using a plumber's snake to unclog a drain at Bill's house and I remark this will solve all your problems [drainage or life – double entendre]. Bill says "yeah right"! His actual words sound like he is agreeing with me, it sure will, our worries will be over! But is that what he really needs? No, deep down, it is the opposite, not very likely. **The language of affirmation in this example is sarcastically expressing skepticism as it applies to his life.** Is this not why you are there? Yes to help out with his immediate needs ... and yes to address his conscience and his real spiritual needs. What can you do about that?

*... [as a matter of **obedience** , discipline yourself to] **continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling [before God, fearing not to do what you know to be right] , for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose, Phil.2:12-13 .***

1. he eats [or you feed him] for a day. Train a man to fish and he eats [or feeds himself] for a lifetime.

2. A Principle, see God's Training-6, p.3-4

## LESSON PLAN

1<sup>st</sup> – the subject and theme of the Bible, 3 pgs

2<sup>nd</sup> – Christ our Sabbath, 3 pgs

3<sup>rd</sup> – Christ's work, 2 pgs

4<sup>th</sup> – Christ's work continued, 3 pgs

5<sup>th</sup> – What God requires of us, 2 pgs

6<sup>th</sup> – Tracing the Kingdom of God through the Bible, 3 pgs

7<sup>th</sup> – Kingdom verses, 2 pgs

**8<sup>th</sup>** – Christophanies; offices of Christ, 3 pgs

**9<sup>th</sup>** – Christ in the Covenants, 4 pgs

**10<sup>th</sup>** – New Covenant, 2 pgs