

Small Group Guide

HOW SHOULD WE PURSUE BIBLICAL TRAINING?

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. Bart Box

August 9, 2009

Colossians 1:27-29

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Explain that every year around this time school begins for all kinds of students—from kindergarten to post-graduate school. Ask: **What do we consider to be the purpose of school, from the most elementary to the most advanced?** Allow learners to discuss their answers. Then explain that today we will discuss the purpose of biblical training in the church.

Option 2

Ask: **Who would consider themselves to be “lifetime learners?”** Explain that many people are continually seeking to formally learn something, whether officially pursuing a degree or just taking a community class. Then, ask: **How does God call all of us as believers to be “lifetime learners?”** Allow learners to discuss their answers. Explain that today we will discuss how we can pursue training as lifetime spiritual learners.

Review the Message . . .

We pursue Biblical training by...

- Relying upon divine revelation, not human speculation
 - We do not adhere to what our minds can devise; we cling to what our God has disclosed
 - Two implications...
 - Because our source is revelation, the content of our study is determined
 - Because revelation is divine, the content of our study is authoritative

Discussion . . .

- Remind learners that Dr. Box defined biblical training as “the equipping of God’s people through God’s Word.” How does this definition sum up the purpose and the method of biblical training?
- Enlist a learner to read Colossians 1:25-27. What is the content of Paul’s preaching? How did he come to know the Word of God to preach?

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- Read Colossians 2:8. In Paul's warning, what two foundations for teaching does he contrast?
- What does Paul's admonishment about empty teaching illustrate about the authority of God's Word?

Application . . .

- Why is it important to study and teach the Word of God instead of truths derived from human understanding?
- When is human thought appropriate to use when studying the Word of God?
- In practical terms, how do we often demonstrate that we consider personal experience and thought to have as much authority as, if not more than, the Word of God?
- Why do we put more effort into studying or reading books about the Bible or about God rather than the Word of God itself?

- Instructing everyone in the body, not just an elite few
 - Spiritual hierarchy in the church is not only divisive and contrary to the Spirit of Christ, it is deficient and contrary to the will of Christ
 - All the truth of God is for all the people of God

Discussion . . .

- Enlist a learner to read Colossians 1:28.
- For whom did Paul say that biblical training was intended?
- Read Ephesians 4:11-12. Why did Paul say that God gave gifts? Who was intended to do the work of the church?
- What does the responsibility of all people in the church demonstrate about God's plan for the church?

Application . . .

- Why do we often delegate our responsibilities in the church to staff or other leaders?
- What are the excuses we use in order to not be involved in the work of the church? Which of these excuses are rational?
- What steps can we take to remedy any real needs in our lives so that we can become part of the work of Christ in our church?
- What is the difference in Paul's training and our tendency to solely hand out good books to read?

- Seeking conformity to Christ, not intellectual superiority
 - The measure of our training is our maturity in Christ

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“One can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of him.... We find in ourselves a deep interest in theology. We read books about God and theology. We learn to find our way around in the Scriptures. Others appreciate our interest in these things, and we find ourselves asked to give our opinion in public on this or that Christian question, to lead study groups, etc.... All very fine—yet interest in theology and knowledge about God...is not at all the same thing as knowing him.” J.I. Packer

- True knowledge of Him results in real obedience to Him

Discussion . . .

- Enlist a learner to read Colossians 1:28-29.
- What was Paul’s purpose in training every person?
- Who did Paul indicate was the power behind the training that he did?
- Enlist two learners to read Colossians 1:9-10 and 2:6-7. What did Paul indicate in these verses was the fruit of truly receiving teaching?

Application . . .

- What is the expressed purpose for the teaching that we lead or receive? What is the practical purpose?
- How do we contribute to the problem of complacent spiritual maturity even in the midst of biblical teaching?
- What are some false indicators of spiritual maturity that we often mistake for spiritual fruit? What are some true ones, according to Scripture?

Bottom line...

God wills for His people to rely upon His Word so that they reflect the Word, Jesus Christ. May we give ourselves to the study of God’s Word in such a way that Christ is clearly seen.

Application . . .

- How can we become more involved with biblical training—in receiving and teaching?