

## GOALS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

1. Teach the group members to study the Bible by means of at least one method
2. Make an appointment to regularly study the Bible together

## I. WORSHIP (14 min.)

## 1. Prayer

*Pray* that God will guide us through his Spirit; that we will be aware of his presence and that we will listen to what he says.

## 2. Meditation

Worship is to admire and praise God that he has revealed himself and his Word in Jesus Christ.

**Theme: To praise Jesus Christ as the Word**

*Read* the Bible verses mentioned below and the explanation. Or explain the verses in your own words.

**John 1:1-18**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome (or: understood) it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

<sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who

comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

- Why is Jesus Christ called 'the Word'?
- What is revealed about Jesus Christ as the Word?
- Compare John 1:18 with the following: John 14:6, 17:17 and Matthew 11:25-27.

**John 14:6**

<sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**John 17:17**

<sup>17</sup>Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

**Matthew 11:25-27**

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. <sup>26</sup>Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. <sup>27</sup>"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

## 3. Worship

*Let* everyone in the small group take a turn to worship (in one or two sentences) Jesus Christ as the One who revealed God.

## II. INTRODUCTION THEME (1 min.)

**The theme for this meeting is: Bible study**

*Read or explain in your own words.*

## 1. The main goal of the Bible

The One and Only God has revealed himself in the creation, in the events of salvation history, in the words of the Old Testament prophets, and finally in the person, words, deeds, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the testimony of the apostles about Jesus Christ

This revelation has been recorded in the Bible by men and women who were inspired by the Spirit of God.

## 2. The importance of the Bible

The Bible is absolutely true and the rule of all spiritual and moral truth. The Bible is God's last and final words to man and reveals what man must know, believe, be and do. The Bible is the most important book in the world and in history!

## 3. The contents of the Bible

The Bible describes the beginning of all things, the goal and purpose of life, the end of this universe and finally eternal life in the presence of God on the new earth.

That is why it is so important to read and study the Bible regularly.

## III. SHARING OF QUIET TIMES (30 min.)

*Let everyone in the small group take a turn to share (or read) what he has learned from one of the assigned quiet times.*

### Theme: Studying the Bible

Day 1	Ezra 7:10 What you must do before you teach God's Word to others
Day 2	Acts 17:10-12 Test preachers and teachers of the Bible whether they explain the Bible correctly
Day 3	James 1:19-25 God's Word saves you and blesses all you do when you do what it says
Day 4	1 Peter 1:22 - 2:2 God's Word takes care of spiritual growth and ultimately perfect salvation
Day 5 <sup>BS</sup>	2 Timothy 3:10 - 4:5 Continue in what you have learned from the Bible
Day 6	Hebrews 5:11-14 Distinguish good from evil by constant use of the teachings from the Bible
Day 7	John 5:39-40 It is dangerous to diligently study the Bible without the intent to obey it
Day 8	Acts 17:1-4 Participate in a Bible Study every week <sup>1</sup>
Day 9	Mark 4:24-25 The size of the measure you use to measure God's Word to yourself and others <sup>2</sup>
Day 10	Luke 2:46-47 Jesus listened, asked questions and shared his insights during Bible Study

## IV. ADDITIONAL SHARING (15 min.)

Part IV is optional.

If after sharing quiet times there is still time left over, the following may serve as subjects for conversation.

### 1. Discussing the study

*Discuss* the study with reference to the questions mentioned below:

#### Theme: Five practical methods for Bible Study

- What are the advantages of the 5 step method of Bible Study?
- What are the advantages of studying one verse, passage or chapter in the Bible?
- What is the intention of studying a theme or topic in the Bible?
- Whose life in Bible history would you like to study?

### 2. Commitment

*Let the group members* consider the following question and record their answer:

"How important do you think is regular Bible Study?"

### 3. Personal sharing

*Discuss* personal growth and commitment. Who would like to share a difficulty or blessing in his/her personal life? What are your thoughts or feelings?

## V. MEMORISATION (5 min.)

### 1. Review of previous Bible verses

*Let* pairs of group members review each other's previously memorised Bible verses (the last memorised Bible verse or the last 5 memorised Bible verses).

### 2. Memorisation of the new Bible verse

*Explain* the meaning of the new Bible verse.

#### BIBLE STUDY

#### Acts 17:11

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

**Acts 17:11 (NIV)**

## VI. BIBLE STUDY (45 min.)

**Theme: Continue in what you have learned from the Bible and proclaim it**

### 1. Bible Study

*Make use of the 5 step method and study:*

#### 2 Timothy 3:10 – 4:5

2 Timothy 3

<sup>10</sup> You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,

<sup>11</sup> persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. <sup>12</sup> In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup> while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> (Literally:) so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4

<sup>1</sup> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

<sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be prepared (be ready) in season and out of season; correct (convince, refute), rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

### 2. Emphasis

The Bible is the most unique book in history! Its like does not exist! It is the only book that reveals God and his will. It is God's standard of truth and absolute rule for doctrine and life - what man must believe and how he must live.

### 3. Explanation for the group leader

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy in 64 A.D. from his second imprisonment in Rome. A short while later he was executed (2 Timothy 4:6). There are two parts:

### Part 1: Stick to the sound teaching of the Bible (3:10-17).

#### 3:10-11. The sound teaching versus false teaching

“You, however”. In the light of the fact that evil people and false teachers (con-men) will keep coming (1 Timothy 1:6-10; 2 Timothy 3:1-9), Timothy must devote himself to stick to the sound teaching of the Bible and walk according to it. By being with Paul those many years, Paul taught him from the Bible what the sound Christian teaching (doctrine) and the sound Christian life is!

#### Follow the good example

Verse 10 in the Greek says, “You ... have (observed, studied, accepted and) copied (Greek: parakoloutheo) my model.” Timothy did this from 50 to 64 A.D.

The first 7 of the 9 examples are expressions of active obedience: “my teaching, my way of living, my purpose (plan, way of thinking, resolve, will) (Greek: prothesis), faith, patience, love, perseverance”. There was no contradiction between the teaching of Paul and his way of life (cf. Matthew 23:3). His purpose or view of life is formulated in Acts 20:24, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race, and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace” (cf. John 4:34; 17:4; Colossians 4:17). Paul practised to be patient and to persevere in whatever circumstances he found himself. He showed love to friend and foe.

The last two examples are expressions of passive obedience: “my persecutions and sufferings”. Paul suffered persecutions, especially during his first missionary journey (Acts chapters 13-14). He was driven out of Antioch (Acts 13:44-52). He was threatened to be stoned in Iconium (Acts 14:1-7). He was actually stoned in Lystra (Acts 14:8-20). Timothy, who probably lived in Lystra (Acts 16:1), had seen this with his own eyes and was deeply impressed by Paul’s life with Christ!

“Yet, the Lord rescued me from all of them.” The Lord always rescues his people: often from death and finally through death! But never can anyone or anything separate the Christian from God’s love for him (Romans 8:38-39)!

#### 3:12. Christians will be persecuted

A godly life is a life dedicated to live with and for Jesus Christ. Such bears much fruit (John 15:5,8). A godly Christian does not lock the people of the world out of his life, but includes them without making compromises. He continues to confront the sinful and unjust world. That is why he is persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12; 10:28; John 15:18-20; 16:1-4,33; 1 Thessalonians 3:4)!

### **3:13. Evil people only become more evil**

The approach of evil people is to deceive and seduce people. That is their weapon of attack, but at the same time that is the weapon that defeats them. They think that they would gain success and happiness by doing evil, but do not realise that their evil will destroy them. Their own weapons will eliminate them (cf. Proverbs 26:27).

### **3:14-15. Knowledge of the Bible is necessary to develop biblical convictions**

But Timothy is different and follows the good example! The word 'You' is put in the front for emphasis. "Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of". A Christian should continue throughout his whole life to develop his own convictions. First his grandmother and mother influenced his convictions about Jesus Christ from the Bible (1 Timothy 1:5). Later Paul helped him to develop new and deeper convictions from the Bible.

### **The task of teaching children**

The Christian father, supported by the Christian mother, has the task to teach the children in the truth of the Bible to his children and to exercise them in obeying it (Ephesians 6:4; cf. Deuteronomy 6:5-9). And if the father is not a Christian, then the Christian mother should do this, as in Timothy's case. And if both parents are not Christians, then other Christian teachers should do this (Matthew 28:19).

The Bible exhorts Christian children to take the teaching of their parents serious (Proverbs 23:22-25). A child may never be given the freedom to only do what it likes to do. The Bible teaches that every child is by nature sinful (Psalm 51:5) and thus not able by itself to find the right way (Romans 8:7-8). Jesus invites children to come to him (Mark 10:14-15). All Christians should invite children to come to Jesus Christ

### **3:16. The whole Bible is inspired by God!**

Verse 16 may not be translated, "Every Scripture that is inspired by God is useful for ....", because it leaves the door open for the interpreter to determine which part of the Bible is inspired by God and which is not. People who wrongly interpret verse 16 in this way set themselves above God's Word and create liberalism. This was not what Paul wrote!

The only correct translation of verse 16 is, "All Scripture is God-breathed (Greek: theopneustos) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." This translation fully agrees with what Jesus Christ teaches in John 14:26 and John 16:13-14 and what the apostle Peter teaches in 2 Peter 1:20-21!

Already in the year 63 A.D. the apostle Peter wrote that the Bible consisted of "the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets" (i.e. the Old Testament period), "the

command given by our Lord and Saviour through his apostles (the four Gospels in the New Testament) and "what Paul wrote in all his letters" (2 Peter 3:1-2,15-16).

The whole Bible is God's Word. The whole Bible (every part of it) is inspired by God (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21). The contents of the whole Bible is infallible (for example, in its teachings, commands, prohibitions and relating of history). The whole Bible is useful for all Christians. The whole Bible is God's last and final word to people on earth (Hebrews 1:1-2) about what they must believe (i.e. doctrine) and what they must obey (i.e. ethics)!

### **The whole Bible is useful for training and equipping**

The whole Bible is useful for:

- teaching the truth: what you must believe and how you must live (where one must go)
- rebuking human lies and transgressions (where one loses the way)
- correcting (how one must find the right way again)
- training in righteousness (how one stays on the right way)
- equipping in every good work (what one does as task or ministry in life).

### **3:17 Becoming a man of God**

The translation of verse 17 from the Greek is as follows: "so that the man of God may be complete (fulfil all requirements) (Greek: artios) and thoroughly equipped (furnished, supplied with what is needed) (Greek: exertismenos) for every good work."

There were two great influences that helped Timothy to become a man of God: his teachers (3:14b) and the Bible (3:15-16). His teachers (grandmother, mother and Paul) faithful taught the truth of the Bible and modelled the Christian life. The Bible must be explained correctly (2 Timothy 2:15) and the teachers must model the Christian life (Hebrews 17:7)!

These two cannot and may not be separated from one another as if they are two different sources for the Christian revelation: one - the Bible and two - the tradition of the Church through godly Christians. There is only one revelation from God: it is recorded in the Bible and it is modelled by Christians. The Christians or the Church may not add new or different revelation to the Bible (1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19)! The oral traditions of the early Church fathers (their recorded sermons), the teachings of modern preachers (teachers) and Christian books MUST all be tested by the truth in the Bible (Acts 17:11)! They NEVER become a part of God's revelation (a part of the Canon of the Bible)!

The better Timothy got to know the Bible and his teacher Paul, the more convinced he became that Paul was a teacher true to the Bible.

The goal of the Bible is not merely to increase our knowledge of God and his will, but also to transform us so that we become more and more like Jesus Christ. The Bible is God's instrument through which he makes a person a godly man, complete (fulfilling all the necessary requirements) (Greek *artios*) and equipped (furnished, supplied with what is needed) (Greek: *exertismenos*). The Bible is God's instrument through which he enables the Christian to fulfil all God's necessary requirements to become what God wants him to become and what God wants him to give his life to (Matthew 5:48; Ephesians 4:12-13). The Bible is God's instrument through which he equips the Christians with everything he needs to fulfil his task in life and his ministry in God's kingdom.

## Part 2: Proclaim the sound teaching of the Bible (4:1-5)

### 4:1-2. Commission to Timothy

In the light of the fact that evil people and deceivers keep coming to turn people into victims and cause the great apostasy before the second coming of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4), Timothy must all the more devote himself to proclaiming the sound teaching.

With this farewell letter Paul charged (Greek: *diamarturomai*) Timothy to continue the great commission which Jesus Christ had entrusted to Paul. Paul passed the torch on to Timothy! And to Day the torch is passed on to us!

Paul emphasises the fact that Jesus Christ is going to judge the living and the dead at his second coming (his appearing). The coming judgement is a recurrent topic of Paul (Acts 17:31; Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Then God's kingdom will reach its final perfect phase.

### 4:2. Timothy's job-description

Preach the word; be prepared (stand by, be ready) in season and out of season; correct (convince, refute), rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. The verbs are commands: you must proclaim, correct, rebuke and encourage.

(1) *Preach (proclaim) (Greek: kerusso) the Word* as a herald

(2) *Be prepared (stand ready, be ready) (Greek: ephistemi):* to proclaim God's Word (the Bible) whether it is convenient or inconvenient, that is, whether people welcome it or do not want to hear it.

(3) *Convince and refute: (Greek: elengcho):* The Greek word is very rich and has several different shades of meaning: bring their thoughts, motives, attitudes and behaviour into the light (expose them); rebuke them; convince them of the truth; convict them of what is

wrong; refute their arguments, objections and excuses; and punish them if necessary.

(4) *Reprove (warn, censure, punish) (Greek: epitimao).*

The Greek word is rich and has the following shades of meaning: warn them; censure their words and behaviour; and reprove them. The intention is to reprove and warn so that they will stop doing evil.

(5) *Encourage (spur on) (Greek: parakaleo) with great patience and careful instruction:* Do this like a loving father (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). The words: refute, reprove and encourage should be done with great patience and careful instruction from the Bible. Patience is needed towards those who transgress. Instruction is needed to find God's way again.

### 4:3-4. The time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine

Such a time comes again and again in different countries on earth.

First, people become careless and negligent. Then they become irritated against the claims of God and his Word, because they feel censured. They criticise the Bible and with it the God who reveals himself in the Bible. Finally, they become openly hostile against Christians, against the Bible and against the God who revealed himself in the Bible.

They gather teachers (of sects, cults and other religions) around them who say what they want to hear; who do not criticise their lies and sinful behaviour. They hire lawyers to change the constitution and the legal system of the country in order to forbid Christians to proclaim the Christian Faith anywhere. The final end of this process is the coming of the antichrist (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8a).

### 4:5. The job-description of Christians

(1) *To live sober:* that is, to be free from every form of mental and spiritual drunkenness. They must be free from every form of excess. They must be self-disciplined. They must stay free from extravagance, superabundance (having too much of a good thing); from being overhasty and rash; from recklessness and confusion. They must live balanced and self-controlled.

(2) *Proclaim the gospel.* This may happen in many different ways: one on one, in a small group, to a crowd, by means of the mass media, by word, play, deeds of mercy and love.

(3) *Fulfil your task.* Discharge all the duties of your ministry. Be someone who finishes the race (2 Timothy 4:7), someone who fulfils his God-given task (John 4:34;

17:4; Acts 20:24; Colossians 4:17) and after having fought the good fight remain standing (Ephesians 6:13)

#### VII. PRAYER (8 min.)

*Pray* with one another in response to what God said to you during this gathering. Let every group member take a turn to pray one or two sentences about what God taught

him during this meeting.

*Pray* with one another for one another (Romans 15:30) and for other people (Colossians 4:12).

#### VIII. THE NEXT MEETING (2 min.)

*Hand out* the preparation for the next gathering.