

**Elements of Productive Bible Study: Teach**

Scripture: 1 Timothy 5:17

Code: B121004

Early on in my ministry, I discovered the best way to mentally retain something is to teach it to others. Preparing sermons each week has a way of drilling God's truth into your head. And the things I study deeply to teach to my congregation are the things I have the easiest time remembering.

So when it comes to getting the most out of God's Word, one of the best ways to cement His truth into your mind is to *teach* it.

You may not have a congregation, but there are other venues and situations that will afford you the blessings and benefits of preparing to teach God's Word. You could start a Bible study at work or out of your home, volunteer for local outreach through your church, lead a Sunday school class, help with your church's youth ministry, or preach the gospel in open-air evangelism in your community. Even setting aside time for a simple family devotional should give you opportunities to study and teach God's Word.

Regardless of the venue, one of the primary blessings of teaching the Bible is that you're forced to master the material if you're going to effectively communicate it to others. The pressure to get the message right is a good thing—it forces you to make good use of your time and study diligently.

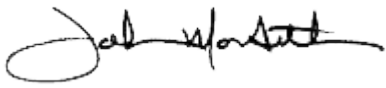
I know that no matter what else is going on in my life, I have to be ready to preach on Sunday. It's an inflexible deadline. I can't drag my feet and say I'll have it ready by Tuesday—there won't be anyone to hear it on Tuesday! The burden of preparing from week to week is actually a great blessing. It's a powerful encouragement to budget my time and discipline myself for the sake of God's truth.

The pressures of teaching should also keep you grounded in God's Word. If you're only reading and studying the Bible for your own benefit, you're more prone to subjective interpretation and application. You start to see Scripture only in terms of what it means to you and for you.

Studying to teach God's Word forces you back to timeless truth and the universal implications of that truth. It drives you back to the original audience and what the passage meant to them. In fact, it helps reinforce the importance of many of the interpretive principles we discussed last week. And it pushes you past your own spiritual needs and circumstances and helps you bring God's eternal truth to bear on the lives of His people.

Not everyone is meant to be a full-time Bible teacher—your spiritual gifts might make you useful to the body of Christ in other ways. But without a doubt, there are people in your life who are less spiritually mature and have less biblical understanding than you. Studying Scripture with not only your own spiritual benefit in mind, but theirs also, will help you get the most from God's Word.





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