

# Evaluating Bible Studies

Women's Leadership Conference

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Mequon Wisconsin

# Importance of Topic

Why is this topic important to you?

Why is this topic important to God?

**Jeremiah 23:25; 28-30 (NIV) — 25** “**I have heard** what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’ .....**28** Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word **speak it faithfully** For what has **straw** to do with **grain?**” declares the LORD. **29** “Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? **30** “Therefore,” declares the LORD, “**I am against** the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me.

2 Peter 3:17–18 (NIV) — 17 Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, **be on your guard** so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. 18 But **grow in the grace** and **knowledge of our Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

# What's it all about?

**Acts 8:30–34 (NIV) — 30** Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. **31** “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” .... **32** The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, .... **34** The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, **who is the prophet talking about himself or someone else ?**”

# What's it all about?

**Luke 24:44–49 (NIV)** — **44** He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” **45** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. **46** He told them, **“This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day; 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins** will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

# His Story Before My Story

This “test” has to do with the question,  
“What is the focus of this Bible study?”

Does it put the focus more on me and what I should do?

Does it put the focus more on Christ and what

he has done

he is doing

he will do for us all?

Nehemiah is a powerful biblical case study on Christian leadership.

1. Being a leader requires prayer, planning, courage, hard work and perseverance.
2. In order to lead, we must listen for God's direction in our lives.
3. Positive expectations are never a substitute for doing the difficult work.
4. God uses each person in a unique way to accomplish his work.
5. Seemingly impossible tasks can be accomplished when God is helping those who honor him.

# Look for Pure Grace

Unconditional grace = grace ALONE without....

ifs, ands or buts

gospel PLUS anything = no gospel

The catholic Church teaches that we are saved by the grace and mercy of God.

"Not by works" means that we do not earn our way to Heaven. There is no quota in regards to how many people you feed, how many people you help, how many prayers you say, etc.

If we are faithful to God, He will be faithful to us. How does a person be faithful to God? By following His commandments, specifically, "You shall love your God with all of your heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself"

From what I understand as well, Christ offers His grace on the conditions of repentance. True repentance is a change of heart, which to me, implies a good deal of effort/"work". It is after we have exerted ourselves and put forth our best effort, that Christ uses His grace to make up for all that we lack--and we all lack a lot.

Hence the scripture that is most often quoted .....on the subject, "**ye are saved by grace, after all that ye can do.**"

We do believe that it is grace that redeems men from sin.

Crossing thresholds is a part of the Christian journey. It is not possible for us to move forward without crossing some thresholds into new places, new experiences, new opportunities, and new victories the Lord has waiting for us on the other side. While it takes faith and obedience to cross a threshold, it also takes faith and obedience to remain on the other side of the threshold and possess the promises of God.

**Galatians 3:1–3 (NIV) — 1** You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. **2** I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? **3** Are you so foolish? **After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?**

# Condemning law before guiding law

Law as a mirror shows us our sin. It accuses and condemns, striking terror in the heart.

Law as a guide shows us the kind of life that pleases God.

Both are important, but helping people understand the reality of sin and their need for the Savior is the law's most important function.

4 However, the chief function or power of the law is to make original sin manifest and show man to what utter depths his nature has fallen and how corrupt it has become. So the law must tell him that he neither has nor cares for God or that he worships strange gods—something that he would not have believed before without a knowledge of the law. Thus he is terror-stricken and humbled, becomes despondent and despairing, anxiously desires help but does not know where to find it, and begins to be alienated from God, to murmur, etc. Smalcald Articles, Part 3 , II “The Law”

# Indicatives before Imperatives

Here's who you are...in Christ!

Now be who you are!

**Romans 6:1–4 (NIV) — 1** What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? **2** By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? **3** Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life...

**Romans 6:10–11 (NIV) — 10** The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. **11** In the same way, **count yourselves** dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

# Inductive before deductive

Drawing truth from Scripture book by book

Makes for a stronger study than topical approach

Obviously and again: not either...or

Problem: it's all too easy to find what you're looking for than to see what's actually there

# Following an Orderly Process

Involve the pastor early in the process.

He is responsible for the flock and its growth.

Sometimes errors are very subtle.

Sometimes the timing may be wrong

Consider a Women's Bible Study curriculum.