

Discipleship Questions

How does gospel work require understanding God's word?

How does gospel work require explaining God's word?

How can the Scriptures be used to either enlighten or confuse?

How did Paul change how he reasoned with people depending on his audience?

How is understanding where someone is in their understanding important to explaining the Scriptures?

What are some critical foundations people need to establish for their faith?

Why is it important to discern the real issue that must be addressed?

Why is it important to make sure you use Scripture properly?



The work of making disciples for Jesus Christ is the great mission Jesus has given all His disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). It should be considered a great privilege for any disciple to take part in fulfilling this mission. Since making disciples for Jesus involves people understanding God's word, it is critical to develop the skill of explaining the Scriptures in a logical and understandable way. For if you cannot logically explain the Scriptures to help people understand what Jesus teaches and how it applies to their lives and the world around them, you will not help them follow Christ. Consider, therefore, some Scriptures to help you learn to logically explain the Scriptures to others.

Nehemiah 8:1-12

The Jews had been rebuilding in Jerusalem after their Babylonian captivity. Physical things had been rebuilt, but they still needed to be rebuilt spiritually. In this text, the people asked for the book containing the Law of Moses to be read to them. So, as they gathered to hear the Law read, it was both read and explained so that the people would understand it. The people then recognized they had not been obedient to it and sought to do so (e.g., Nehemiah 8:13-18). Certainly, your goal in doing gospel work must be to help people understand God's word so that they obey it! This will require you to understand the Scriptures, knowing both what is taught and how to apply them. Then, it will require the ability to communicate that knowledge with others so they can understand God's teaching and what it requires of them.

Luke 24:25-32, 44-49

Jesus helped His disciples understand the events that transpired concerning His death, burial, and resurrection in light of the Scriptures. Jesus's focus

was on using reason/logic to explain how the prophecies of the Old Testament pointed to His suffering, death, and resurrection (e.g., Isaiah 53; Psalm 22). Like Jesus, you must strive to explain the Scriptures in a reasonable/logical way that opens hearts. Unfortunately, the opposite can also happen. The Scriptures can be explained in a way that confuses and/or misses the point of what needs to be communicated. Therefore, your commitment needs to be focused on helping people on a journey of enlightenment and understanding from the Scriptures rather than just talking about whatever point or topic may interest you at the time.

Acts 17:1-4

As Paul taught a Jewish audience in the synagogue, he reasoned to help them understand what they were missing concerning Jesus as the Messiah. Notice that he did not use his own personal opinions to do so. Rather, as they accepted the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, he used them to explain and prove that Jesus really is the Messiah, and how His suffering and resurrection were necessary and the fulfillment of the Scriptures. Similarly, you need to understand where people are in their faith so you can help them progress. If they recognize the authority of the Scriptures, you should work to explain and prove what they need to understand and how they can apply it to their lives. But, you must do so by showing what the text actually teaches – not by giving your own opinions about things.

Acts 17:16-17, 22-31

When Paul traveled to Athens, he had the opportunity to teach both Jews and Gentiles there. Notice, however, that helping them follow Jesus looked different because they were at different starting points. With the Jews, Paul would have reasoned from the Scriptures concerning Jesus as the Messiah (as in Acts 17:1-4). However, with the idolatrous Gentiles, they did not even accept the true God and would not have embraced the Scriptures as authoritative. So, Paul had to reason with them to help them see the true God they should have been serving (demonstrating the illogical nature of the things they had believed). Similarly, you will need to understand the starting point for those you are trying to lead to Christ. Help them take logical and reasonable steps to grow their understanding and faith. While there are certainly many big and challenging truths people must embrace in following Jesus, building the proper foundations for these things is critical. For example, discussing God's view of homosexuality will not be particularly profitable if the person does not believe in God, accept the Bible as authoritative, or understand what makes something sinful. Consider the following critical foundations to build: God, the soul and afterlife, the Bible, sin, Jesus, salvation, the church, Christian living.

Matthew 22:23-33

Jesus responded in this text to a question that may have seemed difficult to answer initially, after a detailed scenario was painted for him. However, Jesus did not get distracted chasing all sorts of different topics as He responded. Instead, Jesus recognized that their question centered around the resurrection. Furthermore, Jesus knew that the people who were asking this (Sadducees) did not believe in the resurrection (or spirit, Acts 23:8). In His response, Jesus pointed to their error in not knowing the Scriptures and reasoned with them using a Scripture from when Moses was at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5-6). He taught a lesson based on God being (“I am”) the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even though they had died physically. In this, gospel workers should learn to properly identify the real issue that needs to be addressed and be able to make logical arguments that correct flawed understanding and action.

2 Peter 3:14-18

There are many false teachers in this world (2 Peter 2:1-3). You must be aware of this for multiple reasons. There are many who twist the Scriptures and teach error through misinterpreting and misapplying them. You must certainly be careful so that you are not led away by them. Furthermore, this has made many people leery of those who want to teach them the Scriptures. As you go about trying to do gospel work, therefore, you must put in the work that is necessary to make sure you are not twisting the Scriptures in any way. The last thing you should want to do in your gospel work is to mislead others to their spiritual destruction! To avoid this, you must make sure you are understanding and explaining Scripture according to their proper contexts and in ways that harmonize with other Scripture.

Conclusion

People need help going from where they are to where they need to be, but often don't know how to get there themselves. In fact, many do not even recognize they are not where they need to be! So, the gospel worker must be able to understand where people are in their understanding and application of Scripture and be able to guide them into a more accurate and complete understanding of God's words. Therefore, rather than just looking to communicate any information from Scripture, you ought to focus on skillfully and logically explaining Scripture in a way that will help people know what God's word teaches and how they should apply it!

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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