

Bible Study Leaders

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Date: 09 May 2026

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[0 : 00] Thanks, Brian, and thank you everybody for coming along. I know it's a Saturday morning, there's probably many other things you could be doing, but I would take it as a sign of care for your Bible study groups that you're here to think and think about this.

Now, as Brian said, we've got to think a little bit about engaging people with the Scriptures, but what I'm also hoping is that some of the ideas we'll be talking about will probably remind you of stuff that you already know and hopefully take you a little bit deeper, but they'll apply generally to leading groups as well.

So it's not just engaging with the Bible, but there'll be application into thinking about what happens during a Bible study group or a teaching session with people, different kind of applications that's there.

So the first point I simply want to make is that we can't think enough about the people to whom we minister. Now, a great theologian said this, a man named Carl Hart, and his point was that when we're involved in Christian ministry, if you're leading a Bible study group, you are, you're thinking a lot about the Scriptures, absolutely, but you're also teaching the Scriptures to people, and the more that we can know about people individually and as a group, then the more effective our teaching will be.

We move from text to audience, and when we're teaching or preaching or engage with people, we're always keeping those two things nearby. And today, as I say, we want to think a little bit about teaching the Bible, which means we're going to be thinking about the people that we're teaching to and what we can learn from particularly some fields of education.

[1 : 45] Now, I'm going to focus a little bit on teaching. My background was in primary school teaching, and then also in theological education. And so I'm going to talk about teaching, but it won't get too technical or anything like that.

But we're all engaged, if we're leading a Bible study, in some form of teaching. So I hope that will make sense. When we are teaching, what's our goal? And what are we trying to achieve? And usually the answer is something like learning.

If we're teaching, we're engaged in helping people to learn. But what does learning mean? How can I facilitate it? And how does learning happen? Are all questions that we are either unconsciously asking or sometimes consciously asking.

So I think if I said to you, you know, what does learning mean? Some might say, well, it's kind of accumulating tax or something like that.

But then we also know that it's more than that, because we want our children to learn not to go near a fire. Now, the fact is, fire is hot. But that may mean that they go to it or not. But they won't go to it. If they don't put their hands in it, we know they've learned something.

[3 : 06] There's more. How can we facilitate learning is a question that teachers are always asking. And I guess that's what we're asking in our Bible study groups. And that kind of begs the question, how does learning happen?

How do we learn things? And we rarely reflect on this, because we don't have to, because we're learning things all the time. And it's an unconscious process. And sometimes the task is to try and bring the unconscious to a conscious level so that we can attend to it, which is what we'll be doing today.

So very simply, we're going to be helping people to, by us, to think about, we're going to be asking, how can we help people to attend to Scripture?

We're going to be asking, how do we help people to engage in Scripture? And that is to bring about change. So we'll be thinking about each of these elements. How do we help people to attend that at

the Bible?

How do we help people, therefore, to engage with it? And that will be a question of how they receive information and how they process it. And all of that is with a view to bringing about change, because, as you all know, we don't study the Scriptures simply to know the Scriptures.

[4 : 21] We study the Scriptures to know the Lord and to be changed with every increasing degree of glory into His likeness through the knowledge of His Word. So I'm just going to take this two very simple ideas today.

The first simple idea is, people learn sort of the same. And then the second is exactly the opposite. People learn differently. So we're going to be looking at those two very simple ideas.

This first one, fairly quickly, and then we're going to spend a little bit more time thinking about the differences. So people learn sort of the same, and then people learn differently.

Now, that's not saying anything you don't know, because we all know people are different. But how do we think about those differences is where we're going to go. But first of all, let's think about how people learn sort of the same.

And this is a little circle that comes from the field of adult learning theory. And it's what's called the adult learning cycle. You can always call it a learning cycle.

[5 : 21] And the idea is that we use learning starts with a concrete experience. That experience gets reflected on. It then gets conceptualised into a broader spectrum of learning.

And then eventually it leads to an outcome or an experience of experimentation. So we move from experience to reflection to theory to action. And again, that may sound fairly obvious.

There's another version of that on your outline there, which just helps us to think a little bit more about this. So we have lots of experiences.

In fact, we have more experiences than we could. Life is an experience. This is an experience right now. Your breakfast this morning was an experience. We have all sorts of experiences.

Some experiences we learn from. Some we don't, because we don't need to. And so they can be formal and informal. This is a more formal learning experience.

[6 : 22] When you go outside and you trip over the concrete block that's meant to stop the water, that'll be an informal experience there. That just kind of happens.

Do we learn from these things? Well, we don't learn from every experience. Sometimes we wish our children good learning from their experiences. If you learn repeatedly from an experience, that's what we call conditioning.

And so sometimes you say things. An experience happens over and over again. And eventually you'll learn. So in my marriage, after a while, I learned that my wife particularly doesn't like to talk about it too much before she has a coffee in the morning.

And that was kind of a hard-won experience over a number of arguments and why you're doing this. Okay? But eventually I become conditioned. I don't talk to my wife much before she's had a cup of coffee in the morning.

Which is certainly a much happier mood. Now, we all have experiences like that. We know not to go near poisonous snakes, not to read green toes or whatever they are.

[7 : 25] That's the accumulating experience that comes in. But reflection is really focusing attention on the experience. So if something happens to you and you think, I've really got to think about that.

I've really got to think about that. And why did I respond the way I did? How can I learn from it? What can I do? Then you add it to what you already know. And then finally you come to an outcome.

You try out a new way of learning in an experience that's there. So these are called... We will each prefer a different part of the cycle.

So some of us are what we call activists. We just love experiences. We like getting into it. Okay?

Some of us are what we would call reflectors. And we think a lot about what happens to us.

Some of us are theorists. We always try to integrate knowledge into a broader thing. And some of us are what we call pragmatists. We just want to get on with it.

[8 : 29] Let's get to the solution and get to that as quickly as possible. So let me give you an example. What do you do when you receive a new electronic gadget?

Okay? It comes in a box to your house from Amazon. It's been delivered. What do you do? Well, the activist just rips the box open, throws all the bits out, and then tries to put them together.

Okay? They want to get into it. The theorist... Sorry, the theorist will get out the manual. Okay? They will read the manual very carefully through.

Then they'll read a book on electronics. And they might even read another book on the theory of AI or whatever the thing's related to, and build it up. Well, they've got a little bit kind of a searcher here, but they will build it up into a big theory of everything.

The reflector will put the box down, go and get a cup of tea, think about it, maybe ring their mum, have a discussion, and eventually they'll get to it. And the activist, or the pragmatist, will read the manual, but they'll only read the bits they need to read.

[9 : 35] So they'll think, I know about this, but I'll go to page five because that's telling me something that I really need to know, which I don't already know. And then after a while, the activist will come over to the reflector and just take the box off and rip it over and do it for me.

Because again, they're getting so frustrated with the reflector that's there. Each of us will have a little bit of a preference. Some of us will be, by nature, activists. Some of us will be reflectors. Some of us will be theorists. Some of us will be, that doesn't mean we can't do all these things. But we have a preference. We like to engage with material at that level.

So again, in our household, my wife is an activist that annoys me intensely. Whenever we get anything new, she just opens the box, gets it out, and then tries to work out how to do it.

I would much rather read the manual, find out how to get on with it, and do it properly. And eventually, if I take it off her, because I read the manual, we can get it all fixed. So the classic thing is, how do we get the clock working on the microwave?

[10 : 39] So she's just pushing buttons of hope in, and randomly it'll happen. I'm thinking, if you just read page five, it will tell you. Okay? Okay? Okay? Okay? So we both approach tasks at a different kind of level.

So there's the cycle. Now, the point here is very simply, that for a successful learning experience, we move people, or we move through, all elements of the process.

So we need to, we need to, we experience things, we need to review and reflect. We can make conclusions, and then we make a plan.

And with a Bible study, what we're simply saying, is that we can move through this process, we have an experience of Scripture, to reflect on it, using questions.

Often we will cast that into a bigger theory, maybe a doctrine, or something in the Bible, in the Bible, elsewhere. And then, but eventually, we need to actually come up with an application.

[11 : 41] And often what happens in Bible studies, we're very good at this, we can experience the Scriptures, I mean, it's easy, all you've got to do is read it. Okay? We're good at reflecting on it, maybe not so good on theorising, and often don't get to this part.

That a successful learning experience, moves through all of the stages, to try and bring us from observation, or experience, through to action.

Because the Lord wants us not simply to be hearers of the word, but to be doers, quoting James. So this is just a way of thinking.

And it's worth, I know, I think a lot of you are using commercially produced materials, or using materials from somewhere else. This is not a bad little grid just to run over the material, to see whether it's helping you to move through each stage of the learning cycle.

No doubt it will be asking you to read a portion of Scripture, and no doubt it will be getting you to reflect using questions. But is it helping you to integrate the teaching of that particular passage into the bigger picture of the Bible, into the kind of the theorist level?

[12 : 54] And is there a practical outcome that comes? Some of you are writing your own materials. And again, if you just think, broadly speaking, of moving through this cycle, then this may help you.

Just to think about, where would I miss? And a lot of people kind of gravitate around this area, and they will not think too much about this plan.

No, it's there. The other thing that this cycle can help us, and now we're starting to move into the area of differences, this can also explain some people's responses in a Bible study group.

So an activist, the person who likes the experience, can sometimes get bored with traditional comprehension questions, because they think, come on, let's get onto it.

Let's do something else. And sometimes they'll also get bored with long series. Six weeks and we're still in John's gossip. Can't we move on to something else? That kind of idea.

[13:56] Reflectors can often frustrate a group, because they won't say much, but then ten minutes after the discussion's moved on, they'll say something and want to drag the discussion back to a point that was already made, because they've been reflecting on it.

And so they've just been sitting quietly and listening, and suddenly they think, oh, you know what we said five minutes ago? You know, we've moved on. I don't know. The reflector has kind of done their bit that's there.

The theorist can get bogged down in details, and say, oh, this connects to that, this connects to that, this connects to that, what about this? And it can kind of grind things to a little bit of a halt. And the pragmatists can get frustrated, because we never get to the action point. So they'll be saying, come on, let's move on. Let's get to that. What can we do? What should we be doing? And that kind of thing.

So different reactions in different groups. So if we understand this, then it can maybe help us to think about what's going on in a Bible study group.

[14:54] So two applications. One, check your materials to see whether it's moving through the learning cycle. Or when you're writing materials, see if you can make sure that it's moving through the learning cycle.

And then two, this starts to give us a little bit of a handle on some of the possible differences of people in our group. Now, difference is not a problem. We're all different.

We're all dealing with difference all the time. And if you're thinking, you know, that one of these is absolutely right, that's because that's your preference. I wish everyone was a reflector. But then that would be a very quiet group.

We'd all just be sitting, not saying much, you know, and basically trying to get there. We need, every group needs all of these people. It's just a question of understanding that we can sometimes come in from different areas that we need to do.

There's also a little bit of an age dimension in this. If you're dealing with younger people, they're more likely to be on the do and pragmatist end. Just by nature of maturity and all the rest, though, that's not to discount the fact that there are obviously very thoughtful young people as well, and so on.

[16:03] And that will interact with other differences that are there. So that's a very simple point. That's a very, fundamental learning theory that we work with our experiences, we reflect on them, we then integrate them into what we already know, and then we make changes.

And if you think about it, that's a process that happens all the time as we go through life in informal and informal situations.

So the experience here is what I've just said. Some of you are reflecting on it and still processing it. Others are putting it into connection with other learning theories that you know.

And others are grateful that I've at least said something which is an outcome, but you wish I'd said a little bit more about what the implications of this are. But all of us are hopefully moving through that. And my suggestion is at least at the end for the practice is that you use this to evaluate your material or to provide your material. So, I don't know, that's a successful learning experience, but that's a learning experience that we've just had together with this now.

[17:11] So, first simple idea, people learn sort of the same. Second simple idea, people learn differently. So, there's the...

So, we're over on to the second page. So, three quick points. First of all, what we're doing in this session is what we call robbing the Egyptians.

Now, if you know the story of Exodus, when the people of Exodus came out of Egypt, the Egyptian people gave them gold and precious stones to send them on their way.

That's often known as robbing the Egyptians even though the Egyptians gave it to them. And so, the idea is that there's good things out there in the world and we can borrow and use those things. But that always comes with a warning. Because what did the people of God do with the gold that they robbed from the Egyptians? They made a golden calf. Okay? They made an idol and took them away from the Lord.

[18:16] So, what we want to do is this is a little bit of a general principle for interacting with the world is we want to rob the Egyptians. God's common grace means that we can learn all sorts of things from research and other fields and all the rest of it.

But we've got to be wary that we don't turn it into an idol, a golden calf and misuse it. So, what we're doing in this is we're going to be using some educational theory which has been developed for the world of education.

We're robbing the Egyptians or the Americans or the Swiss or whoever it is. Okay? But we're hopefully not going to turn it into an idol which is going to replace the role of the Holy Spirit and all the rest of what we're doing.

What I'm going to be doing is talking about preferences for learning in two modes. And the point I want to make here as we do that is that it is all about preferences not about ironclad options.

So, I'm going to be talking about whether you're a visual learner or a oral learner or a kinesthetic learner. And that doesn't mean if you're a visual learner that you can't learn orally or kinesthetically.

[19 : 25] It just means that is your preference for learning. We have preferences for the way that we receive information. We have preferences for the way that we process information. But that doesn't mean that's the only way that we can receive all the preference information.

So, if I if I had a tennis ball here and I threw it to you you would catch it with your right hand or your left hand. Or you would be so nervous you fumble it and drop it and I can't do it because you'll fumble.

But normally you would express a preference to your right hand or your left hand. If I threw a ball to your wrong hand you could catch it. You're just a bit more comfortable catching it with the right hand.

And so what we're doing here is talking about what people are comfortable with doesn't mean they can't catch with their left hand but a preference is there. And it's all about your perception of your preferences and we're going to I'll be a little bit clearer when we get through.

There are different ways of people of thinking about differences. So people used to talk about right brain and left brain thinking. That was one way.

[20 : 31] Some people are more right brain which from memory is kind of technical. Left brain is more creative. I could have got that around the wrong way. I'm not sure. When I was having a discussion earlier this week and people were talking about their Myers-Briggs score.

And that's a very famous kind of inventory of personality which kind of gives you four spheres and each has got two holes and then you end up with 16 different personality types which a lot of people find helpful in learning how to work with each other.

We talk about how to receive information and we'll talk about that particularly and we also talk about how to process information and we'll talk about that as well.

Now these theories have kind of come in and out of fashion in education particularly when it comes to a thing called mind styles or the way the brain works.

There's been a lot of new work in the brain that's come and so some of these sometimes people say these theories don't quite match up with what we know of how the brain works.

[21 : 42] Most teachers intuitively recognise that there's a little bit of truth in all of these things. But people say the whole idea of styles would be you receive information doesn't really work well in a classroom it kind of does because there are kids that really do like receiving information visually and orally and all the rest.

So we're kind of between what the experts are saying and what practical experience is telling us and I've chosen two things that I think you'll recognise and that I've found to be fairly helpful in thinking about.

The two particular things we're talking about are modality and mind style. So modality is the way that we receive information and mind style focuses on the way that we like to process information. So they're the two things that we're going to focus on and particularly mind style. But let's think about modality first. How do we like to receive information?

Basically I'm using a model called VARC which talks about four ways that people like to receive information. Some people like to receive it visually and what we call visual learners.

[22 : 58] Some people are what we call oral learners they like to learn by listening. Some people like to learn by reading and writing so we call them read-write learners.

And then finally people like to learn by doing we call them kinesthetic learners. Well that's what the Bible calls them. So they're the four modalities.

You may have thought about this before. Sometimes people usually just talk about visual auditory and kinesthetic. But the model I'm using picks up read-write because a lot of people now learn

through screens which is kind of visual but it's also got writing as well.

And so and also a lot of people just do simply like learning through books. So let's think about each one of those. So visual learning.

They like visuals. Maps, charts, symbols, diagrams. They like different colours, word pictures, gestures, pictures, language, anything that appeals to the eyes.

[24 : 03] Visual learners will often talk visually. So they will say, instead of I understand, they will say, I see what you mean. You can hear the visual in that.

They see red, they don't get angry. No, I see red. They need to get things into perspective. Again, the language is kind of telling you the visual preference person.

They get the picture. It looks right to them. It's that kind of language that a visual learner would use. I think people would say that our world is moving towards visual learners, simply because we're surrounded by images all the time, and particularly screens.

But the screen is also plays into the read-write learner. But a lot of people remain visual learners. Secondly, oral or hearing, happy to listen.

This used to, when I was a teacher, it was always interesting to watch people in the class while I was talking. Some would be writing furiously to write down every word that I said, kind of rewrite learners.

[25 : 24] Others would look up when there was a diagram, but there were often people who would just be kind of sitting there steering in the space. And I don't think they weren't paying attention, but they were just simply oral learners.

They were just listening. They were very happy to listen and pick stuff up and learn that way. And it was always disconcerting to me because I'm a read-write learner and I'm one of the people that like to write down everything.

And I'm thinking, they're not paying attention, they're not learning anything. I used to get very anxious about particularly oral learners because they didn't seem to be in danger. But when you talk to them, they process the information really well.

They're like discussion, sharing and buzz groups, roll-playing talks, repeating aloud debates, oral quizzes, all that kind of thing. Again, you can hear it in their language, that sounds right.

Something clicked with me, that kind of language. I heard warning bells ring, and so this is the oral kind of preference.

[26 : 26] With young children, girls tend to be more oral than boys. They tend to be more visual, more kinesthetic. And that's certainly, well, I can't compare.

We had two families. One of my friends' families had three boys, we had three girls. And whenever we had dinner together, it was excruciating.

Because our girls would be talking non-stop, trying to get these boys to talk. And the boys just wanted to kind of run around and play with the toys or anything like that. And our girls eventually would win them over, the boys would start talking, and it was all time to go.

They were very frustrated. But they were very oral, kind of, you know, and talking and orally orientated. With read-write learners, they like lists, notes, handouts, definitions, quotes, meaningful headings.

They take lots of notes and lots of information. So again, I've just been noticing in these seminars, there's a couple of people that really write down everything. And I would say they look to me like read-write learners that are there doing that.

[27 : 39] And they like that. Some people really appreciate the handout. Some of you just put it aside and don't care because you listen. That's just the way it goes. Others are really paying attention to the screen because that's the way you like receiving information.

So we're all kind of different as we go. Read-write learners tend to really like the word of experts as well. Hence the posts. They like hearing what other people in the field say as they go.

Again, you can hear it in the language. I'll take note of what you're saying. I'll put it on my list. Can you put that in writing for me? And they will often when they're trying to check a spelling word they'll write it out rather than sound it out or something like that.

Kinaesthetic learners. These are people who learn by doing field trips, discovery, trial and error. They love illustrations which put things into practice.

So you can see the implication of something. Samples, photographs, walking and talking, real life examples. Very keen on implications. Most young kids are very kinesthetic, very active in their

learning.

[28 : 56] So you like lots of activities. Adults tend to kind of grow out of this a little bit, though there's a proportion of the population which has a very strong preference for kinesthetic learning.

kinesthetic learning, people feel comfortable with things. It's their feelings that are there. They get turned off by experiences or what people say in that kind of language.

They'll talk about everyone was really moved. They'll talk about that feels right. They grope for an answer. They find things difficult to handle. You can hear the language at hands is kind active and embodied and things like that.

Now, in terms of the general population, kinesthetic learners are the minority. There's very few. I used to do this. We used to do a quiz.

You can do quizzes and we would get a proportion across the class. And invariably the visual and read-like learners were very prominent. Oral, not so.

[29 : 59] And the kinesthetic learners were the low group. In terms of Bible study, this is probably the hardest group to cater to.

Because the Bible study is by definition focused on text, reading, writing, discussion, and so on.

And so this is the difference that is most hard to cater for.

And the other thing is because most people, even when they have a preference, this is often the weakest preference, some people can be two or three, what we call multi-mode, they can have two preferences or even three.

This is usually way off. And one of the things that I'll emphasise a couple of times is we will tend to ignore our weakest preference. So when we're thinking about a group, if you're strongly read, write, and very weak and kinesthetic, you won't think about this really at all.

And one of the implications will be if we're leading a group or a Bible study group, are the person centricers? Let's look for our least preferred preference. How can we involve everyone in the group as we think about it?

[31 : 10] So if you think about it, those in a Bible study group field trips, not really a possibility. Sounds a bit a ton of strange.

Maybe discovery, trial and error, we can talk about that. Use of illustrations, yes. Pass things around, well, pass the Bible around, we've all felt that before, you know, that's a kind of word. Real life examples, yes. Implications, yes. And you can see how that might dovetail with the pragmatist end of the learning cycle. So there are things in there to think about, but how do we bring this into Bible study group.

I don't want to spend too long on this because I suspect that this is the one that people are most familiar with, the idea of moral and visual learners and things, but just to remind us that we're comfortable with that.

I'll pause there and see if there are any questions before we move into the things mode that comes. So we've talked about the learning cycle and we've also talked a little bit about modality.

[32 : 19] Are there any questions or comments that people would like to make about that? Okay, well let's move on.

So, when we talk about mindstiles, we're talking about how we audit information and how we process information. Okay? How we audit information and how we process information, how we perceive the world and how we interact with it.

So, in terms of perceiving the world, we have two kind of options. We can perceive the world in concrete terms or we can perceive the world in abstract terms.

Concrete people tend to want to relate to and easily relate to the physical world through their physical senses, through touch, taste, hearing, sight, smell, and so on.

Abstract tend to relate to the world of emotion, feeling, ideas, all invisible and non-physical. Now, that doesn't mean that concrete people can't deal with ideas and that abstract people can't deal with the real world, but I think we can see the difference between the two.

[33 : 41] some people are very comfortable with the world of ideas and philosophy and emotion and all that kind of stuff. Other people just kind of want to get on with it and think about the world as it is, the things that are in front of them.

So, that's the first kind of idea of perceiving the world or taking in information. Then, the second is how we order the world and some people do this sequentially and others random.

So, sequential people like to see the world in very crisp, clear, step-by-step logical ways. Whereas, the random people can tolerate ambiguity, they can make split-second decisions, information can be stored in large chunks and big ideas, maybe not so much detail.

And so, you've got those two poles and two poles and that leads to four kind of what we call modalities, abstract sequential, concrete sequential, abstract random, and concrete random. So, these are the four out of this. So, it's a little bit like the Myers-Briggs, just a bit simpler. You've got four instead of 16, as opposed to all of these beers and chairs.

[35 : 10] There's all sorts of different ways of slicing and dicing this. But this is a simple one that can help us, I think. Now, on the sheet there, I've got some characteristics and preferred activities of these different groups, and I'll just put some slides up as well.

So, abstract sequential people are interested in knowledge and facts. They learn by thinking through ideas. They also like to know what experts think.

They're intellectual, logical, and analytical, and less interested in people than ideas and concepts. Second, abstract, sorry, abstract sequential, like reading and writing, that tends to be open.

They like working alone, they like lectures and content, they like using theories, they like class notes, they like research and experts, and they like information gathering, essays, so that's a little bit of a hangover from my educational days.

Concrete sequential, order, practical, linear thinkers, they're methodical, they can take one step at a time, they seek usability, they're doers, they need to know how things work, and they can be conservative and professional around it if they want to get things right.

[36 : 33] These are the people we want building bridges, these are our engineers and things like that as we go. Their preferred activities, demonstrations, hands-on experiences, practical activities, charts, checklists, short-term projects, guided practice with an organised!

person to see the sequence and things. Abstract random, imaginative, perceptive, sensitive, often emotional people.

They learn by listening, sharing ideas. They're interested in people and culture, ask lots of questions. They are idea people and they like the big picture.

They're not that much interested in the detail, but they like seeing the big picture that's there. They like group discussions and activities, they like role plays, music, movies, television, fantasy.

They like social activities to balance their work. They particularly like an environment that's aesthetically or psychically pleasing, so they're very attuned to their environment.

[37 : 40] Prefer a non-competitive atmosphere and they'll prefer people with problems interested in trying to work out pastoral issues and things like that. Concrete random, experimenters, risk takers, trial and error learners, inquisitive and independent, like to be self-directed.

They often reach accurate conclusions in the absence of logical justification, which drives abstract sequential people crazy. You've got that right, but your reasoning's all over the place and that's kind of interesting.

They're intuitive, instinctive, impulsive, and they often function by acting and testing experience. They like experiments, games, simulations, they like a missing environment, group tasks, and open-ended activities.

So that's a brief run through of the characteristics of the different groups. Now, how do we work out what we are? Well, at this point you get to do a quiz.

So if you turn to the back sheet of the paper, like that, you'll see that there's 15 lines of four words.

[38 : 52] Now, what you need to do is just go through each line across and circle the two words that best describe you or that others would use to describe you. So line one, when people say that you're imaginative, investigative, realistic, or analytical, and you can choose two.

So, even if it's what you would like people to say, that will also tell you your preference. So, imaginative, realistic, realistic, or analytical.

So you circle two, then you go down the line two, you organise, adaptable, critical, inquisitive. Now, the concrete, random people amongst us, you've already started putting circles around, you're not listening to me anymore.

Concrete, sequential, you're listening to the instructions carefully to make sure you're getting it right. Others are thinking, how's this working out in terms of a theory? That's the abstract, sequential. And if you're around the people, you're having an emotional response, you're either thinking, I love quizzes, or I hate quizzes, but I'm going to ask you to do it anyway.

So, work your way through the 15 lines, two per line. Sometimes you'll think, oh, three can apply to me, sometimes you'll think, oh, only one applies to me. You have to choose two.

[40 : 07] It's a forced choice. Okay? So, circle two in each line, and then I'll give you a key to working out the response. So, I'll give you a couple of minutes to work through the quiz, and I'll give you the key to it.

So, line one, circle two of the words, line two, circle two of the words, line three, circle two of the words or phrases. What reflects you most strongly or others with what you think others would quickly associate with you.

Try not to overthink it, just work your way through it. Okay? Make sure you're on the back page, on the very back of the handout. Now, remember, with this also, there's no right or wrong, simply describing a preference.

If you think I really want the abstract grammar, then pop in the abstract grammar. Now, I'm going to hand out the scoring sheet, and that just simply takes you through each line and tells you some initials for each word, and then you can use that to score at the bottom just with check marks, the first line.

So, let me just take you through the first line just to make sure we're all on the same page. So, if you've got that, okay, so if you've circled imaginative, that means you're, that's an AR, so you'll put a mark down at the bottom under AR to count.

[41 : 53] If you circle investigative, that's CR, so that gets a check under CR. If you circle realistic, that is CS, and if you circle analytical, that's AS.

Okay, so then you can go through line by line and just keep a tally down the bottom of the different categories and then you'll get a bit of an idea of how it turns out.

Is that all clear? Yeah. Okay. Okay, everybody, let's... What I want to do is just quickly see if I can get the results from everybody.

I'm going to just have you get to look around what I think I saw is people sometimes have one or two preferences that are very close. So what I'm going to say is if you've got a preference, preferences that are within about three or four, okay, so 14 to 10, 14 to 11, let's tell me both those preferences and I'm going to ask, so for instance, I got AS 14 and I got CS 11.

So I'm going to put one for there and one for there. I also look at my least preferred, I had one CR.

[43 : 18] so that's always the negative. I'm going to put one there in red just to do that. So what I want to do is collect the whites first and then the reds.

So if you've got a preference or two preferences or even three within three or four, some people might even be spread right across the board, in other words, they're one very close.

When I call out AS, just put your hand up and I'll count and we'll see what this group looks like. Does that make sense? So if AS is either your first or second preference within a state of three or four, put your hand up.

If you're in doubt, ask your name of what you do.

AS is either your top number second, one if second and third time and it's still hand done.

[44 : 29] As long as it's within three or four, that is a preference. Okay. My problem is that that Now, was there anyone who had AS as their least preference?

Anyone have AS as their least? Okay, now CS as either your first or close preference with the others.

And did anyone have CS as their way off preference? Oh, that's right. Now, anyone have AR as their first preference or they were very close preference?

Right, okay, one, two, three, four, five, two, three, four, five, and then it's not in the middle of the race.

And did anyone have AR as their way off preference? Okay, and then anyone have CR as their first preference?

[46 : 17] Second or third, you know, close CR. And did anyone have CR as their least preferred?

No, that's good. Five, six, seven, eight, and then it's not in the middle of the race. 15, eight, and six, seven, eight, and then it's not in the middle of the race.

Now, this is completely unscientific. But interesting to see. Looking at this group, we say there's a very strong sequential preference.

Okay? And a strong abstract preference. So that means there's a whole bunch of people that are very good with ideas and also logical thinking.

And we get that pretty strong preference there. When we come down to this end, we've got a very strong preference against the CR.

[47 : 21] Okay? So, now that's neither here nor there. It's just, it's all data. Can I just also say, would you have it if you had only one preference as your clear winner?

Was it people who had only one preference? People who had two preferences? Yep. Or three? Yep. And anyone have four?

Is it right across the board? Okay. And that's all. So, the idea, if you've got two preferences, then see what's in common. Is it an S or is it an A?

And that will just give you another little piece of information as to whether one points the stronger preference is being expressed there. Okay? But, interestingly, in just about every group I've done this, this is pretty well with a spread that you usually get.

And I often relate this group to kinesthetic learners as well, which is also a low-preferent modality. And this also suggests that we're a relatively well-educated bunch of people.

[48 : 32] This often comes, this is a, I do this in Bible colleges, and we get this spread across Bible colleges, a little less here perhaps, and a little stronger up here, but usually stronger on the sequential kind of area that's there.

So, and again, it's neither here nor there, except to understand that there will be a lot of people in our world who aren't conquering random. And it's worth thinking about this from the point of view of evangelism from ministry generally, a whole bunch of things.

How do we cater across the board? And all of this is really just saying it's another way of getting a handle on the differences that are amongst us and their implications.

So, if we go back to the handout, just thinking about Bible studies, and on one page, sorry, I've got the page numbers on the head there.

So, two pages in, there's two charts thinking about learning and thinking about Bible studies. So, let's just have a quick look at the Bible study application.

[49 : 36] Abstract sequential people like to explore ideas. They're impatient with detail, they can get sidetracked. In other words, they like ideas, so they'll go off with an idea on their own.

They'll argue theological points, because theology is kind of abstract ideas. They may not notice group members' needs, and so they're focused on the discussion, and their theology, not necessarily that person's getting very upset at the moment.

Okay? And they can be a warrior because of the detail and stuff like that. The concrete sequential person likes to answer all the questions. And so, I've had this person in the Bible study, they get very anxious, it's 20 minutes to go and there's still 15 questions.

They say, how are we going to answer all the questions? And part of me wants to say, okay, I don't know, it's okay. They want to answer all the questions. They want to know where the discussion's going. Are we just talking or are we heading somewhere?

That kind of thing. They can get hung up on detail, they find practical solutions to needs, and they can be perfections. The abstract random person wants to have deep and meaningful conversations.

[50 : 45] They appreciate the good fellowship in the group. They don't care about the questions, and they might even get upset about the questions. How can you possibly ask that question? And so, that's offensive or something like that.

Very conscious of members' needs, so they will notice the person that is upset. And they can sometimes, all the things at the bottom are just a bit of a guess with the person that did this.

Concrete random, want to explore possibilities. They want to connect up experiences. Sometimes they can do one question and forget the rest, and then they're off.

They're loyal, and they crusade for people's needs, and they can be non-performers. So, all I'm saying here is, thinking about differences is useful, not just for Bible teaching and learning, but for thinking about the whole Bible study group context.

In other words, you've got different personalities in the group as well. So, how do we think about that? In other words, not one size fits all. And what do we do with that?

[51 : 46] Now, I'm going to talk about engaging the Scriptures, but I'm just going to jump to the end of this presentation before we do that, just to point to what I think are the many implications. The simple application here is all I'm saying is, try and think about how to vary what you're doing in a group.

Some groups can kind of get into a rut where you do the same thing over and over again. But if you've got different people in this group, perhaps just thinking a little bit about variety. Can we do something different? Can we approach the Scriptures differently? And we'll talk about some ideas for that at the moment. But can we just change things up in order to cater for differences in the group instead?

So maybe, and groups will be naturally doing this, but I'm glad they don't. The idea of a field trip. So, if you're doing a study on the poor, for example, why not go and visit a local nursing ministry and volunteer to help as a group for the night, instead of doing your volunteer group. That would get some people right out of their comfort zone, but it would be right in the comfort zone for some people in the group. So that may be something just to think about.

[53 : 02] Just to think about the shape of the meetings and even the whole program and what you could do to just change things up a little bit to focus on different aspects of the Scriptures or people's words and things like that.

I think all groups probably use social activities and things like that, and all of that is all part of the mix. But thinking about the variety that you can do. A warning. You can't cater to all of the people all of the time.

Otherwise you end up with a circus. So you can't do everything everywhere all at once. Because it just gets too confusing. But what you can do...

Sorry, you shouldn't cater to some of the people all of the time. So I'm just having a really interesting discussion with Philip. And we're both observing that what we usually do is we will teach and run a group the way that we like to learn and run a group.

Now that's all fine as long as everyone in the group is exactly like us. But they're not. They're a little bit different as we've found. We've got some differences even in this group here.

[54 : 08] So how can we think about others as well as ourselves? We will naturally gravitate to teach the way that we learn best. But that may not be the way that everyone in the group learns.

We will relate to others that we want to be related to. But that's not necessarily the way that they like to be related to. Let me give you an example. When I come home from work, I like to sit down for half an hour.

Not say much. You know, just kind of process the day. My wife is a verbal processor. So what do we do? She can leave me alone or I can listen and talk.

And so we've got to flex. Sometimes I'll say, look, I just need the treatments. See you soon.

Sometimes she needs to talk straight away so I need to be on deck.

And I can't make it. You can't have my size fits all. You can't flex according to the person that's there. I need to understand that she is a verbal processor. And sometimes I'm just going to think in my head, please shut up.

[55 : 12] I can't handle it. And she will also sometimes have to say, I'm just wishing you say more. Because I'm an internal processor. And so we've got to work it out in the relationship.

The point is you shouldn't cater to some of the people all the time. What you can do is cater to all groups at least some of the time. And so it's that balance. Trying to think about how can we just change it up a little bit to maybe help others engage as we think about the group.

Now, you may have the most homogeneous group in the world. Everyone may be exactly the same. In which case everything I've seen is just irrelevant. Just keep doing what you're doing. But the chances are that there are differences that we can just start to be aware of and start to cater for in what we're doing.

Okay. So that's the application. Now, let's go back to thinking about different ways of handling the Scriptures. Because... Yeah. So engaging the Scriptures.

Again, a really interesting discussion with Philip. He asked the question, Does the Bible lend itself to one's style of teaching and learning? And we were thinking about the fact that it comes to us as a book, as the Word.

[56 : 34] So did that automatically mean that read, write is probably the way to go? Now, the problem with that, of course, is that for a long time the Bible was taught horrible. There was no Bible.

And even when there was mass-produced Bibles from the Gutenberg Bible forward, most people couldn't read. So most people receive the word horrible through sermons and through people telling them or storytelling or whatever.

So it always hasn't... We always haven't had the luxury of a group of the Scriptures. The other thing to think about is how does God communicate to us in the Scriptures? 66 books, 1500 years, 40 different authors.

Do you think that Paul and John have the same personality when you read their... No. Paul, kind of analytical, logical, John circular thinker.

Peter, kind of emotional. And you see that coming out. So God is using the personalities of the writers to help us that. And then there are a bunch of different genres.

[57 : 41] So right in the middle of the Bible, we've got 150 poems. Okay? Now, that's not everyone's cup of tea. I find it hard to read poetry. I never quite understand what it's doing.

But some people love poetry. There's more. Lots of the Bible is narrative and story. There are different ways of God communicating. And he's not communicating a lot of things.

Because I can... I guarantee you could tell me the story of the Bible in about five sentences. God created a perfect world. People rebelled against God and ruined it.

God worked through the history of the people of Israel and ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ to restore creation. But that story gets told in lots of different ways. Using lots of different genres. Using illustrations. Using explanation. In other words, it looks for me like God is communicating to cater a little bit for difference. As we do that.

[58 : 39] And so when we... And the point is, when we come to a scripture to teach it, it will lend itself to certain different kinds of teaching that comes into play.

Now, most of our Bible studies... I'm just going to flick through this and try to give you all a head over. Most of our Bible studies will revolve around questions. So, inevitably, we get a passage. We devise a sequence of questions and we answer them. But are there other ways to approach the scriptures than to do that? It's not a bad method.

It's a tried and tested. You've just got to remember some things about questions that they should be open and closed. So, an open question has a, what do you think about? A closed question, what did Jesus say?

He's got one answer or something like that. So, often, a lot of... The problem with a lot of Bible study material is that it consists of closed questions. Where people just go, yes, yes, yes, yes, no, yes, or study done.

[59 : 39] They're not forcing you to think. But open questions force you to think. It's another way of just testing the material that you've got. But are there other ways? Are questions the only way to approach a Bible text?

And the obvious answer I'm fishing for there is no. Because there's a variety of texts. You can always approach a text with questions. But there are other techniques you can also look to get people to engage with the Bible.

So, let me just do this for the last time. I hope there's no open and you can see that. Yeah, so... Let's just run through a couple of techniques.

We can get people to summarize. Talking to some people through the week, sometimes you end up with long passages. What do you do with that? You can read or you can maybe divide up the passage into smaller sections given to one or two people.

And say, okay, can you read that section? And then give us a one sentence summary. What's the elevator summary of the point of that particular part? And if it's a narrative, what happened?

[60 : 44] If it's an argument, what's the point that's there? Good for long passages, not so good for familiar passages. Because everyone thinks they know what familiar passages say. So, people tend not to read familiar passages.

Because they, in their head, they know what a book says. And I don't know about you, but one of the challenges of Bible study is to get people to actually read the text. Rather than tell me what they know the text says.

So, summarize. A version of that is paraphrase. So, take a passage phrase by phrase and translate it. This is good for familiar passages, which are not always understood.

So, let me give you an example. Colossians 1, 15 to 23. The hymn about Christ. It is full of jargon. Jesus is the firstborn from among the dead.

What does firstborn mean? Does it mean literally the first one that was born? Or does it mean something about the idea of the firstborn being preeminent? Or over?

[61 : 44] What word would you use to describe it? So, get people to look through the passage. Take those words. Particularly theological words. Which we tend to skip over. Because we think it's easier to say what we understand rather than not.

And paraphrase and give an explanation of what that word is. Detail. But that it helps people to kind of think about it. So, rather than saying what does this passage say about Christ.

What you do is you work through phrase by phrase. And you get the firstborn or whatever the other phrases that are there. And you build up the question rather than come to it with conclusions.

So, you take it little bit by little bit of the way through. Many passages can be compared. So, you can compare different passages by the same author.

Or you can compare passages by different authors on the same theme. Compare the same incident in different gospels. And when you compare it, you're looking for similarities, differences, changes in focus and detail.

[62 : 47] Again, an example. The only miracle that is in all four gospels is the feeding of the 5,000. So, that would be an interesting comparison to see how Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all record that detail.

What details do they leave in? What details do they put out? And what does that tell you about their take on the feeding of the 5,000? So, you could do that. You could compare in Colossians, for example.

You've got two big sections about Jesus. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Why is there two? And what's the difference? You can compare. And so, you could do that. You could give that to the group.

And then get people to do that and then report back. But it's a different way. And the passage is kind of inviting you to do that. And you could look at the sermon songs in Isaiah.

There's four passages which talk about the sermon. Do they build up? Are they all saying the same thing? Are they disagreeing with one another? What are they doing?

[63 : 50] And what does that mean? You can compare scriptures that are there. You can encourage people to take notes. Underline or circle particular words or details in the text.

So, one thing I'm really keen on. And most of the English translations can do this. But what words keep getting repeated in the text? And repetition, or you always, I promise you never say always. Repetition normally indicates emphasis. So, you repeat what you're trying to emphasize. Okay? So, you repeat what you're trying to emphasize. You see what it did? Okay.

You got it? You repeat what you're trying to emphasize. So, we've all got it. So, you can look for that. Or we can look for related words. So, looking for variations of holiness or sanctification.

Lots of different ways to get people to be a bit messy with their Bible. If people were a bit worried about writing in the scriptures, then you can use a photocopy passage. And just get people to look at fine detail and start to do some of the work for themselves to have a look at.

[64 : 56] You can organize ideas and themes in a passage. And this is good for passages where there are distinct classifications. So, in 2 Corinthians chapter 2 to 5, Paul makes a series of contrasts.

And so, you could read through that and look for the contrast that he makes. You could even do it on a chart, on a whiteboard or a piece of paper. What contrast is Paul making between the ministry that leads to life and the ministry that leads to death?

And what are the features of that on the way through that are there? Contrasts we've talked about. I think I look for contrast as well. Identify types.

This is good for a narrative, which has got multiple characters with the Gospel. So, in Mark chapter 5 verses 1 to 20, Jesus heals a demon-possessed man.

Now, you've got a number of characters there. You've got Jesus, the demon-possessed man.

You've got people tending pigs. You've got the townspeople and the disciples. And they're all reacting differently.

[66 : 03] So, again, if you had a chart, you could put each of the names at the top and then their reaction. And it forces you to look more closely at that. Rather than just reading it, you're saying, okay, let's look for the emotional reaction or what are they thinking?

What does Mark tell us? Or how would they be reacting? Which is a kind of creative question. How would the pig owners feel about Jesus sending their herd of 2,000 pigs off into the lake?

So, lots of different ways. You can look for the different characters and what they do. Now, sometimes you can draw the passage.

This is a little bit trickier because most people think they're terrible artists and this freaks people out. One of the lectures I used to do when I was lecturing at Moore College, we did Mark's Gospel. And then the very last lecture, I brought in all this butcher's paper and Texas and crayons and said, now you're going to draw Mark's Gospel for them. And I said to people, half of you are going to hate this.

[67 : 06] In fact, most of you are going to hate this. But there's going to be a small group that are going to love this. And they could go to the groups and I got people to draw a mind map of Mark's Gospel as a way of summarising everything that they've done in the Bible study.

And I've done this technique with Bible study groups. So, we finished a series on Romans and I gave, you know, we split up into groups of two or three and said, let's put Romans on one page using pictures, single words, how do you understand it?

And it's just a different way of getting people to think about it. You can actually physically draw Psalm 1. Okay? You've got two trees or two pictures. That may be just a way of having a go, maybe too far for something.

Interviews. This is another one we've done, this is kind of a lot of fun. Where you've got multiple characters in a passage, think of questions that you would ask them if you were a journalist.

So, everyone's got to read the passage. And then, what would a journalist ask? And then you can even role play. And so, I've seen this done brilliantly with the parable of the prodigal son.

[68 : 17] Where there's a little bit of a talk where you get all the information. And then people from the audience were selected to be, one was selected to be the father. One was selected to be the prodigal son.

One was selected to be the older brother. And one was selected to be the neighbours. And then they would come out the front and we would ask them questions. So, to the prodigal son, why did you leave your father?

And so, he had to tell us based on his understanding of the passage why he left. And he said, how were you feeling when you were eating the pig stuff? You know, why did you decide to come back? And why did you make up that speech? What did you think you were trying to do when you said that? And the best moment was we were interviewing the person who was the father. And we said, how did you feel when your son came back?

And with genuine emotion, he said, joyful and I love my son. And it just suddenly brought the whole kind of vibe of the passage really alive as this person had really put themselves in and the question really exposed them.

[69 : 18] But a lot of the gospel scenes will lend themselves to this. You can't do it every week because otherwise everything gets boring. But it's a really effective technique for a one-off every now and then to have a bit of a go.

It takes you into the emotional mood of the passage as well. People get a bit nervous about that because they're always speculating about what the word of God has told us. But you try and contain that within an understanding of what's going on culturally and historically in the passage.

And make the point, yeah, we're having a bit of a guess here, but let's see how it works out. And they are human stories and so the emotions are often real. Very technical is a sentence analysis. So instead of saying what does Paul say in Romans chapter one about his gospel, you can maybe break it down into a passage where you take the passage clause by clause and try and show the relationship between the things.

So here we've got Paul. He calls himself a servant of Christ, an apostle set apart for the gospel of God. Three statements about himself. Now, then he starts to talk about the gospel.

[70 : 30] He promised it beforehand. Where? In the Holy Scriptures. It's the gospel concerning his son who was descended from David according to the flesh. And then there's another clause which goes on to talk about the spirit.

So now you start to see being broken now. And this takes a long time and it's probably better for you in preparation. But to break down a case of Hitler's thought, particularly in Paul, where there's often intricate arguments, is not a bad thing to have a go at.

Mapping. And literally, when you're dealing with Exodus or Old Testament passages, get an atlas out and see where they are, where they're moving, things like that.

Plenty of resources online are able to do that. Or even when Jesus is moving around Mark, you could get a map of Galilee or Palestine and trace his movements up and down to the different cities.

In Mark, for instance, he goes backwards and forwards across that lake. So what happens when he's on this side of the lake? What happens when he's on that side of the lake? What happens when he's in the middle of the lake? And you'll see that the lake is a place of revelation.

[71 : 41] There's revelation on the edges of the lake and there's revelation in the middle of the lake. And so that becomes a theme that you can identify. Lists are good.

You can list commands, instructions, words or ideas. Sometimes in Colossians 3, number 17, where you put on and put off, you can just simply make a list of what you put on, a list of what you put off, and then you can paraphrase.

And then you can say, what would it look like to put that on? What would it look like to put that off? And you're suddenly looking at that passage in a slightly different way. A variation of lists is using a table.

We've mentioned that a couple of times. Characters, ideas, lots of different tables you could do. The parable of the four soils that Jesus tells lends itself to a table.

You've got four soils. You've got what happens to the soil. What does the soil represent? And then amortization. So you could spend a Bible study filling in the blanks on a four by four blank of that there.

[72 : 53] Roleplay, that's a variation of the interview. Plot, a little bit trickier, but sometimes you can plot. You could get a technique.

So this is for Exodus, chapter 15. So what is the Israelites' attitude to God over chapters 15 to 17? They start off trusting.

Then they go to doubt. Trust, doubt, trust, doubt, trust, doubt. Or is it trust all the way? Is it doubt all the way? My mind doesn't think like this, but other minds do. X and Y axes and all that.

And you'll be able to do that in a way more effectively. But you could plot different things over a passage as it goes. And you'll get a bit of a picture.

You could plot on this, you could do a bit study on the kings of Israel and Judah. Faithful to God, unfaithful to God over time. It would be pretty impressive. Pretty well down here with the page of the scope.

[73 : 53] But to see it graphically and to think about the different summaries and how it works is just another way for people to encounter scripture. We've talked about questions.

The Swedish method, maybe people know this, they don't. Very simple method and really good for people who are just encountering the Bible for the first time. Gets them to do the work.

You read the passage. You say, what don't I understand in the passage? Are there words? Are there concepts? Are there ideas? The light bulb is, oh, that's an idea that I've learnt or I would like to take a hold of.

And the arrow is, when I read this, this suggests to me that I should do this kind of action. So, very simple. You give people 10 minutes of the passage. You can put those three icons on a sheet and then you just simply write, everyone writes their observations and then shares them.

And so, it's a self-discovery, a guided discovery. Then it becomes a group discovery project that's there. And again, you can see that different of these techniques will appeal to different modalities and different mindsets.

[75 : 06] So, this one is kind of probably good for your concrete random person because they're doing all the work and getting it out. Whereas, some of the more analytical ones are for the abstract sequential.

The role play is very good for abstract random people because they take you into the emotion in the event. So, different techniques, different passages, they can do this.

Manuscript discovery, very kind of technical. It takes a long time. This is what you can do on a weekend away. You give everyone a copy of a Bible text, usually a short one.

No verses, no chapter headings, almost no sentences. You can take all the full stops out as well. And then you work on it like you would an original manuscript of the Bible because that's what they were like.

If you've ever seen a Greek manuscript, it's just text right across. No capital letters, very little punctuation. And you've got to work out, okay, how do we understand this?

[76 : 08] And it forces you to read every word and to make decisions about breaks and things like that. But as I say, this is probably, you would do that once every 15 years.

And with a group that's highly motivated to do it, but it's getting people to please try. And so that's a weekend activity with a book like five weeks or something like that.

Okay, let's keep it short. So, that was a really quick run through. And my aim is to overwhelm you. I can read that. So, the aim was really just to say, okay, there are different ways.

People learn the same, but they also learn differently. People tend to teach the way they like to learn. But the other thing is to look to your least preferred mode because that is where you are least likely to do any thinking.

So, I know I'm a highly visual, highly read-write learner. I'm not a kinesthetic learner at all. So, how can I think about that in a way that might help the kinesthetic learners in my orbit who are there?

[77 : 24] We don't have to do it all the time, but every now and then we just throw them a bone.

The dog is happy. Just to show that the other way we think around. And then as I said, variety.

You can't do it to all the people all the time. You shouldn't do it to some of the people all the time.

But you can cater to all groups at least some of the time. So, I will make sure Brian has this power point that will be helpful.

And that will remind you of the things. There's an old book for which I got most of those ideas out of, with some experience, called Leading Better Bible Studies.

And that contains a little bit more detail about some of the ideas. Again, I'll leave the details with Brian if people want to chase that up. I can even leave this. Have you ever done any of the students? Have you got this in your life?

I can leave this behind. So, I'll give this to you as a resource. So, that would be helpful if you want to follow up any ideas. And they also talk a lot about leadership, developing group life, helping people.

[78 : 34] Right? It's just chock full of ideas which might help you or stimulate you as you think about your group. Okay? Now, it is 11.30. Let me just say, I think the fact that you put aside time to do that, it shows dedication to the task.

And it's very encouraging to me. Because this is a really important job that you do. Like, leading people in the knowledge of the Scriptures and therefore the Lord. What can be more important or essential?

And so, it's worth every now and then just taking a little bit of time to think about what we're doing, as we've done this morning, to try and think about how can we just keep on pushing the envelope a little bit on the way that we are doing it.

And then thinking about our groups. Are we doing the same thing over and over again? And are we happy about that? And if we're happy, it's not. But every now and then I get the thing in the back of my mind, this could be done just a little bit better if I had some ideas.

So, I hope this has given you some ideas. And I hope it's overwhelmed you. And it pushes you to think about that. You know, talk with one another as we go. Now, I don't want to keep us past 11.30, so I might pray and finish.

[79 : 44] But if people want to hang around and chat after, very good to do so. So, yeah. Let us pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you that it's a word of life that reveals your will, character, intentions, your love for us, so many things.

And Father, we pray for ourselves as we lead various groups of different sizes, different ages, different maturities, all the differences that are possible.

Father, we pray that you'll help us integrate our reminders today of this other dimension of differences as well. Help ourselves to be overwhelmed by the task and to be excited about the possibilities.

Father, we know that we don't do this alone, but as we teach, your spirit is always at work. And so, help us always to be thankful for that, but not to rely on that to excuse our process.

Help us to take on board whatever insights we can as we think about our groups and their differences or similarities. And Father, we just pray that you will help us to continue to teach your word faithfully.

[80 : 51] And also, with some of these insights that we may do it with increasing effectiveness from a human perspective. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.