



BEACON HILL BUTLER CAMPUS TUESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

The Thematic Method

Homework Review:

Discussion Board Post: Don't just respond but engage.... (Y'all are doing ok.... make sure read the whole question)

Completely fill out your form using the scripture above and be prepared to share your revelation. Don't google us.... meditate and bring your thoughts to the discussion so that iron can sharpen iron!

In the introduction to this book, we noted that the secret of good Bible study is learning to ask the right questions. In doing a thematic study, you decide on a set of questions to ask about the chosen theme before you look in the Bible. Your questions should be based around what Rudyard Kipling called his "honest serving men" in his short story "The Elephant's Child."

*I Keep six honest serving men:
(They taught me all I knew)
Their names are What and Why and
When And How and Where and Who.*

Use Kipling's serving men as you prepare the vital observation questions you want to ask in your thematic study: What? Why? When? How? Where? Who?

The Thematic Method

(Week 4)

The Thematic Method of Bible Study involves approaching a biblical theme with a set of not more than five predetermined questions in mind. You then trace that theme through the Bible or a single book by asking only those questions, summarizing your conclusions, and writing out a personal application.

The thematic study is similar to the topical study (see chapter 6) but differs in two ways.

- First, the thematic study is shorter than the topical because you study fewer verses. It is, in fact, a limited type of topical study. A topic may have a number of themes running through it. For example, one topic could be "Prayer," but you could study the following themes under that topic: "The Prayers of Jesus," "The Prayers of New Testament Writers," "Conditions for Answered Prayer," "Prayer Promises," "Intercession for Others," and many other prayer themes. A topical study would examine every possible verse that relates to the overall topic. **In a thematic study you concentrate only on passages of Scripture that deal with your selected theme.**
- Second, a thematic study entails fewer questions. In a topical study you ask as many questions as you can because your goal is to discover as much as possible about the topic. **The thematic study has a limit of five carefully chosen questions. After making a**



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list of all the verses related to the theme, you examine each verse, asking only the questions you have prepared.

Why this Method of Bible Study

The purpose of this method is to discover what you can about a chosen theme with specific, prepared questions that you will ask of each verse chosen for study. There are some great advantages in using it, and we will include some practical tips for it.

Six Steps for Conducting a Thematic Study

Step One – Choose a Theme to Study

Step Two – List All the Verses You Intend to Study

Step Three – Decide on the Questions You Will Ask

Step Four – Ask Your Questions of Each Reference

Step Five – Draw Some Conclusions from Your Study

Step Six – Write Out a Personal Application

A few reference tools are needed for this method of Bible study:

- A Study Bible
- An Exhaustive Concordance
- A Topical Bible

How to Conduct a Thematic Study

Step One: Choose a Theme to Study

Select a theme in which you are interested. If this is your first study of this kind, start with one that is small or short. In the Assignment section are some suggestions, including the questions; the example gives you a completed study.

Step Two: List All the Verses You Intend to Study

Using your three tools—the study Bible, the exhaustive concordance, the topical Bible—make a list of all the Scripture verses that are related to the theme you have chosen. Remember to consider synonyms and other similar words and concepts when using the concordance. Select from this list the verses that are most important to your theme (unless you are trying to discover all the Bible says about your theme).

Step Three: Decide on the Questions You Will Ask



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How do you know what questions to ask? Write down those in which you are most interested. What are some things you would like to know about your theme? Make a list of questions, not more than five in number. remember that sometimes you may need to ask only one question. Write your question(s) on the form or on a blank sheet of paper.

Step Four: Ask Your Questions of Each Reference

Read through your references and ask your set of questions of each verse. Write down the answers you find in the appropriate places on your form or paper. Sometimes you will be able to answer all the questions in a given verse, but usually you will only answer part of them. Occasionally a verse may not answer any of your questions; in that case, leave that part blank on your form. If you are not finding any answers to your questions, start over and write a new set of questions.

Step Five: Draw Some Conclusions from Your Study

After you have finished checking the references and writing your answers, go back and summarize the answers to each of your questions. You might organize your study into an outline by grouping similar verses together and turning your questions into the major divisions of the outline. This will make it easy for you to share the insights you have discovered with others.

Step Six: Write Out a Personal Application

To implement what you have discovered and make it real in your life, write out a personal application that is practical, possible, and measurable. Refer to the steps suggested in the Devotional Method (chapter 1) if you need help in developing an effective application.

Homework

Begin your thematic Bible studies with themes that are simple and have only a few Scripture references. So here is a starter theme (love thy neighbor). As you become proficient in this method of Bible study, you can make your themes more complex and use more biblical passages.

Here are some ideas to get you started, including sample questions you may ask. (Don't feel restricted by these suggested questions; make up some of your own for these themes.)