

## Lesson 8: Teach Scripture at Events



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### Behind the Scene

Evaluate the Event Expectations and Text

Assimilate the Text

Prepare and Share the Message

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### Introduction

God has blessed his church with women who plan retreats or events for ladies to gather together and enjoy Christian fellowship. Some events are designed to give women a break and leave them refreshed. Many times, these events also include a time for women to gather intently around the Word and grow spiritually.

You should know that teaching Bible study is quite different from presenting God's Word at an event. However, Bible study leaders are often invited to teach Scripture at various events with a Christ-centered teaching and relevant applications. Larger audiences don't have the same opportunities for engagement, questions, and interaction so it is important to clearly teach the Word. Thoughts that are clear in your head may not "click" with others, and you'll want to be especially clear in your transitions and explanations so women can learn well.

This may be an opportunity you will have—so here are some tips to help you understand what to expect and how to do it well.

## **EVALUATE THE EVENT EXPECTATIONS AND TEXT**

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The first, obvious question you will face is whether to accept a speaking engagement to teach the Word of God to other women—and the answer isn't based on your availability. So how do you make that decision? It is an honor to be asked—and it is quite humbling. Your heart may leap with joy and excitement at the opportunity, but don't say yes quite yet. There are a few things that will point you in one direction or another as you prayerfully consider an invitation to speak.

Find out about the theme and text of the event so your decision is based on a clear understanding of your presentation topic and defined expectations. Spend time talking to someone (or several people) on the committee to clarify their purpose and goals for the event. Gather the details about where and when you would speak. Get that information in writing so you can refer to it and know it is correct. Specifically ask how long you will be presenting, or how many times you will be presenting. Create opportunities to get input from others about what they are hoping to hear. Then listen carefully about the picture they paint for the event.

If you receive information in a phone call it would be wise to write down what you heard and e-mail the person back to thank them for their time and restate what responsibilities you noted. Miscommunication happens so easily! Do everything you can to keep information and expectations clear. Don't make assumptions.

### **Recognize How Much the Text Will Shape the Event**

Planning committees work very hard to coordinate an incredible number of details for an event. Generally, the committee will select a text to capture the purpose and key message of the retreat and then plan a theme. To varying degrees, the text and theme will be presented throughout the event.

It will be helpful for you to understand the big picture. Ask the committee to tell you about the event and listen for the priority of Scripture. Is the intent to put Scripture at the center of the hub and have everything centered in that truth? Or is it more like a pie that has slices of different things?

You want to capture the theme and purpose of the event and connect the pieces, especially if you are a key-note speaker. Make sure you see what is happening and why it has been specifically planned. Your responsibility is to teach Scripture faithfully while still being mindful of the theme and purpose of the event. Carefully evaluate whether you will be able to teach the truth of Scripture in a way that complements the intent of the event.

### Identify Priorities

Ask about the purpose and goals of the event—what does the committee want for the women who attend? You might find that the planning committee has a distinct idea about what makes an event successful. There is a broad spectrum of needs and viewpoints—as numerous and varied as the people involved. You won't be able to meet all those needs, but it helps to be aware of what others are thinking.

If you are able, find a way to ask participants what they hope to learn or experience. This can also help as you prepare your presentation. Understand what struggles and needs the participants have. Teach Scripture to encourage, guide, and comfort them in the hardships they face.

Evaluate how your skill set and experience line up with the intentions and needs of the committee or participants. Are they looking for a deeper, knowledgeable teacher who is equipped to answer difficult questions? Maybe they are looking for something lighter or humorous with life stories and applications. Maybe they have planned an outreach event that needs a strong, clear Gospel message with less detail and depth or expressions that are difficult for others to understand.

### Ask Questions

Make sure you fully understand the event you've been asked to speak at.



#### Your Questions

The questions you ask about goals and logistics don't have right or wrong answers. But if you don't understand the big picture for the event it could cause disappointment and frustration (for you or the committee and participants).

You are asking about the needs of others to determine whether you are a good fit to serve as a speaker. Don't make assumptions about what they are looking for. Ask questions.

Who is hosting the event, and who will be invited? Where is it being held? Is this a first time event? Who else is speaking, and what are some of the topics or breakout groups being planned? These questions don't have right or wrong answers, but they shape your understanding of what will be happening. Who is the target audience for the retreat and what will they expect? Will there be opportunities for evangelism with women who are unchurched or will the event focus more on discipleship for women of faith who want to grow? Will women appreciate being challenged and urged to study the Word? Will they listen like Bereans?

*Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (Acts 17:11)*

Surveying the committee or participants can just be a simple e-mail. Two or three questions will provide a wealth of insight about the people who will be attending.

1. Why are you planning to attend [this event]?
2. What are you hoping the speaker talks about?
3. What do you hope to know or feel at after [this event]?

Unlike the demographical data mentioned in Lesson 3: Select the Best Bible Study, these answers will give you a more general impression rather than statistical information. Give women the chance to answer the questions in their own words so they can fully express their thoughts. These insights don't necessarily change what you teach, but they will likely change how you teach. It will show you where to start. As you strive to draw others into God's Word, you need to know where they are at physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Meet them in their weariness, fear, or bitterness and invite them to the cross of Christ.

This information will help you connect to your audience—and more importantly it will help you point them to Christ.



### **Before You Say "Yes"**

Understand the topic or text you are speaking about. Did the committee direct you to any key points you are supposed to address?

Know the purpose of the event and the goals of the committee.

Consider whether your skill set will meet the needs of the committee and purpose of the event.

Be certain that you have adequate time to prayerfully study and prepare for the presentation.

Know where, when, and how long you are expected to teach. Get that information in writing and have it confirmed.



### Activity: Evaluate the Event Expectations and Text

It's your turn to Evaluate the Event Expectations and Text.

Step One: Write out at least three questions you should ask when considering a speaking engagement.

Step Two: List two reasons you would NOT accept an invitation to speak even if you are available. (If lack of confidence or insecurity are on this list, you should talk to your pastor).

Step Three: Learn about expectations and the true need of the human heart by looking at the account of Jesus and the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-31. Do you think the young man expected a difference answer? Why was Jesus right as he pointed to the law?

*As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"<sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good. <sup>19</sup> But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.'*"

*<sup>20</sup> "Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young." <sup>21</sup> Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. "There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.*

## ASSIMILATE THE TEXT

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Inhale Scripture.

The process of studying Scripture, praying it, and assimilating it in your life is one breath and motion.

Study, pray, and trust the Holy Spirit to strengthen and teach you. Review Lesson Two: Respond with Fruitful, Christian Living to remember how sanctification works!

As you pursue this goal, think of these steps:

1. Study the text
2. Pray the text
3. Live the text

### Study the Text with Reliable People and Materials

The academic knowledge you gain as you study Scripture equips you more than you can imagine. Know the text. There is a wealth of information written about the Scriptures, and the more you learn the more you realize how little you know.

Start learning. Study the materials and do your research—you will learn much more than you can share but that is your blessing! This process was covered in depth in Lesson 4: Prepare to Teach. Refer to that lesson as you prepare.

As you begin your study, write down some of your initial questions and perceptions so you can remember what you didn't know (or what you misunderstood) when you began your preparations. What words are unclear to you? You want to remember what it was like to not know the answer. Remember those things because others will come to listen and they may have little understanding, misunderstanding, or misplaced expectations. Don't forget that.



#### Journal Your Thoughts

Have a place where you can write down your thoughts and questions. Write your own responses to those thoughts and questions while studying and see how the Holy Spirit shapes your insights.

Keep the priorities and intentions of the event in the same place so you continue to relate what you are learning to those specific needs.

The Word of God is *“alive and active”* (Hebrews 4:12) and you will find yourself on your knees praying that God approves you as *“a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15).



### **The Central Message of the Text**

There are many ways to apply and reflect on the text. Applications and reflections can be helpful as you continue to study the Word. But there should come a point in your study, reflection, and prayers that the central truth of God's Word will be evident. This does not refer to the many thoughts and applications for your life, or things that are personally meaningful to you. You need to know the point of the text. Clearly.

All the other points serve to draw light and attention to the truth God is revealing. There aren't four or five things God is teaching. He is teaching one thing and there are four or five applications, reflections, or prayers.

Make sure the one truth is clear.

Find a friend or mentor to study Scripture with and go out for coffee to talk about what you've been studying. Ask your friend to restate what she heard you say, or write down her questions. Mention your original questions or perceptions and talk about how God has corrected or refined your understanding. Those thoughts and questions may be points you need to include in the beginning of your presentation as you connect with your audience.



### **A Blessing of Spiritual Fellowship**

The spiritual fellowship you share with other believers brings many blessings. One rich blessing comes as you talk about the Word of God. We are meant to encourage each other with Scripture and walk together in his truth. Talk to other believers about God's Word or find a mentor.

Where?

Many people are looking for a mentor and don't know how to find someone they can partner with as a believer. Your pastor may have an idea of someone you could take out to coffee and see how the relationship develops. You can also keep your eyes open at Bible study or while serving together at events. Are there other women who demonstrate godly wisdom, Scriptural insights, or a gentle spirit? Reach out and ask them if they have time for a chat. Talk about Scripture and spiritual growth. Let the relationship develop. It isn't necessary to have a formal mentoring program in place. Just strengthen your network of Christian friends.

Most importantly, talk with your pastor. Even as you study reliable resources, it is possible to miss the main points or find yourself struggling to restate what you've read. It is one thing to learn something and another thing to be able to teach it.

Sometimes the pastor assists with developing a retreat theme, and he may have great insights and guidance for your preparation. Sometimes he will want to see the material ahead of time to understand what is being covered. Remember to build time for those opportunities as you gauge or plan your preparation time.

This entire module is built on the expectation that you will interact with your own pastor and continue to learn from him. Get his input and direction as you select your study materials. Whether you are preparing for a Bible study, retreat, Sunday school lesson, or family devotion time, your pastor is your spiritual guide. Ask, learn, and then share your insights with him to make sure your thoughts and words are clear and true.

### Pray the Text

One of the easiest ways to meditate on God's Word is to memorize it. Memorize every word of the text and repeat it on your way to work, waiting at a stop light, or while you prepare dinner. Think about it constantly. Think about each word and every concept. Then pray the text—don't pray about the text. Pray the text.



#### Speak God's Words to Him in Prayer

God loves to hear his children pray to him with words of Scripture. The Psalms are ancient prayers and songs that can be easily incorporated into your times of prayer and meditation. This is an easy place to start.

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:14)*

*When I said, 'My foot is slipping,' your love, O Lord, supported me.  
When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul. (Psalm 94:18,19).*

Many passages in Scripture can be used as prayers by changing the pronouns to make it personal or suitable for a group.

*Lord, you forgive all my sins and heal all my diseases; you redeem my life from the pit and crown me with love and compassion. (Psalm 103:3)*

Refer to the section on prayer in Lesson Two: Respond with Fruitful Christian Living. Here is another example of how you can reflect on a text and pray it:



*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. (Romans 12:10a)*

Lord God, you are such a devoted Father. With great faithfulness you have shown yourself to be the One who is Love. What a privilege it is for me to receive your devoted love. Thank you, God. Find me eternally grateful for the rich love and devotion you have poured out through Jesus my Savior. Let me reflect your loving devotion to others. Let my love draw others to you and see the grace and love you give so freely.

Forgive me Lord for the many times I don't feel brotherly love or lack the love and devotion you desire. Give me an eagerness to show love and devotion to others for your glory. I want to think that I love every soul for which you died—but in my heart I know I do not. Open my eyes to the opportunities I have to be devoted to others in brotherly love. Urge me Lord—don't let me look past people who need your love. Prompt me—then remind me that I have asked you to help me respond with lavish love. Stir within me a desire to do your will for your glory and the good of your kingdom. Amen.

Learn it, pray it, and live it before you talk about it.

Memorize as much of the text as you can. Put notes in your day timer or on your phone. As the truth of God's Word settles on your heart, you will find your mind churning with thoughts as you meditate on similar passages or insights from Scripture. Learn to meditate by finding quiet time to consider why God revealed or recorded the words of the text. What does he want you to learn or do? How does this section or teaching of Scripture shape your life?

### **Live the Text**

Trust the Holy Spirit to do his work in shaping your life. Learn God's clear truth from a personal perspective. This does not mean your thoughts or wisdom shape how you understand God's Word. Rather, God's truth and wisdom breathe life into your soul and transform your life and thinking.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.<sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1,2)*

You don't shape the Word but you will teach it more clearly if it has shaped you. Speak from your heart and soul but make certain that your heart and soul have been refined with the truth of the Word and the guidance of the Spirit.

There is a little bad news here.

As you yield to the truth of God's Word and humbly ask to be taught before you lead others, God will answer your prayers. You may not like all his answers. As you pray to understand Scripture more clearly, God may draw light to sins that you have casually dismissed or left buried in denial. Can you teach about selflessness, joy, or the sacraments without first being sifted as wheat?

*Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. (Luke 22:31,32)*

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

<sup>13</sup> *Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
so that sinners will turn back to you. (Psalm 51:12,13)*

God will lead you as you prepare for your presentation—and he will start by speaking to your heart and life. Martin Luther wrote about this learning with three words, "Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio." His long-standing insight points to prayer ("Oratio"), meditation ("Meditatio") and affliction ("Tentatio"). Pray to understand the text, meditate on Scripture, and expect trials and hardships. You may (or may not) want to know that Luther emphasized affliction.

*"These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter 1:7).*



### **When God Uses a Life to Prepare a Message**

The story of Hosea is a perfect example of how God teaches and works through people to proclaim his message.

Hosea was a prophet in Israel at a time when God's people were being unfaithful to the Lord. God could have sent Hosea to preach a message of repentance and condemnation, but instead, the book of Hosea records a personal demonstration of God's faithful love.

God directed the prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute. After bearing Hosea's children, the woman returned to her life of prostitution. But at God's command, Hosea bought her back and restored her as his wife. What a powerful picture of God's faithfulness and forgiveness! Hosea teaches a clear message about who God is and spotlights his merciful love.

But this message isn't just an historical account we need to know. It doesn't simply teach another attribute of God that we can list under his name. It is a message for hearts that need to be reminded of God's love when they sin. It turns our aching hearts to confidently trust in God because he is faithful when we are not. It points us to see God's work of salvation—we are lost and he is the faithful Savior who draws us to himself.

God may speak to you through the account of Hosea to see your own unfaithfulness and feel its sting. He may point to your unwillingness to forgive other sinners. You may imagine that you are the righteous prophet—when in reality you are the adulteress. He may prompt you to reach out to someone who has hurt you with forgiveness and acceptance—and it may be very painful. This equips you to serve with humility.

As the text becomes part of your thinking and living, the central truth will become more evident. Consider whether God is telling you what you should do (this is the law) or if God is telling you what he is giving you (this is part of the gospel).

Does the text make you more aware of your shortcomings or God's infinite love?

This is one of the most difficult tasks in presenting the text.

It is also the most important.



### Activity: Assimilate the Text

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It's your turn to Assimilate the Text

Step One: Write down the question(s) to ask when you are considering whether a text is a message of the law or the gospel.

Step Two: List three things you could pray about when reflecting on 1 Peter 1:7

*These [trials] have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Step Three: List three or four things you could think or pray about when reflecting on Romans 12:1 and identify the most important point.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

## **PREPARE AND SHARE THE MESSAGE**

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You will invest a considerable amount of time learning the text. Study and pray for wisdom, talk about it with your pastor, and share what you learn with others. See the central message and identify the messages of law and gospel, pray the text, and know in your heart what it means.

But you aren't done.

If you stop here, you will receive the greatest blessings of Scripture with strengthened faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. But now your goal is to communicate what you've learned to others. Now that you understand the power and amazing truth of God's Word, you need to spend time learning about the best way to communicate those treasures to others.

Don't let these final steps be a stumbling block to the truth God has given you to share. The Spirit will work through the Word, but your intentional effort in these final steps will bless those who hear God's Word from your lips.

There are three things to do: adapt your presentation to reach different learning styles, prepare your materials, and practice your presentation to know long it is.

### **Adapt Presentation to Reach Different Learning Styles**

After you have studied the text and made notes, you will have a ton of information that makes sense to you. Now you need to consider how various types of learners can best understand what you teach.

The materials in Lesson Four: Prepare to Teach help you reach a variety of learners. Review the section on step learners, create learners, research learners, and talk learners. Remember to identify the learning objectives for your presentation (this material is also in the same lesson) so you know the key points that need to be communicated in a variety of ways.

### **Prepare Your Printed and Visual Materials**

Contact a committee member to make sure you know what format(s) they would like to receive your materials.

If there are PowerPoint presentations for the event, you may want to include your own slides to make your key points, illustrate applications, and help visual learners. You may want to ask the committee if they would like you to use their themed slide templates or at least ask about the colors they plan to use. Other times, you may have a specific layout for the slides. The book, "Rule the Room" by Jason Teteak has some excellent tips for PowerPoint slides.

If there are handouts, make sure you know the deadline to have those materials turned in. Double check for typos (have a friend proof read your copy) and leave lots of white space for participants to write answers. Use a readable font and size to assist your learners in every way possible.

Other resources, like maps or lists, should also be included with your handout in the same font/size so it is clear that they go together. You may want to include your contact information in the footer so people can reach you.

Review Lesson Four: Prepare to Teach and note the section, “Plan Logistics and Make Final Preparations.” You will find important information to review.

### **Practice Presentation Length**

Some people write out their entire presentation word for word to make sure they teach clearly, use good transitions or examples, and have a solid conclusion. This is wise if you are just starting since you may get rattled and forget what to say.

With experience, some presenters just write an outline with key phrases, words, transitions, and examples.

Any way you do it (and there are many ways to write notes), it is important that you have a solid introduction, know your key points, and have a very solid conclusion.

Practice your presentation out loud. Simply imagine that you are talking to someone and share the insights you have learned. When you are starting to give presentations, you will likely practice when you are alone. Focus on speaking clearly to the key points of the text and make sure you know what words, phrases and examples you want to include.

Then look for an opportunity to visit with a friend or your pastor to share the main points of your presentation. Ask them if you can share what you’ve learned and hope to present at an upcoming event. Listen carefully to their feedback—don’t dismiss it or make excuses. Give it thoughtful consideration.

Know how long you have for each section of your presentation. If you have a one-hour presentation, break up your time slots for the introduction, key parts and conclusion. Refer to “Plan Key Parts of the Lesson” in Lesson 4: Prepare to Teach for a reminder on how to plan your time. If you have 12-15 minutes for each key point you could practice each section separately. Watch the clock—you have 12 minutes to explain the key point of the text. Work through each section.

Be thoughtful to the timelines set for the event agenda. You want to stay within the allotted time you have been given. Others have prepared for their time slot also—or someone has intentionally prepared lunch to be served at a set time!

### **It is Essential to Arrive Early**

There are several important reasons to arrive early.

1. It contributes to a relaxed and secure environment.
2. It allows for relational ministry opportunities and conversations.
3. It gives you time to address last minute details.

This event isn't just about what you have to say. People are ministry. Talk to committee members and thank them for their work and commitment to God's kingdom work. Seek out women you have been in contact with via phone or e-mail to personally say hello. Recognize that committee members and other speakers have also been studying God's Word under the same theme. Humbly appreciate the insights and encouragement of others. If you are able/comfortable, speak to the participants at the event to find out more about your audience.

Ultimately, the details are a final obstacle that must be addressed! Check your mic early. Ask what type of microphone you will use—lapel and handheld microphones each require some flexibility, because you need to wear the right clothes or one hand will be tied up holding a mic. Hearing impairments are very common, especially in large rooms. Ask someone on the committee to wave at you from the back if they can't hear so you don't have to keep asking "can you hear me?" Be mindful of those who can't hear well in a large room!

Check your PowerPoint slides (if applicable). Be aware of font changes or screen sizes that will impact how your slides appear. If you chose a unique font be sure it shows up correctly when loaded. Think about your back up plan if the internet at the venue is unreliable.

Be physically aware of the setting: Where do your notes go? Will you hold them? Where is the clock so you can check the time? Where is the best place to stand?

Finally, be yourself.

You are a called, holy vessel of God's grace. The Holy Spirit is IN you. You can be confident in God's gifts and the power of his Word yet still remain humble as a redeemed sinner. Trust the Holy Spirit's work and God's promises about Scripture. Continue to pray that God's Word would touch the hearts and lives of those who are listening. Remember that the power of your presentation is directly related to God's Word.



### Activity: Prepare and Share the Message

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It's your turn to Prepare and Share the Message

Step One: Where do you keep track of important dates and deadlines? Will you need to set reminders for yourself or find a place to keep the details of your event handy?

Step Two: What are some fundamental elements to remember when thinking about learning styles? What are some basic ways that people learn?

Step Three: Who would listen to you share your presentation prior to the event?





**Notes: Teach Scripture at Events**

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Lined writing area with horizontal lines for notes.

## **Your Turn to Teach Scripture at Events**

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It's your turn to Teach Scripture at Events

### **Review and Exercises**

Items flagged with arrows require action on your part. If you are uncertain how to proceed, reread the appropriate section in this lesson.

### **Evaluate the Event Expectations and Text**

- Write out at least three questions you should ask when considering a speaking engagement.

### **Assimilate the Text**

- List three or four things you could think or pray about when reflecting on Romans 12:1 (below) and identify the most important point.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

### **Prepare and Share the Message**

- Who would listen to you share your presentation prior to the event?