

THANK YOU FOR SAMPLING

**“THE 7 BEST PRACTICES FOR
TEACHING TEENAGERS THE BIBLE”**

"7 Best Practices" is a book designed to give you the skills needed to dynamically teach the Bible to teenagers. You'll enjoy it's easy to apply principles and straightforward teaching tips.

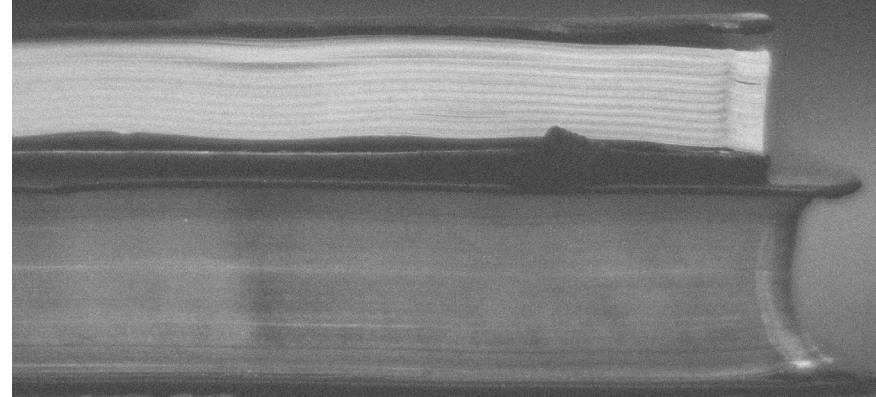


IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOOK,
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BEST PRACTICES FOR
TEACHING TEENAGERS THE BIBLE



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SETTING THE STAGE

I have worked over the Bible, prayed over the Bible for more than sixty years, and I tell you there is no book like the Bible. It is a miracle of literature, a perennial spring of wisdom, a wonderful book of surprises, a revelation of mystery, an infallible guide of conduct, an unspeakable source of comfort.—**Samuel Chadwick**

It is not the man who brings the Word that saves the soul, but the Word which the man brings.—**Thomas Arthur**

**DO YOUR BEST TO PRESENT
YOURSELF TO GOD AS ONE
APPROVED, A WORKMAN WHO
DOES NOT NEED TO BE
ASHAMED AND WHO CORRECTLY
HANDLES THE WORD OF TRUTH.
- 2 TIMOTHY 2:15**



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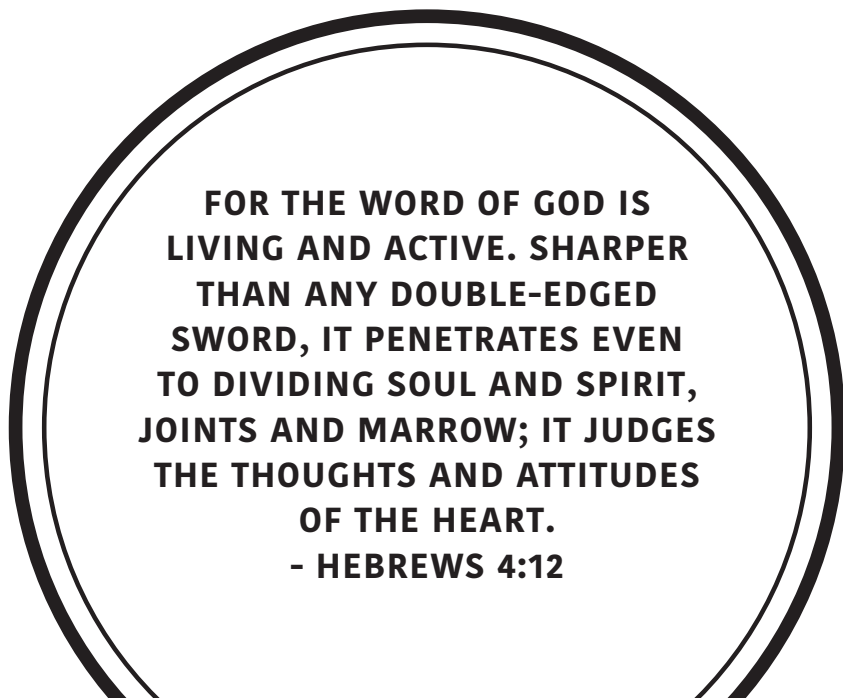
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**BEING A BETTER
BIBLE STUDY
TEACHER**

Philosophy and religion may reform, but only the Bible can transform.—**Brian H. Edwards**



**FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS
LIVING AND ACTIVE. SHARPER
THAN ANY DOUBLE-EDGED
SWORD, IT PENETRATES EVEN
TO DIVIDING SOUL AND SPIRIT,
JOINTS AND MARROW; IT JUDGES
THE THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES
OF THE HEART.
- HEBREWS 4:12**

There are skills I'm pretty good at. I can handle myself pretty well in a workshop. I'm no craftsman by any means, but I can refinish furniture, sling drywall mud, or build furniture with the best of them. I've built houses before. In this particular discipline, and maybe one or two more, I'm fairly adept. Better than average.

There are other skills I'm OK at. I'm an OK cook. I'm an OK photographer. I'm an OK fantasy baseball player. (So maybe a little less than OK on that one, but a man can dream, can't he?) I have a passable level of ability at quite a few skills or concentrations.

There are a whole host of skills at which I pretty much stink. I know how to play guitar, but I'm awful. I'm absolutely terrible at golf. Seriously. It's not pretty. I can't dance. I can't act. And I can't sing.

Now here's an interesting thought. What if I wanted to be a better golfer? I could be, couldn't I? I could take lessons, invest in clubs, practice my swing on the driving range, and begin to gain experience through playing regularly. I could improve. But I don't. And I won't. You want to know why?

There are well-meaning, good-hearted men and women all across this country who are not very good Bible teachers, and who have never made the effort to improve.

I couldn't care less if I'm a good golfer or not.

Being good at golf is not a value I hold. It's not important to me to be proficient at hitting the links. And because this is true, I will probably never invest the time and energy it takes to become good at it. Golfing isn't something I'm going to do on a regular basis. It would be futile for me to play very much golf considering I'm a bad golfer and I haven't really done the work to become a better one.

And yet, there are well-meaning, good-hearted men and women all across this country who are not very good Bible teachers, and who have never made the effort to improve. And yet they still teach the Bible each Sunday.

Why aren't they seeking to be better Bible teachers? Certainly there are many factors that may play into this. But at its core, it's an issue of importance. For many people, being a more dynamic Bible teacher is just not something they value.

Now, I want to be quick to say that I'm not in any way disparaging these people. Not one bit. I love these folks! The adult volunteer who works a day job and teaches teenagers in Sunday School or small groups is my kind of person. My belief is simply that the vast majority of these people have no idea they aren't good Bible teachers. They love teenagers, they feel called to serve, and they are teaching the way they were taught. So, I'm not critical. I'm compassionate.

The purpose of this book is two-fold. The primary purpose is definitely that you would become a better teacher of the Bible. My prayer is that this book will help you be a better Bible teacher by giving you some extremely practical and easy-to-implement strategies. This book will help you teach the Bible better.

But more than this, the purpose of this book is to help you remember, or see for the first time, the value of being a great Bible teacher.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Before we get into the practical stuff, I want to ask you a question . . .

What drove you to pick up this book?

What was it that moved you to open the cover and flip through the first few pages? What caused you to browse an online bookstore and go through the process of downloading this to your e-reader of choice? My hunch is that the reason you're currently reading this book is the same reason I sat down to write it. I'm willing to bet that you're compelled not by obligation, but by desire.

And I bet you're not entirely driven by the desire to be excellent at the skill of teaching the Bible. I bet you're motivated by something

deeper. You see, this is where my golf analogy falls flat. While being a better Bible teacher is in many ways about skill development, unlike improving at golf, there's more than proficiency motivating your desire to teach the Bible better.

If you teach the Bible to teenagers on a regular basis, there is something inside you that believes this is a worthy pursuit. Like me, you want to see teenagers live vibrant, dynamic faith lives. You and I are passionate about seeing teenagers know God more. We lead students closer to God. And we primarily do this through teaching them about God through the Bible.

We teach them on Sunday mornings in a large classroom.

Or on weeknights in small groups in somebody's home.

Or maybe on a Sunday night at a coffee shop.

Whatever it looks like, you are in some ways responsible for standing in front of students and leading, or facilitating, or teaching them. But what we teach them is what this book is all about.

HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO

So what do we teach students? Well, we're not teaching students to be better at math. We're not teaching them government, or economics, or chemistry. We're leading students deeper in their relationship with Christ. And we need to get on the same page about how we do this.

The primary way God has made Himself known to His children is through the Bible. I've written about this extensively so forgive any redundancy. But it's a subject I'm really quite passionate about. Why? Because if we're not careful, we can make youth ministry about a lot of different things. We can get caught up in building our efforts on a lot of different platforms that, if not framed in the right light, can actually distract us from the very things they are intended to point to.

We can build our ministries on relationships.
 We can build our ministries on service.
 We can build our ministries on worship.
 We can build our ministries on evangelism.

When we build our ministries on one or any combination of these pursuits, we're not far off. Each of these is an important aspect to the faith lives of teenage Christ-followers. But if we fail to ground students in the truths of the Bible, then we fail to put any of these things in proper context.

For relationship, service, worship, and evangelism to be realized as God would have them realized, they have to be understood in the context of God's character and in His Kingdom principles. If our relationships with our students don't start with an understanding of our identities as God's children, they're no different that their relationships with their agnostic, Muslim, or Hindu friends. Outside of a right understanding of God and His ways, our worship becomes feel-good emotionalism that serves to meet a need in us, but that is certainly not directed at God. Apart from God's Kingdom principles that are communicated only through His Word, our service becomes nothing but mere volunteerism.

For relationship, service, worship, and evangelism to be realized as God would have them be realized, they have to be understood in the context of God's character and in His Kingdom principles.

If our relationships with students are to produce more fully committed followers of Christ, they must be built on the full knowledge of God Himself. This simply cannot happen without a solid understanding and application of the Bible. Again, this is the very reason God gave us the Bible! So that we might know Him. Sure, there are aspects of God that are mysterious and unknowable (thankfully!). But His character, His history of working in the world and in humankind, His attributes, His unending desire to redeem us, His expectations for us as His children, His glorious plan for the future. . . . All of these things can be known! And they are known through the Bible.

If this is true, and I believe it is or I wouldn't be writing this book, then it's pretty important that we know the Bible, and that we know

how to teach it in such a way that it's real, relevant, responsible, and that leads to life change. We can offer our students nothing less! And, in all reality, we can offer God nothing less.

So, that's my appeal to you. That's my pitch, so to speak. As people who are motivated by our love for God and by our desire to see students have an active faith that influences their lives, we need to know how to teach the Bible better. Not for the sake of being good Bible teachers. But for the sake of being obedient to Christ's command to make disciples.

WHAT WE'RE NOT DOING

Before we move on, I want to take a second and acknowledge two points of potential contention, lest you or I become tempted to travel down either of these roads.

Point 1: There are well-meaning people whose zeal for the Bible has replaced a zeal for God Himself.

One of my favorite artists is Michael Gungor. He alludes to this issue in the very excellent song "Cannot Keep You":

*"We cannot keep you in a church.
 We cannot keep you in a Bible,
 Or it's just another idol to box you in."*

I get it. I understand if you have a sensitivity to this based on past experiences with someone who has this bent. When our love for the security that comes with knowledge and rules replaces the love for the security we have in God, something is wrong. We've missed it.

I hope that you've picked up from this introduction my belief that spiritual transformation is ultimately found in and through Christ. *My contention is simply that God gave us the Bible so that we can have authentic encounters with Him on a regular basis.* Being a better Bible teacher creates more and truer spiritual moments for the students you teach.