

A Special Report from Glenn Brooke,
Author of the Premiere Guide to Bible teaching,
[Teach the Bible to Change Lives](#)

Glenn Brooke Answers Seventeen More Questions from Bible Teachers

About the Author

Glenn Brooke has been teaching the Bible for more than twenty years and is the author of [Teach the Bible to Change Lives](#) and [52 Model Questions](#). Glenn is the husband of one wife (and he married 'up', way up!) and the father of two children. He is learning how to exercise his gifts every day as he walks with Christ and ministers in His name. Glenn's family calls the Johnston Evangelical Free Church (Johnston, Iowa) home. Glenn's statement of faith agrees with the twelve points of doctrine from the Evangelical Free Church of America (<http://www.efca.org>). Contact him at info@teachtochangelives.com if you have questions.

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I've picked seventeen questions from Bible Teachers all over to answer in this special report. Did I get your question covered? Teach to change lives, remembering that teaching ministry is a privilege,

Glenn Brooke
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“I go out and speak to women's groups and always have a teaching from the Bible but to this day, I have not been able to come up with a teaching of my own. I always give full credit to the teacher I learned it from at first and have them write his/her name on their notes, but I so want to be able to teach something the Lord gave me instead of looking for other's teachings to share. How do I do this without lots of prayer and studying the Bible, which I do already? How does one get to that point? I've been teaching for years now.” -- Ruth

Bless you, Ruth! I applaud your quickness to give credit to others. (You would be amazed how many people do not.)

Your statement “I so want to be able to teach something the Lord gave me” tells me that He has already put this desire for teaching in your heart. And the Lord never gives us that desire without the ability to do it!

If you are regularly praying and studying the Bible, then you are learning directly from the Lord. And that's what you can be teaching to others. My experience is that the Lord almost always teaches us so that we learn ourselves, and has a like expectation that we in turn share what we are learning so that others can learn as well.

If you aren't keeping notes about what the Lord is teaching you, begin today. Just a few short sentences are usually all you need to capture what you learned. As you do this, it will not be long before you get a clear sense of what lessons you could teach. Over time your journal can become a terrific source of ideas for teaching.

Now if you say, “Oh, I couldn't teach that stuff” I will challenge you to tell me why not.

Remember that the Lord has complete confidence in Himself, working through you, to teach precisely what these ladies need at this time.

Begin with short devotions, just one key lesson or thought. Do not underestimate how powerfully effective these can be. Put your trust in the Lord whom you have followed so faithfully for years.

“How do you use commentaries as a reference? What information are you looking for if you only use them a reference? What is the purpose if you are to get your revelation from the study of the Bible? Thank You.” -- Emma

I’m regularly asked about Bible commentaries. Which one do I recommend? How much can you trust them? I wrote up a special report about this. You can get it (free) at <http://www.teachtochangelives.com/commentary.htm>

Commentaries are most useful to get perspective on things you cannot learn from the Bible text itself. These include:

- related information about secular historical events and the culture of the pagan nations
- church scholars' views on this book or theme over time
- differing interpretations of prophecy

Check out the special report so you understand my perspective on how to use commentaries.

“How do you start, when so many people have so many views about the Bible? Where do you start and go from there?” -- Bobbie

Mark Twain famously said, “It’s not the parts of the Bible I don’t understand that bother me.” The key ideas in the Bible can be understood by a child. Yes, we will never fully plumb the depths of the Bible, not even in multiple lifetimes. The devil wants you to think it is hard to understand, however, because he knows that he has to keep you away from plain truth to lead you into destruction.

There are many views about doctrine and Christian living. But there is little disagreement about the essentials. God created us and the earth to glorify himself. We are sinful, and incapable to fixing ourselves. God is holy, and does not accept sin in His presence. Jesus is the only son of God, and is one with the Father. Jesus’ death is the sacrifice that paid for our sins and made it possible for us to be in relationship with God – eternity begins now for us.

We all begin with these things, and grow in grace and understanding as we walk with Jesus. Our job is to love Jesus, and love one another. Do you need to have all the details about predestination, eschatology, and sanctification worked out? No.

Speak with your pastor or minister, and they can assure you of these things, also.

“How do I get to the point where I am able to cite scripture verses? What's the best way to memorize verses?” – Janet Wooten

Some people do not find memorization as easy as others. You’ve probably met people who could rattle off relevant Bible verses without apparent effort. There are wonderful stories about rabbis who had memorized the entire Torah. It’s clear that many of the Jews in the New Testament knew the Torah and prophets well, not just the Pharisees. There are several men at my church who have worked hard at Scripture memorization. And it is work. This discipline takes earnest effort, even for those who are pretty good at it.

If you want to know the best way to memorize a verse, it’s repeatedly saying it out loud. Repetition is the mother of mastery.

I’m certainly not against Scripture memorization.

I’m more in favor of Bible study that leads to broad familiarization, however, than pure memorization of a collection of verses.

Stick with me on this.

The Bible study methods I promote in [Teach the Bible to Change Lives](#) are not about strict memorization, but studying in both breadth and depth. Go over a book like Ephesians every day for a month, and it’s general structure and themes will stay in your mind. You may not be able to quote the Ephesians 6 “armor of God” passage perfectly, but you’ll know what’s there. Work through the whole Bible a few times, and you’ll have an increasingly good feel for the major themes, and how things fit together. You’ll be absorbing more of the tone and feel of the Word. These things, more than how many verses you’ve memorized – or what level of memorization you’re capable of – are important to being a Great Bible Teacher.

“How [can I] motivate the group?” – Maria

The most important thing you can be doing on a regular basis, Maria, is praying for your group. Ask the Lord of their hearts to quicken them, animate them, open them up to the Word, and fire their enthusiasm for learning.

You can pull out everything from your ‘bag of teaching tricks,’ but it won’t result in changed lives – and that’s what we’re teaching for – if the Lord isn’t at work. “Apart from me you can nothing,” said our Lord.

Are there tactics to help? Sure.

Here's one tactic that I think Bible teachers should use more often: build high expectations. Give your students assignments between times together. Challenge them with questions that don't have simple answers. Find life applications that put them a little further out of their comfort zone, and pull them further along the arc of discipleship. Set up a little peer pressure to encourage people to work at understanding the Word.

Sometimes when I make this suggestion I get this kind of response back: "Well, you see, my group wouldn't like that, or I'd lose people." My comeback is simple: Jesus had (and has!) high expectations for his disciples. He didn't chase after people that turned away.

"How [do I] understand the root meaning of a word in the bible? For example, common phrase such as "Grace of God", "the Lord of Grace", "May the Grace of God be..." etc... I would like to know the essence and true meaning on the word "Grace" in the bible context. How can I do that? Thank U :-)" -- Davy

Short of learning Greek and Hebrew, you'll need a good reference book to help you. One of the best reference books for Great Bible Teaches is [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#). It will really help you understand the original word meanings.

I'm also working on a special report on how to use an exhaustive concordance with Hebrew-English and Greek-English lexicons (dictionaries) to do this kind of word study.

"My biggest problem is keeping the attendance up and the burning desire to learn high." -- Ray

Sometimes people miss classes because of events you cannot control – sick kids, travel, and other commitments.

Your job is not to fret over these, but work to put together the most powerful, dynamic, I-can't-wait-for-next-time lessons.

And find ways to engage them in between lessons.

For example, give a little hint about the next class at the end of each session. Not just "See you next week," but "Next time we'll look at how Babylon was conquered in one night, fulfilling the prophecies of Jeremiah 50 and 51. Come prepared to find out how the empire really began collapsing 23 years earlier." Build the anticipation!

You can send your class members an email message between get-togethers, even put in a few quick phone calls. Remember that we're talking about teaching ministry here, not just teaching events.

“My only question is where to find Bibles and books to use the places that I have seen are so out of my Ministries price range that it's hard to get started is there anyplace that has them at a low price”. – Richard

Richard, I recommend you check out **Christian Book Distributors** at <http://www.cbd.com> for a huge selection and excellent prices. If you are looking specifically for inexpensive Bibles, check out **Discount Bibles** at <http://www.discountbible.com/>. I've had good service from both companies.

Two kids' teaching questions:

“I teach Kids Church and we have Lots of "Fun", but we also need "serious" lessons. How do I get their "serious" attention?” -- Cynthia

“Hi brother Glenn, I'm a Sunday school teacher for kids 3-5 years old for me is very difficult to keep them quiet. I start preparing the lessons on Sunday nights have everything ready by the next Sunday. I pray for me and for them every day. But my question is how can I do to get their attention when they are always talking to each other?” – Hilda

I'll tell you right up front that I'm not experienced at teaching younger children. So I visited with some people who are VERY good at it and asked them your questions. I'll paraphrase their answers here.

First and last, you must really love the kids. They'll know if you don't really love them.

Second, shoot for 2 minutes of focus on you and the lesson. If you have their attention for two minutes, you can get a lot in. This means you have to laser in on one key thought or idea.

Final thought: if the kids are visiting with each other, that's a good sign that they're comfortable in the group. Give thanks, because it is not always so!

There's a very interesting book titled [**Why Nobody Learns Much of Anything at Church: And How to Fix It**](#), that has many ideas of making serious lessons engaging for young kids.

“[I’m interested in] Bible study reviews. Also, effective teaching methods would be helpful. Teaching on discipleship is also relevant to me right now.” – Robert

Robert, I can’t recommend Bible study reviews.

If someone writes a terrific Bible study, and if someone else writes a glowing review, does it mean that it’s going to be an excellent study for your group at this time? No.

If you’re serious about using (or adapting) a ready-made study, get it well in advance and prayerfully consider how well it fits the needs of your students or group at this time.

Teaching the Bible to change lives always means tailoring lesson material to their specific needs at this specific time. You can count on the Lord to lead you in this.

There is a detailed section of my book [Teach the Bible to Change Lives](#) that describes how to identify the lesson material that will be best for your students, under the authority of the Lord who loves them and wants them to grow.

Two questions about engagement:

“Can you give me instruction on exercises or techniques that will motivate students to participate in the lesson, other than the lecture style of teaching?” – Barbara
“What are the methods to draw students continually to the Word of God. What methods keep them coming back for more?” -- Barbara

You’re not delivering traditional sermons -- you want people involved in discussion and ideas! Great Bible Teachers use Great Questions to engage people in the class.

I wrote [52 Model Questions](#) for this reason. It’s a set of questions that you can readily adapt for discussion on any Bible passage, and for any group. (Really!)

I also write at length in my book, [Teach the Bible to Change Lives](#) about how to run lesson time so that you get the best discussions possible.

I also have a lot of tips in this area in the free weekly teaching tips collection (sign up at <http://www.teachtochangelives.com/optin.htm>)

If you want your students to draw back to the Word continually, then you need to model it for them. Create lessons and devotions that come directly from the Bible. Share what the Lord is teaching you in your own study time. Speak often about opening the Word and hearing from God. If they ask questions, turn to the Word together for answers.

I also believe it's our responsibility as teachers to challenge our students to read more of the Word. Coach them on reading broadly and deeply.

Theological Questions

I've received a number of questions that aren't really about Bible study or teaching *per se*, but theological questions. My general answer on these questions is to speak with your pastor, or a trusted person who will work from Scripture to help you find answers. So my answers below are shorter than these questions deserve, because these questions are really just the beginning of a longer dialogue that should happen.

“If you were saved and baptized, then backslid do you have to be baptized again? Is that what it means to do your first works over?” – Wayne

Different Christian traditions have tied additional significance to baptism. Without knowing more about your church background and personal convictions, I would answer this way: baptism is a public sign of inward reality. I find no basis in Scripture for repeated baptism. My personal conviction from Scripture is that baptism is normal for believers, but not required for salvation.

“Dear Glenn, while in a training class at church, the minister stated the Holy Spirit and the Holy Ghost are different. He said the Holy Ghost gives the believer the Holy Spirit. I know that there is one Spirit. How do should I address the error? The difference has to do with linguistics.” -- Michelle

Jesus tells us that the Father gives the Spirit (see John 13:15) and that he [Jesus] that he is the one who sends the Holy Spirit (see John 16:3). The names “Holy Ghost” and “Holy Spirit” are English translations of the same Greek words, so I do not think that Scripture supports the idea that they are separate beings. My suggestion is to go back to the Bible and get the truth. I'm sure your minister would be delighted to show you from Scripture how he came to this understanding. “But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15)

“What is Jesus teaching about the temple and the end of era [in Matthew 24]? What type of hermeneutics is to be applied to all the texts? Is it talking about the second coming?” – Wilfredo

Jesus is plainly speaking about the period of time leading up to His glorious return. Most of this chapter is his answer to the disciple's questions in 24:3. Some of the description is figurative, and we will recognize the events clearly

only after they have happened. Jesus tells the disciples in 24:2 that the Temple will be destroyed. The Romans destroyed the Temple in AD70.

“I was in a Bible Study recently and the teacher stated that "repentance is the door into the kingdom of God." What is the proper response to that statement? The same teacher stated in another class that the fruit of the Spirit comes before the Gifts of the Spirit and we should seek the fruit and not the gift. Please help me to have a proper response.” – Gladstone

It would be helpful to know the context of these statements. Jesus declared that He is the gate (John 10:7) and the only way to the Father (John 14:6). But you can say that unless sin is taken care of, no one enters the kingdom of God. So it is true that unrepentant individuals cannot enter the kingdom of God. But it is more accurate, from the Bible, to say that Jesus is the door into the kingdom of God.

As for the fruits and gifts discussion, I don't see in Scripture any evidence that one comes before the other. We cannot dictate which gifts God gives us. Nor can we control which spiritual fruit we bear – it is a result of the Spirit of God working in us. Paul does tell us to “earnestly desire the greater gifts,” (1 Corinthians 12:31) and immediately launches into a description of love.

What about you? Do you have a burning question about studying or teaching the Bible?
Let me know about it at

<http://www.teachtochangelives.com/question.htm>

I will answer as many questions as I can in a future special report like this one.