

Teaching the Bible

By Matthew McKellar

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read the comments related to 2 Timothy 2:15 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: Practically understood, what does the challenge of “handling accurately” the Word of truth involve?

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to Hebrews 1:3 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What is the significance of the phrases “sat down” and “right hand” which are used with reference to Jesus?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to Colossians 4:3-4 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: How would you summarize the content of Paul's prayer request in this verse?

Scripture to Memorize

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust these to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand basic principles for teaching the Bible.

Matthew McKellar is associate professor of Preaching at Southwestern Seminary. Before joining the seminary faculty in 2009, he served as a pastor for twenty-eight years in Texas.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

During Sunday School, David's class had two guest teachers. When the first guest teacher taught, David was left confused about the text and had many unanswered questions. However, after hearing the second teacher, David felt he understood the text and its key applications.

What do you think the second teacher did that led to David's positive learning experience?

Text-Driven Teaching

Read 2 Timothy 2:2,15 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Paul was writing to Timothy, his "son" in the faith, who was a young leader in the church.

Verse 2. What you have heard. This word refers to the content of Paul's teaching to Timothy. From Paul, Timothy had heard the truth about Jesus and how Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Testament. **entrust.** This term is used here and elsewhere in Paul's letters to convey the idea of handling a possession as a trust or deposit. The one who entrusts the truth seeks to pass it along without any change or contamination. **teach.** Timothy was instructed to pass along what he had learned to faithful and capable men so they would be able to teach also. In this context, *teach* means "to communicate truth accurately to believers so they might understand it and share it with others."

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share a report.

Studying the Passage, 2 Timothy 2:15

Verse 15. do your best. If a disciple aims to teach the Bible effectively, he must submit to the authority and commands of the Bible. To be diligent is to be ready or eager for action. In this verse, *diligence* is connected with presenting yourself to God as a truth-tested and truth-driven worker so you have no shame or embarrassment due to careless discipleship. **rightly handling.** These two words come from a single Greek term that means "to cut straight." This is a challenge to the discipler to *stick with the text* as he seeks to explain it. He should let the text of Scripture be the source and substance of his content.

Also, the text should govern the way he structures his teaching. At all times, his goal is to *expose* the meaning of the text rather than *imposing* ideas on it that have no connection.

Discussion Question

How does the term "entrust" in 2 Timothy 2:2 relate to the responsibility of "accurately handling" Scripture as emphasized in 2 Timothy 2:15?

Christ-Centered Teaching

Read Hebrews 1:1-3 out loud.

Studying the Passage

The theme of Hebrews is the absolute superiority of Jesus. He is superior to angels, prophets and priests who served God's purposes.

Verse 1. spoke. The idea of God's "speaking" is repeated in this verse. This reminds us that He is a communicating God who has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity. **Portions . . . ways.** According to this verse, God spoke through the Old Testament prophets to His people in many parts and in many ways.

Verse 2. last days. These two words come from a single Greek word that is connected to the doctrine of "last things." The "last days" in this context refer to the time since the coming of Jesus to earth and His subsequent death, burial, and resurrection. **by His Son.** The literal translation of this phrase says that God has now spoken *in Son*. His ultimate and final *word* is Jesus Christ. In fact, all of Scripture points to the fact that God fulfilled all His promises in His Son. For this reason, every disciplemaker should aim to teach with a Christ-centered focus.

Discussion Question

In highlighting the superiority of the Son in verse 2, what are the two things the Father has done in connection with the Son? (Hint: focus on the verbs "appointed" and "made.")

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** may now share a report.

Studying the Passage

Verse 3. radiance of the glory of God. This is the first of two assertions that specifically emphasize the unique manner in which God "speaks" in His Son. Jesus is the outshining of the Father's surpassing worth. **exact imprint of His nature.** This second assertion is used by the author of Hebrews to tell us that the character of Jesus expresses the essence of God. After reminding the reader that the Son sustains all things by His powerful word, the author also refers to Christ's completed work at the cross. **purification for sins.** These words direct us to the cross where Jesus died in order to cleanse us from our sins. **sat down.** This phrase indicates the completion of a work. Jesus accomplished the will of His Father. **right hand.** This designation refers to a position of honor and authority. Having completed His unique work, Jesus is enthroned at the right hand of the Father.

Prayer-Saturated Teaching

Read Colossians 4:2-4 out loud.

Discussing the Passage

Writing from prison to believers in Colossae, Paul encouraged them to devote themselves to prayer. Identify the two specific marks of devoted prayer he mentions in this verse.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share a report.

Studying the Passage

Verse 3. open to us a door. Paul used the imagery of an open door to express his desire for

an opportunity to share the gospel. **mystery**. Paul often used this term, referring here to something previously unknown which has now been revealed by God. Because of the mystery of Christ, Paul now found himself in a Roman prison.

Verse 4. clear. This word means “to give full disclosure or bring something fully to light.” Not only did Paul pray for an opportunity to speak and teach the truth, but he also prayed for clarity of communication when the opportunity came. A disciplemaker’s preparation for teaching should be bathed in prayer. Our prayer lives are the true measurement of our dependence on Jesus.

On Your Own

In the space below, write a brief prayer to Jesus. Believers who have been discipled can effectively and accurately teach the Bible to others. If you are not regularly teaching the Bible to an individual or group, ask Jesus to open that door to you in His timing.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Prayer

7 minutes

At Home: Nail It Down

Three key passages provide a basic understanding of the task of teaching the Bible (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; Hebrews 1:1–3; Colossians 4:2–4). God is a communicating God who gives His people the privilege of speaking and teaching His Word. While He specifically gifts some for the ministry of teaching, all disciples should be able to share the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15).

Text-driven Bible teaching is vital. The one who teaches the Bible does not invent his message or impose his own ideas on a biblical passage. Rather, his goal is to explain clearly what the Bible says. He must take special care to accurately handle the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Disciples have a Christ-centered focus when teaching. The Father has spoken fully and finally in His Son. Since all Scripture points ultimately to Christ, those who teach should do so with the goal of exalting and honoring Him (Hebrews 1:1–3).

Prayer is indispensable in the life of the disciple who teaches the Bible. The one who attempts to teach in his own strength is certain to fail. However, the teacher who depends on the Spirit of God through prayer has supernatural assistance as he shares the Word (John 15:5; Colossians 4:2–4). Like Paul, the teacher should be prayer saturated, praying for both the opportunity to teach and clarity when the opportunity comes.

To summarize, consider the following basic principles for teaching the Bible:

- Text driven
- Christ centered
- Prayer saturated

Disciples who follow these principles will be prepared to seize every opportunity to communicate God's truth to others with clarity and conviction.

Follow up Question

What are some basic principles for those preparing to teach the Bible, and why are they important?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.