



The law & Gospel method of Bible study is the Church's traditional way to study the Bible, which was popularized by Martin Luther. Law & Gospel Bible study makes a distinction between God's two main Biblical themes: law & Gospel. God's law theme identifies our sin, by revealing what God wants us to do that we don't do. God's Gospel theme identifies our need for Jesus the Savior, and reveals how God's love offers us salvation through Christ.

STEP ONE PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REVEAL GOD'S VOICE THROUGH THE TEXT:
"Father, let your law and Gospel voice renew our love, faith, and hope."

STEP TWO READ THE TEXT REPEATEDLY UNTIL YOU CAN TELL IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:
John 10:11-18 (See the reverse side of the worksheet for the printed Gospel text)

STEP THREE REVIEW A STUDY BIBLE TO DETERMINE THE TEXT'S THEOLOGICAL MEANING:

The fourth Sunday of Easter is called "Good Shepherd Sunday" because all three years of the Liturgical cycle offer us readings from Chapter 10 of the gospel of John, where the Good Shepherd is described. When we think of Jesus "the Good Shepherd," we always link this image to his meek and sympathetic behavior towards those who went wrong in life. But the "Good Shepherd" of today's gospel is completely different. For the evangelist John, the shepherd is not one who caresses tenderly the wounded sheep, but the fierce protector, the fighter who, at the risk of his own life, stands up to anybody who threatens his flock. The passage begins with Jesus saying: "The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep" (11). "Good" does not stand here for sentimental, sweet, tender, not hurting anybody. It stands for "the true shepherd," "the authentic one." Jesus is the true shepherd not because he cuddles and caresses his sheep, but because he loves them so much that he is ready to lay down his life for them. Count how many times the expression "lay down his life" is used in the text. To bring out even better the image of the true shepherd, the text goes on to contrast it with the figure of the "hired man," the "mercenary" (12-13). The mercenary is hired for money. A hired man's contract did not demand that he should lay down his life for the sheep. He was allowed to run away, since, after all, he was not concerned with the flock but with the money, his salary. All Christians should be good shepherds. Whoever wants to be a disciple of Christ must portray the generosity of his master. He should not start measuring how far or much he can love his brother or sister. He must be led entirely by love. If a Christian is satisfied with obeying a law, or doing the minimum, he or she has not understood what true love is. If we love our brothers and sisters or serve our communities in the hope of getting some advantage here in the form of gratitude and prestige or even a reward in heaven, we do not really follow Christ's way. The expression "to lay down one's life" is found five times in the text.



John 10: 11-18 11I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away — and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

STEP FOUR COMPLETE A LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY TO *Restore Hope in the Savior*

Law Question: *How does this text reveal our sin (self-centeredness) and how we do not live as God desires?*

Answer.....

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Gospel Question: *How does this text reveal God’s gift of Jesus as the Savior who freely offers us salvation?*

Answer.....

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Please send your “answers” to Pastor Bob: Schmalzle@yahoo.com which he likes to incorporate into the sermon.

STEP FIVE PRAYERFULLY MEDITATE UPON GOD’S GOSPEL VOICE: *Restoring Our Hope*

A. Quietening Our Inner Sanctuary: *We quiet our hearts (souls) by focusing on our breathing. Breathe in slowly to the count of five (J-E-S-U-S)...hold your breath to a count of six (C-H-R-I-S-T)...exhale to a count of seven (T-H-E-L-O-R-D). Repeat this pattern of breathing until you are relaxed.*

B. Dwelling within Our Inner Sanctuary: *We meet the Lord Jesus in the sanctuary of our hearts (souls), which is a place created within our mind's eye for us to be with the Lord. Using our favorite sights, sounds, smells and feelings, we visualize our inner sanctuary as a place of peace where the Lord Jesus meets us.*

C. Listening to God’s Voice in Scripture Speak to Us through Jesus: *As Jesus meets us in our inner sanctuary, he lovingly shares God’s Gospel message of hope from the Scripture text we have just studied. Listening to God’s Gospel voice restores our trust and hope that Jesus’ death and resurrection freely offers us eternal Salvation. When Jesus speaks to us, our souls are nourished and refreshed.*

STEP SIX SHARE THIS LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY WITH A FRIEND:

Forward this via email, give a printed copy, or post on social media