



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:

Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23 (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:

In chapter seven of the Gospel of Mark, we discover what, in the eyes of Jesus, true religion is all about. For the Pharisees the emphasis was on observation of the law, both written and oral. For Jesus, however, what matters is the heart. More external observance without a corresponding movement of the heart does not please God. We are invited to see what is really important for our lives. In the Gospel of Mark the Pharisees are seen as the main opponents of Jesus. They eventually succeed in getting Jesus arrested and executed. Jesus' approach to the law was different than that of the Pharisees. Jesus put the spirit of the law before its external observance. For him, the life of a child of God is much more than a mere external observance of the laws. Jesus wants people to come to a real relationship with God. He challenges us to move from conformity to conversion. The Pharisees believed that anything less than a literal observance of the law would undermine God's people. If they removed Jesus they would be defending God and his law. Jesus challenges us to look not at externals but at our hearts. In the language of the bible the heart is the center of the human person. God's people are invited to 'love God with all their heart' (Dt 6:5). One who rejects God's ways, is said to have a 'heart of stone.' God no longer writes his law on stone tablets, but in the hearts of his people (Jer 31:31-34). Jesus begins his ministry by asking his hearers for a change of heart and a complete turning back to God (Mk 1:15). True religion is not a question of doing things, like praying or going to church. Religion is a matter of the heart. Long before Jesus, the prophets had fought against a formalism in religion that reduced it to lip-service and nice liturgies that did not bring about a change of heart. In the discussion about clean and unclean, Jesus shows us that the home of good and evil is the heart. It is in the heart that each one decides how to relate to God and to others. It is our hearts that we must give to God.



Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" ⁶He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' ⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." ¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile." ²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

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. Quieting 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 re-post on social media