



Weekly Law & Gospel Bible Study



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 9: 38-50 (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:

Throughout Mark's Gospel the disciples are often portrayed as clueless, confused or downright resistant. In verses 38-50 Jesus moves into specific and graphic teachings that clarify precisely what is expected of a disciple of Jesus so that one does not become a stumbling block to others (v. 42-48). The Gospel begins with the disciples complaining to Jesus about an exorcist whom they tried to stop. While they are eager to bring judgment on this outsider, Jesus himself wants the disciples to pay attention instead to their own behavior. In verse 42 Jesus immediately turns the tables on the disciples, warning them that they are the ones in danger of doing harm. It's as though Jesus says, "The problem is not the folks outside our group. Don't worry about others -- they are not the problem. Rather, look to yourselves. How are *you* getting in the way of the gospel? How are *you* a stumbling block?" Jesus warns that finger pointing at others can distract us so that we do harm and cause others to stumble. Sometimes, even our best intentions to correct others can have unintended consequences for innocent bystanders. Great damage is done to the gospel when Christians are preoccupied with infighting and self-righteous proclamations about others. Jesus returns the focus back to our own behaviors, the ways we speak and live good news, and the ways we place obstacles in the way of that good news. The Greek word *skandalon* is used in each verse from 42-47. A *skandalon* is an obstacle that people trip over, and is usually translated "stumbling block." Jesus could not be more clear: he is talking about the danger that his own followers can do, and he uses the dire image of drowning to get his point across. This week's gospel lesson invites us to examine the stumbling blocks we place, often unknowingly, often in faithful enthusiasm, in front of the most vulnerable among us.



Mark 9: 38-50 ³⁸John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. ⁴²If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. ⁴⁹For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

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.....

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

Answer.....

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 re-post on social media