

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:

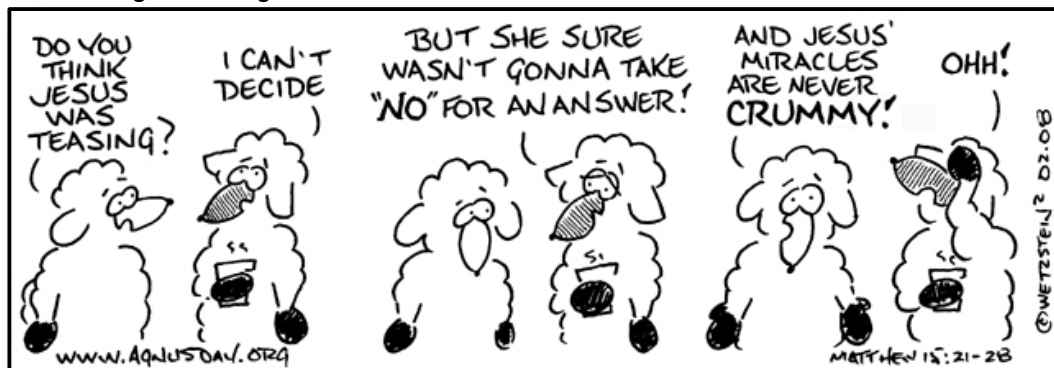
Matthew 15:21-28 (See the reverse side of the worksheet for the printed Gospel text)

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

In the early times of the Church, the Apostles found themselves with the serious problems of whether to admit, or not to admit, foreigners into the Church. One day, a foreign woman comes to Jesus. She belonged to the Canaanites that had often drawn Israel from its faith in the Lord to the worship of Baal. At first, Jesus relates to the woman very harshly, and rudely says to her: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel....not to wild scavenger dogs" (!). At first Jesus relates to her with contempt as any of his fellow Israelites would have treated her. However, the rest of the story reveals how Jesus challenged the Apostles to accept a radical change of mind. In the end, Jesus says: "Woman, you have great faith!" By healing the daughter of the Canaanite woman, Jesus is showing that the time has come to pull down the barriers that have divided people throughout the ages. The greatest thing to come out of Jesus' encounter with the Canaanite woman was the "great faith" she was given by Jesus. The New Testament teaches us that faith is a gift God gives us to:

1. Realize the damning consequences of our sinful nature and our need for a Savior.
2. Accept that God freely gives us his own Son as our Savior from sin, death, and the devil.
3. Celebrate that this "great faith" within us is an unconditional gift of God which we were "predestined to receive" (Eph 1:4).

For St. Paul, and the sixteenth century Protestant Reformers, nothing can surpass the "saving faith" we have received as a gracious gift from God.



Matthew 15:21-28 ²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

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. 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 post on social media