



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:

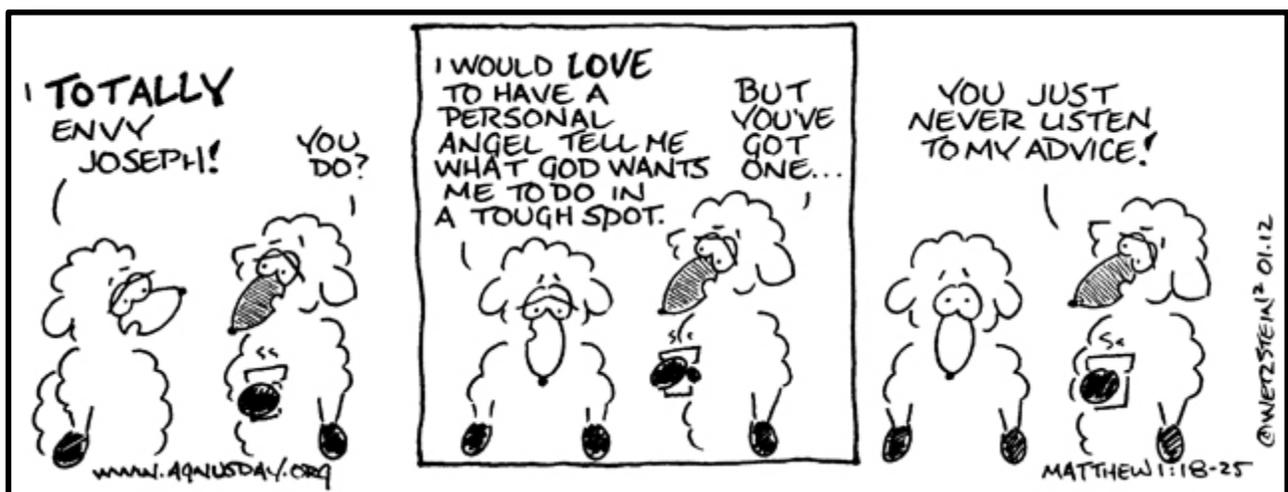
"Father, let your law and Gospel voice renew our love, faith, and hope."

STEP TWO READ THE TEXT REPEATEDLY UNTIL YOU CAN TELL IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

Matthew 1:18-25 (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:

As we draw nearer to the celebration of Christmas, we now turn our attention to events that happened before Jesus was born. These events are told in the first two chapters of Matthew and today's Gospel comes from there. Joseph is the main character. He has to decide what to do with Mary following her mysterious pregnancy. God intervenes through his messenger exhorting him to keep her as his wife because she is to give birth to the Savior. Joseph obeys the messenger angel and by so doing allows Jesus to become a descendant of David. Joseph is important because he is of David's stock. By accepting Jesus as his legal child, Jesus becomes a son of David. Matthew placed his genealogy of Jesus at the very beginning of his Gospel (Matt 1:1-17) in order to make this point clear right from the start. Joseph is also presented to us as an example of a person of faith. He obeys each time the messenger of God says something to him concerning his relationship with Mary and the child Jesus (Matt 1:24; 2:14, 21, 22). His faith allows God to intervene in the lives of his people. The Savior is called Jesus, a Greek form of the name Joshua, which means "God saves" (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:31; Acts 4:12). In Jesus, God saves his people from their sins. He is the new sign by which the people of Israel and of all ages know that God is with us.



Matthew 1:18-25 ¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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 email, give a printed copy, post on social media