

## **Bible Studies – A Chapter at a Time**

**What:** This material is personal to me although the outcome had an apparent effect on those who participated with me in Bible studies. In every church I pastored I led Bible studies whether youth, young adults, middle-age adults, or seniors. But leading Bible studies was a learning experience and this is what I want to write about; I discovered an effective approach in which the Bible came alive to people.

**Why:** When I first began to lead Bible studies, I did a verse-by-verse detailed analysis as you might experience in a lecture. I had the Greek language background for the NT although my Hebrew was severely limited for the OT. I remember completing a study on a book in the NT and realized that though we studied in detail and could talk about the 'trees', no one saw the beauty of the forest. In other words, no one could state what the book was about. I considered this to be my fault, not the fault of the participants. But Bible studies were what we did as a church and we fulfilled our obligation.

**How:** So, upon reflection, I changed the method. Instead of a verse-by-verse analysis we read an entire chapter and discussed the biblical concepts in the chapter. We looked at the bigger picture rather than through a minute window. For instance, a study of the letter to the Philippians took four weeks instead of four months or more. It appeared to me that the Bible came alive and people wanted to return.

In this age of information when information is highly controversial, Bible studies have a different agenda. I happen to believe that the Bible is exciting, fascinating, and engaging, when properly understood. There is no longer a view that 'anything and everything goes' without critical awareness and that, in itself can be controversial. However, the Bible can be relevant as we apply 'truth' to our lives. The Bible can allow us to touch heaven when there is no heaven on earth.

This is stated briefly and a leader can fill in the gaps that are missing.

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