

# DIGGING INTO THE WORD

Before the  
World Digs  
into You



SAMPLE

# Digging into the Word: Before the World Digs into You

Believers who are eager to understand God's Word often take two divergent paths toward their goal. Some are full of zeal and dive in, sure that their sincerity and eagerness to learn is all they need to understand the Bible. Others take a more analytical approach and read the Bible like a textbook trusting in their scholarship to give them a better grip on truth. So which is right?

The Missionary-Apostle Paul commended the people in the town of Berea for understanding that zeal combined with in-depth study is what makes for a faithful student of God's Word. He commended them because they received God's Word with readiness and searched the Scriptures daily to find out the truth (Acts 17:11). It is that combination of zealous digging into God's Word for one's self that makes for mature believers.

The title of this study is "Digging into the Word: Before the World Digs into You." We are constantly bombarded with the philosophies, principles and ideas of this world everywhere we turn. The greatest protection we have against being wrongly influenced by these forces is to entrench ourselves in the Word of God. Hopefully, this study will help lay the ground work for a lifetime of being a "noble Berean."

## Lesson One: The Bible Student's Pledge

Every man and woman who enters the military must pledge an oath of enlistment in which they covenant to follow certain uniform codes of justice. While believers are not required to sign any such oath we have a much higher calling to covenant in our hearts to be faithful to God's Word and apply it to our lives in a walk of faith. This lesson focuses on some basic commitments every faithful student of God's Word needs to make.

## Lesson Two: Analyzing a Passage

Just about any trip far from home requires a fair amount of planning. But what about a trip that will last a lifetime and has eternal consequences? A life in the Word is a journey that requires diligence, planning, prayer and a determination to know for one's self what God says. This lesson covers a basic strategy for digging into God's Word that any believer can use.

## Lesson Three: Key Ideas and Diagnostic Tools

While all we need to obey God is an open Bible and a willing heart, there are some simple tools that can help you along in your journey of discovery. Bible College and Seminaries are wonderful for those who can attend but everyone can do their own in-depth study with nothing more than a good concordance, Bible dictionary and cross reference Bible.

## Lesson Four: Continuing Education

Many occupations require the worker to have regular continued education or professional development. This reminds them of things they may have forgotten, teaches them new things, and reminds them how important it is to keep on learning. As believers we must always maintain a teachable spirit and be committed to a lifetime of learning. This lesson ties together some unifying principles about a Bible learner.

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## SESSION ONE

# The Bible Student's Pledge

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bibles
- Extra pens and pencils
- White board or poster board
- Printout of the Uniform Code of Military Justice [http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/morgan.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/morgan.html)
- Handouts

## LESSON OBJECTIVE

Every man and woman who enters the military must pledge an oath of enlistment in which they covenant to follow certain uniform codes of justice. While believers are not required to sign any such oath we have a much higher calling to covenant in our hearts to be faithful to God's Word and apply it to our lives in a walk of faith. This lesson focuses on some basic commitments every faithful student of God's Word needs to make.

## CONNECT

Read the oath of enlistment that every enlisted soldier must take upon entering any of the branches of the US military. Display a few pages of the Uniform Code of Military Justice you have printed from the internet and ask: *How many young soldiers do you think know every line of the Military Code of Justice?* A soldier is pledging to follow all that is laid out in that Code, though it may take him a lifetime of service to begin to understand everything that is contained in it.

Ask: *As Christians, will any of us in this life ever fully understand everything that is contained in God's word?* It would be foolish to think such a thing. At the same time we should always be striving to grow in our understanding of God's Word and how it applies to our lives. This study is designed to help you set a path that will ensure you are always growing deeper in your faith as you learn more about what God's Word says and means.

## CONSIDER

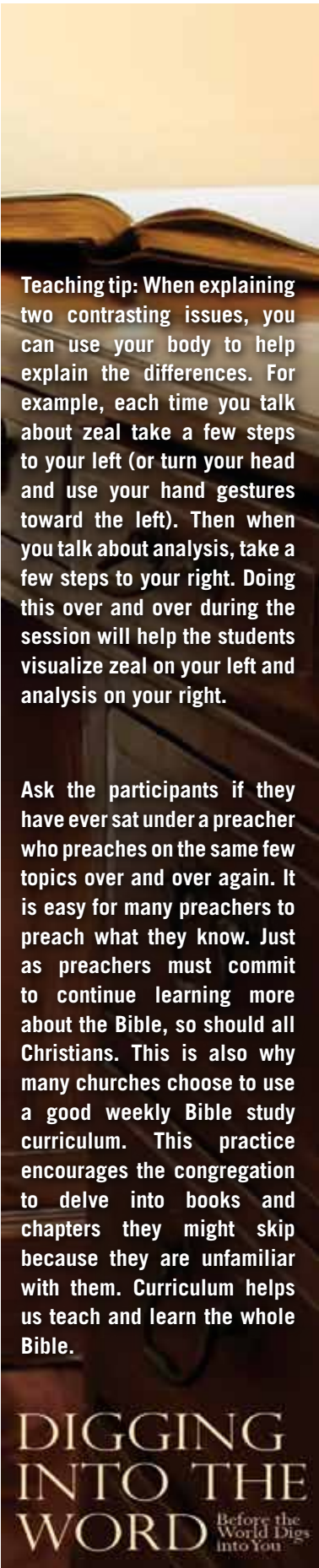
Ask: *If you surveyed a room full of average church goers, what do you think they would say a person needs to do to become a serious Bible scholar?* Write the answers given on a white or poster board. Some things people would probably list include a good library of books, college and seminary education, etc ... While all of these things named are surely important, advanced Bible study actually begins with a few basic lifelong commitments we should all pledge ourselves to follow.

## PLEDGE: I WILL Be a Berean Christian (Acts 17:11)

Call on someone to read Acts 17:1-15. Ask: *What was the difference in the way the Berean Christians approached God's Word compared to the people of Thessalonica?* Have participants look at the Scripture passage on their handout, "My Commitment to the Word," and underline the words that illustrate this difference.

I, (NAME), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God. (Oath of Enlistment)

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Display the following points on a PowerPoint slide or poster board and lead the group in a brief discussion using the following questions to focus on personal application.

- **Zeal** – Ask: *What does it mean to study God’s Word with passion? Is this lacking among many of today’s believers? Can passion get out of focus and become a problem?*
- **Analysis** – Ask: *Has there ever been a time in your Christian life when digging deep into God’s Word didn’t seem that important to you? Is it possible to become too analytical in one’s approach to God’s Word?*

Believers who are eager to understand God’s Word often take two divergent paths toward their goal. Some are full of zeal and dive in wherever the page lands sure their sincerity and eagerness to learn is all they need to understand the Bible. Others take a more analytical approach and read the Bible like a textbook.

The Apostle Paul commended the Berean Christians for understanding that zeal or passion combined with in-depth study is what makes for a faithful student of God’s Word. It is passionately digging into God’s Word for one’s self that makes for mature believers. Refer again to the handout and ask participants to put an X on the chart to mark how balanced they think they are between zeal and analysis in their Bible study.



**I WILL commit myself to the whole counsel of God**  
(Acts 20: 25-31)

Read Acts 20:27 and ask: *What did Paul remind the Ephesians he had been faithful to do while with them?* Ask participants with various translations to read verse 27 for the group. On a poster or white board write down the phrases read that correspond with “whole counsel” in the NKJV. That phrase is translated in different versions as:

- whole purpose (NASB)
- whole will (NIV)
- all that God wants you to know (NLT)

Instruct participants to write out Acts 20:27 as a paraphrase on their handout. Lead the group in a discussion of the importance of what Paul was saying to the Ephesians. Paul’s main point was that he didn’t avoid any part of God’s Word. He was committed to teaching them about as much of Scripture as time allowed while he was with them.

Ask participants to read Acts 20:25-35 silently and then ask: *Why did Paul go to such lengths to teach the Ephesians as much of God’s Word as possible? Why did he make sure he didn’t just “skim the surface”?* The Apostle knew the only protection against false doctrine is a commitment to know God’s Word for one’s self. We all have friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors that have been deceived by false doctrine. When we spend the time learning God’s Word, we can defend ourselves from these attacks on our faith.

## I WILL press forward toward maturity in Christ through the Word (Hebrews 5:11-6:1)

Read the quote from Charles Spurgeon from the sidebar and call on someone to read Hebrews 5:11-6:1 and then ask the following questions for discussion:

- *What problem does the passage address?*
- *Are there many believers in our churches who should have progressed more spiritually than they have?*
- *What do you think the writer means by “solid food” in Hebrews 5:14?*

God gave me this great book to preach from, and if He has put anything in it you think is not fit, go and complain to Him, not to me. I am simply His servant, and if His errand that I am to tell is objectionable, I cannot help it. Let me tell you, the reason why many of our churches are declining is just because this doctrine has not been preached.

—Charles Spurgeon

### COMMIT

There is one part of the pledge left to cover. **I WILL remind myself constantly of the purpose of studying God's Word (Ephesians 4:11-16).** Remind participants that the purpose of digging deep into Scripture is not so we can know more than others. Encourage them to recognize the reason God gifts some to teach His Word is so every believer can be equipped to be what God wants them to be. As you lead in prayer ask God to help everyone in the group to take God's Word as seriously as the Bereans did.

Remind the class to bring their Bibles next week. Jokingly say that you didn't call anyone out today for not bringing his or her *Bible* to *Bible* study when the topic is learning to study the *Bible*!

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# My Commitment to the Word

I WILL be a Berean Christian (Acts 17:11)

Write out Acts 17:11.

Zeal

Analysis

I WILL commit myself to the whole counsel of God  
(Acts 20: 25-31)

I WILL press forward toward maturity in Christ through the  
Word (Hebrews 5:11-6:1)

I WILL remind myself constantly of the purpose of studying  
God's Word (Ephesians 4:11-16)