

# Standard LESSON™

## Doctrine = Practice

by Ronald G. Davis

If God's project is to make effective Christians, what exactly is it that makes a Christian effective? What is needed is the very same thing anyone with any responsibility needs: ability to make the responses necessary to accomplish the task! That is, a person can do what is needed to fulfill his or her purpose. What, then, is it that the Christian needs to do? To be built up (along with fellow Christians) in strength of faith, to worship and praise the Lord, to announce the good news of salvation to all who will listen. He or she has the same purposes as does the church: edification, fellowship, worship, and evangelism. The first epistle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians of the first century is also a Spirit-filled call to Christian unity for us twenty-first-century Christians.

### The Core of Effectiveness

At the core of Christian effectiveness is a willingness to submit our selfish agendas to the Word of God. Certainly in the study of 1 Corinthians 12–14, the teacher will want to encourage and facilitate a deep, usable knowledge of the grand truths studied. Bible memorization must be at the forefront of strategies used.

A key verse in each lesson text will reveal some of those grand truths. Consider having a learner with an effective voice record every key verse (with reference) for your unit of study, and burn CDs for distribution to all class members. (Note: The *King James Version* is free of copyright restrictions; other versions will require permission.) When these are distributed, announce the intention and suggest that learners fill their opportune times—driving, cooking, washing dishes, resting—listening to these verses repeatedly.

Since not everyone in your class is an auditory learner, consider handing out a one-a-day worksheet for a selected key verse of each week with seven different activities to be used, one each day. The worksheet might resemble the following, if 1 Corinthians 12:7 were your key verse, with the direction to tear off each day as it is completed:

Sunday—The \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ is given to \_\_\_\_\_ man to \_\_\_\_\_ withal.

Monday—The aefimnostt of the Spirit is eginv to eervy man to profit ahiltw.

Tuesday— every given is man manifestation profit of Spirit The the to to withal.

Wednesday— Uif nbojgftubujpp pg uif Tqjsju jt hjwfo up fwfsz nbo up qspgju xjuibm.

Thursday—+H3 M@N1F3\$+@+10N 0F +H3 \$P1R1+ 1\$ G1V3N +0 3V3RY M@N +0  
PROF1+ W1+H@L.

Friday—The \_\_\_\_\_ Spirit \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Saturday—Quote 1 Corinthians 12:7.

(Note: Wednesday' exercise can be decoded by substituting the preceding letter in the

# Standard LESSON™

alphabet for each letter in the coded text.)

Many learners find that memorization and melody go hand in hand. Who can resist a snappy jingle? (In fact, who can get one out of his or her head?) Probably in your group of learners there are some who would find joy in developing a singable tune for selected verses from your unit of study. Early in the study (or previous to its start), seek volunteers to compose a simple tune for verses you identify as important. The writer could add or alter words slightly to develop a singable chorus; for example, 1 Corinthians 13:13 (“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”) could be effective as:

Abideth now three—  
Faith, hope, charity;  
You easily see—  
How great is charity!

## The Fabric of the Bible

Though we tend to separate doctrinal and historical elements of the Bible, doctrine is illustrated in biblical history. Paul consistently weaves his 1 Corinthians 12 comments about speaking in tongues with the account of the history of that manifestation in Acts 2.

The lesson for May 23, 2015 demonstrates how history and doctrine are consistent. Speaking in tongues has been a divisive issue in the church—from Paul’s day to this day. But by comparing Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12, your students can be challenged to look at God’s intent for tongues.

In studying these passages, make sure each student has copies of the printed texts. Challenge them to circle words and phrases that have to do with the actions of the speaker and to underline words and phrases that have to do with the benefits gained by the hearers. Soon it will become obvious that tongue speaking was a gift not to showcase the spirituality of the speaker but to increase curiosity and understanding of the hearer.

## Into Life

The epistles were designed by God to challenge Christians to be true to the doctrine they have been taught. Doctrine is true whether individuals apply it to life or not, but the only personal value that doctrine has is seen in daily application. There is the “What’s So” of the gospel, but there is also the “So What?”

With every lesson, the wise teacher realizes that his study and plan are incomplete until he asks, “So what? What is there about today’s truths that can make a difference in the lives of my learners this week?”

Teach your students to read the epistles with a “So What?” attitude; that is, to ponder the personal consequences of each truth revealed. Consider dividing your class into two groups for reading the texts antiphonally one or more weeks of the study: one group to read a verse, and the second group to exclaim “So What!” after each. Be certain to explain that this is in no way questioning the validity of the text, but is a simple challenge to consider the text personally and behaviorally.

Teaching the facts of doctrine is never an end in itself. We much teach our students to “do.”

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But we cannot do what we do not know. The wise teacher of adults—like Paul—combines truth with application.