Hearing the Word

The Manual

Leader's Guide

Nigel Barge

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The Manual

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Nigel Barge, November 2023

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HEARING THE WORD

Synopsis

'*Hearing the Word'* is a tool to help all who read the Bible to find out what its authors originally intended when they wrote it, and to seek God to apply His Word to their lives today.

For a pastor / teacher, it may be used to help others:

a) to think for themselves as they read their Bibles, and
b) to mature in their knowledge of the Word of God.

It encourages people to approach a passage in a disciplined way using four steps:

LOOK - what does it ***say?***

LEARN - what does it ***mean?***

LISTEN - what is the ***message****?*

LIVE - what is the ***response****?*

It is simple. Founded on basic principles of addressing any text, it is beneficial to all: to the novice it lays a good foundation, to the 'hardened' Bible student it acts as a reminder of good habits that may have been laid aside!

It is a resource for personal work that is also useful as a basis for group Bible study.

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Hearing the Word has been developed over many years, during which the people of Torrance Church have been patient through the tortuous process!

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At a point of discouragement, Stuart Smith was enthusiastic, having used *The Introduction* at a church weekend.

William Wilson affirmed my belief that the discipline of *Hearing the Word* has benefit to 'experts', including fine expositors like himself.

David McAdam brought great encouragement by demonstrating its effectiveness not only in use by church home groups but also as a tool to train pastors in third world settings.

Dave Glover spurred me on and sought to bring it into the 21st century by use of his graphics in the presentation.

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Through painstaking hard work, Phil and June Malloch have countered my literary inadequacies and made the materials presentable!

Nigel Barge
November 2023

THE RATIONALE

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Preface

In the 16th century, one of the earliest reformers of the church rediscovered that the Bible was for everyone.

This inspired William Tyndale to translate it into English and print it for mass circulation. As he said to a leading clergyman of his day,

> *"If God spare my life, e'er many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."*

When we were first developing 'Hearing the Word', a friend in Glasgow used it with his congregation.

As they went through the course, he noted two facts:

a) All kinds of folk benefitted.

   Someone who had only recently believed in Jesus and come to church interacted comfortably in a group with a student at Bible college.

b) The 'secret' of understanding the Bible was out.

   A friend said to him after the course, 'I used to think what you did as a preacher on Sunday was clever; but now I know how you do it!'

It was perhaps a little shocking at first, but it made my heart soar. Notwithstanding God's treasured gift to the church of preachers and teachers, there was an echo of the promise of the New Covenant:

> *'I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour… saying, "Know the Lord". For they will* all *know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'*
>
> (Jeremiah 31:33,34)

Introduction

"Give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day.
Teach him to fish and you will feed him for a lifetime." **(Proverb)**

All who seek Jesus love the taste of 'fish': *i.e.* they are eager to receive the Word of God. So, when it is 'served up' by those gifted at teaching it, we sit back and feast. The question is though, 'Can we 'catch' it for ourselves?!'

The problem, in terms of learning from the Word of God from sermons, is that we remember such small amounts of what is said. It seems we retain only approximately 5 percent of what we hear. It is a sobering thought for preachers that 95 percent of all the 'blood, sweat and tears' of preparation during the week is therefore going to be lost to their hearers on Sunday!

Merely witnessing an expert in their field does little to transfer their skill: Two weeks in front of the TV watching Wimbledon does not increase the national ability at tennis! Similarly, as we hear a preacher expound the Scriptures, though we might learn much of substance, we don't necessarily learn how to imitate them in opening up the Word of God for ourselves.

The challenge therefore is not merely to 'taste the fish' and admire the preacher for 'catching' it, but rather it is to imitate them and learn to 'catch fish' ourselves, by engaging with the Lord, in His Word.

Hearing the Word is a supplement to the God-given ministry of the 'teacher'. It is a tool that can be used to show the whole church that they are able to expose the Scriptures, thus learning how to 'catch fish' for themselves! It contains two parts:

1) An Introduction
This is a four-hour interactive course, suitable for novice and expert alike. It shows the former and reminds the latter how to read the Bible 'closely', listening for the Word of God, in a simple and straightforward way.

2) Bible Studies
These cover all genres of Scripture. They provide basic information on the text available to the original hearers and encourage people today, using the method of *Hearing the Word*, to explore the Word for

themselves. Having done this individually, they then suggest how their views might be shared together in a group.

In a nutshell - *Hearing the Word* enables us to do all that we humanly can, as we the read the Word. Thereafter, we are completely dependent on the grace of God and work of His Spirit to reveal Himself to us.

The Basis

The first three stages – LOOK, LEARN and LISTEN – merely adopt a method that would be taught in a school English class. Only the last stage, LIVE, is existential, as it asks, 'What is God saying to me?'

It is possible to engage in Bible Study in minute detail yet, like the Pharisees, completely miss the point. Jesus, the Word made flesh, told them, *'These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.'* (John 5:39,40)

The correct action then is not to suspend rational thought when reading the Scriptures; rather it is to employ all one's God-given ability, in submission to Jesus, recognising that in the end, *'His thoughts are not your thoughts, and His ways are not your ways.'* (Isaiah 55:8)

Hearing the Word exercises the discipline of human thought and reason but does it in the context of seeking divine intervention, recognising that *'Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labour in vain.'* (Psalm 127:1)

There are two pre-requisites to learning:

1) The will to learn

Unless there is an underpinning desire to learn, no means, tool or tutor will be able to effect learning in another.

2) The confidence to ask questions

Perhaps 'Curiosity killed the cat' - but a lack of it may yet kill the church! It is through questions that people learn. The prime goal of *Hearing the Word* is to give people who read the Bible the confidence to ask questions. That is the precursor to them then going on to find answers and to learn for themselves from the Word of God.

Hearing the Word is built on two assumptions. First, it is a basic need in the church for everyone to read the Bible and feed on the Word of God for themselves. We long to see the Word of God being impressed on children, talked about in daily life and being shared hospitably with others in our homes. (Deuteronomy 6:7; Acts 2:42ff)

Secondly, pastor-teachers in today's society are often in a position similar to the Apostles at the beginning of Acts 6 – aware of the priority of the Word but unable to treat it as such due to the demands on their time. Back then, the personal house-to-house teaching (Acts 5:42) was being neglected because of the demands of the food distribution to widows (Acts 6:2). Today the teaching of the Bible in regular, pastoral dialogue has been squeezed out by the busy lifestyles of shepherd and flock, and reliance is now almost completely on the Sunday monologue.

Hearing the Word seeks to address these in the following ways. It provides for:

a) Everybody,

by demonstrating that the Bible is *for* them and *accessible* to them. It gives people confidence to read it for themselves, by providing a simple structure to approach any text, at any time. Furthermore, it provides an on-going opportunity for interaction in Bible study between the pastor-teacher and member.

b) Teachers,

by providing a resource of Bible Study Guides to help leaders interact with their people and encourage them to learn from their Bibles. All the main styles of writing in Scripture are covered and each Study has a Leader's Guide. This means that a hard-pressed leader may simply pick up and start using the resources with little prior preparation.

The hope is that, as with the appointment of deacons in the early church, *Hearing the Word* will be a practical means that enables 'the Word of God to spread.' (Acts 6:7)

Testimony: ‘I can read the Bible’

by **Mana Hazlett**

I can remember when I first realised I could read. One evening I was sitting up in bed waiting for someone to come and read me a bedtime story. The story was chosen but for some reason there was no sign of an adult. I started to look at the text and realised that I could see that there were several paragraphs and that the story wasn’t very long. So, I started to read it and just read the whole story from beginning to end – and then read it again – and again. It was a wonderful feeling!

Fifty-five years on - the same sort of experience happened the fourth time I did our summer Bible study with the format of LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN and LIVE. First lesson, well, I was struggling. The second one, hmm, not much better at all, in fact I was quite bamboozled. I could see the general idea, but it certainly wasn’t clicking with me. So, the third session was my BIG problem because I was one of the leaders and really wasn’t sure how I would cope when I didn’t know how to get from one section to another!

Fortunately, the other leader was happy to prepare with me and on the night, the session went well. I was immensely relieved! People felt they got a lot from it and I didn’t have to confess I hadn’t a clue how the whole thing ‘joined up’! So, you can imagine my joy when I started session four. There was no pressure as I didn’t have to lead. When I started going through the format, well, I just got through it, and it all clicked. It all fell into place and made sense. It was a wonderful feeling, a bit like when I discovered I could read, all those years ago while waiting for a parent at bedtime. The next day, when I was seven, I knew I didn’t actually need anyone else to read anything, the world was my oyster.

So here I was all these years later, waking the next morning knowing I could do the series of strategies in LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN and LIVE by myself and read the Bible for myself! I’m an independent Bible reader now and have found my theological feet so to speak. It is a real feeling of being born again. The world is indeed my oyster.

Mana Hazlett Elder, Partick Trinity Church of Scotland, Glasgow

The Ethos

Priesthood of all believers; Theological Basis; Human skills; The Meaning of a text; The Author's intent

1 The priesthood of all believers

At the Reformation a key rediscovery was 'the priesthood of all believers'. The Bible showed the common man that he did not need a priest to act as his go-between to God; he had access himself by grace through faith in Christ alone. It followed from this that the written Word of God must also be accessible to all believers, without being mediated through a priest.

It was this belief that inspired William Tyndale to translate the Bible into English and print it for mass circulation. He expressed his intention to a notable cleric of his day with the words, *"If God spare my life, e'er many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."*

The goal of making the Bible known continues to be vigorously pursued by those in the evangelical tradition. In many churches, careful expository preaching covering the whole Bible allows everyone access to God's Word. On top of this, there is a vast array of resources – Bible translations, books, sermons, conferences etc., within easy reach of most Christians in the west. The reformers could not have dreamt of such riches! Ironically, amidst such bounty, we are in danger of creating a new priest-like category: 'the priesthood of the preacher'! In the church of today, we have let ourselves be ensnared by the lie that the Bible is so hard to understand it is only really accessible to ministers of the Word.

Belief in this lie has led to a total reliance on sermons, CDs, Bible notes, and books. Personal reading of the Bible itself may be seen as indispensable. Many think there is no point reading the Bible unless they have a suitable aid. From this it is a short next step to reading just the Bible notes or listening to the sermon, putting the actual Bible to one side.

The outcome of this is to minimise personal engagement with the Word. We are not taught *how* to think about the Word but rather, *what* to think. Many Bible Study Groups issue questions to ask about the text; members often end up discussing the question and what was in the questioner's mind, rather than what was in the mind of the author of the text!

A symptom of how far we have strayed is our tendency, when justifying a belief, to quote preachers as the authority rather than the text itself. *Hearing the Word* aims simply to demonstrate to all believers that they can read the Bible for themselves, and to provide a model or tool that will encourage them to do so.

2 Theological Basis

Hearing the Word is founded on the following biblical Truths –

a) God created us to communicate with Himself

"God said, 'Let us make man in our image.'" (Genesis 1:26)

We were made in His likeness for a relationship with Him. The foundation of any relationship is the ability to communicate.

b) The Bible is the Word of God

i) God has spoken in the past.

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways." (Hebrews 1:1)

This 'Word' was written down and constitutes the first part of the Bible – 'The Old Testament'.

ii) God has spoken and revealed Himself in Jesus.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God … and the Word became flesh." (John 1:1,14)

"...in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son." (Hebrews 1:2)

Jesus' disciples recorded this 'Word', thus completing the Bible with 'The New Testament'.

c) God's Word is for everyone

i) Everyone can know God for themselves.

Jeremiah looked forward to the time when *"no longer will a man teach his neighbour saying, 'Know the Lord', for they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest." (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:11)*

This does not dispense with our need of teachers *about* God and how to read His Word, but it does promise a knowledge *of* God, and an ability to hear Him speaking, that is both personal and direct.

ii) The key to hearing the Word is the Holy Spirit.

Long before Jesus came, Joel prophesied, *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people…" (Acts 2:17 cf. Joel 2:28)* When this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost *(Acts 2:16ff),* the Spirit enabled the disciples to speak the Word of God and people of all backgrounds to understand it.

iii) The requirement is faith.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.." (Hebrews 11:6)

Therefore, anyone who reads God's Word faithfully can expect, by the enablement of His Spirit, to hear the Word of God for themselves.

d) God speaks sovereignly through the Bible

i) There is no formula by which we can make God speak to us. *"The (Spirit) blows wherever he pleases." (John 3:8)*

ii) Knowing the Bible does not mean we know God. Jesus told the Pharisees, *"You diligently search the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me and have life." (John 5:39)*

The Pharisees knew the Scriptures yet did not recognise / hear the Word of God when He was made flesh and lived among them! *(John 1:14)*

iii) The Word of God comes to us through grace
"It is by grace you have been saved through faith – this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9)

3 Human skills

Supernatural and natural, spiritual and unspiritual; one of the most handicapping misunderstandings in the church is the perceived divide between them. This misconception manifests in many situations, where something which is common sense in daily life fails to be applied to the working of the church. Thus, people who are successful in their spheres of business, health or education do not bring insights gleaned when organising and managing people at work, to the operation and administration of the church. The assumption is that the church must be different, spiritual not natural. Although the intention to defer to the Spirit may be good, the results of the neglect of common sense are to the church's loss.

Spiritual and non-spiritual are not necessarily mutually exclusive, of course. It is true that God's ways are not our ways, and we submit in all

things to the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10-16) However, within that *caveat*, we are meant to use all our faculties, experience, and common sense.

There is no area where this divide is more evident than in the reading of the Bible. Many tend to stand back, suspend natural inquisitiveness or methods of investigation, and wait for an expert to tell them what it means. The presumption is that the Bible is only accessible to *some* and if you are not one of the chosen then your intellect is to be used solely to store and regurgitate things that have been told you by 'people who know'.

The opposite pole of this is the treatment of the Bible simply as a natural document that can be analysed and worked out using merely human logic. This is a half-truth; for though Scripture is written by men, it is breathed by God. (2 Timothy 3:16)

There is a tension here. To live faithfully with this we need, on the one hand, to approach it acknowledging that we are totally dependent on God to reveal Himself. That is God's part. Unless He does, we will 'labour in vain'. On the other hand, we should respect it and read it with the same care and attention, using the same principles and method that we would with any ordinary authoritative literature. That is the human part.

Hearing the Word is a tool aimed at ensuring that as we read our Bibles, we do whatever is humanly possible to hear the Word of God.

4 The 'meaning' of a text

Philosophers suggest that the meaning of a text might lie in three places:

a) the mind of the *author*
b) the mind of the *reader*
c) *'out there'* – a separate, unrelated third place.

To believe that its meaning resides in the reader themselves exalts the reader above the text and allows them to confer on it any meaning they wish. This approach allows the text to say only what conforms with the reader's thinking.

Those who believe that God is the author and that the Scriptures are breathed by Him, hold that the meaning is centred in God Himself. However, the Scriptures were penned by men. As with the Word made

flesh, the Word written is both fully divine and fully human and must be read as such. Therefore, an integral part of the meaning of the Scriptures is the *intent* of their human authors. Though they were inspired by God, the authors wrote of their own free will, not just as an automatic printer for a divine computer. Each wrote a human document with their own intention.

This has implications: we do not approach the Bible with our minds in neutral, viewing it merely as a random collection of 'magical' words to be applied to our souls. This would deny its humanity. Neither do we approach it as an intellectual exercise to be subjected to the human mind and worked out. This would deny its divinity.

Instead, we come to it reading it as rigorously and carefully as we are able, searching the human document as thoroughly as we can. At the same time, we approach it with reverence, acknowledging that God may choose to speak through any part of it, in any way and by any means. This may include: a text on a notice board, a random verse, a line in a song, etc.

5 The author's intent

The Reformers rejected the general approach to Bible reading of their day. This had viewed the Scriptures as a mystery full of hidden and mystical meanings whose texts were to be allegorised. Instead, Melanchthon declared, 'Scripture cannot be understood *theologically* unless it is first understood *grammatically*.'

For this reason, 'Calvin set himself to the investigation of the grammatical and literal sense [of scripture] by a careful examination of the Hebrew text and by a diligent attention to the drift and intention of the writer's course.

'In their expositions there were two guiding lights:

a) The *scopus* – the overall purpose or goal of the passage.
b) The author's intent – the thought in the mind of the author when he wrote the text.'

(Quoted in 'The Psalms by John Calvin' abridged D Searle page xvii)

In equipping readers to summarise a passage and to discern the main point, 'the Lesson', *Hearing the Word* is designed to follow these two 'lights.'

Methods

Teaching Ministry; Styles of Learning; The Investigative Method; Reading the Bible: LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN (Main Point, Key Verse) LIVE

1 The teaching ministry

There is confusion in the church over the ministry of teacher. Access to information about the conditions and culture of Bible times, and the ability to impart it, has often been mistaken for the divine gift of *Teacher (Ephesian 4:11)*. This can also occur with the gift of *Preacher / Evangelist.*

Paul taught Timothy in the hope that he would 'correctly handle the word of truth.' *(2 Timothy 2:15)* It was not enough that Paul himself handled it correctly; he wanted Timothy to do so too. The divine gift of teaching is inextricably linked to discipleship. It does not do for others what they cannot do; rather by God's grace, it enables the pupil to follow the example of the teacher by heeding his instruction. The work of a teacher, therefore, is not simply to tell others 'what' to do, but to show them 'how' to do it too.

If this is not done, the pupil becomes permanently reliant on the teacher. Inadvertently, the 'priesthood of the preacher' has fostered such a relationship. For spiritual nourishment, members of the church depend completely on their ministers of the Word. Like oversized starling chicks they simply sit waiting for the preacher to produce the next 'worm' from Scripture! It never occurs to them that they might be able to find some themselves, because the 'parents' don't seem to encourage it.

2 Styles of learning

In general, people learn how to do things in various ways:

a) Imitation – *by observing an expert*

This is an important factor in learning, but mostly just in terms of inspiration. Little practical benefit is imparted in the process. If it were, there would be a marked increase in the skill levels in local sports clubs round the country after Wimbledon or the British Open!

In the same way, while great teaching may be the means of God speaking and may impart information about the Bible, just listening to it will not greatly improve personal skills in handling the Bible.

b) Teaching – *by being told what to do*

Imparting of information about good practice is essential. Again, by itself, it has limited benefit. Reading 'how to' books from the comfort of an armchair will not markedly improve a performance or lower a handicap! Similarly attending conferences or reading books about the Bible are of limited worth without reading the Bible itself.

c) Instruction – *by being guided by an expert*

An expert teaches – the pupil attempts – the teacher reflects on the attempt and then directs – the pupil responds. This is the classic model for personal tuition and is the essential ingredient of progress to the optimum level of an individual, in any skill.

This is at the centre of the rabbinical method of teaching and was surely deployed by Jesus with His twelve apostles. However, it is very rare within contemporary church life.

d) Experimentation – *by individual practice*

Individuals, based on all that they have learned or seen, practise and experiment. By itself this is a slow way to learn, but when combined with all of the above it is the only sure way to solid and swift progress.

Unfortunately, the third and fourth styles of learning are currently the most neglected in contemporary church life.

Conscientious teachers fear bad habits. One way to avoid them is to ensure that pupils do not practise in the teacher's absence. While that may avoid bad habits, it will stifle initiative and the growth of the skill. The best way to encourage development is not to forbid experimentation but rather to complement it with regular instruction and careful oversight.

Pastors rightly abhor wrong biblical teaching. If, however, we discourage open thought and personal engagement with the biblical text, we stunt the spiritual growth of the flock. To foster growth, 'children in the faith' need to be nursed through adolescence. Even a right balance between autonomy and restraint involves risks and mistakes. However, achieving this balance is essential if the 'children' are to develop into responsible' adults'.

Maturity in Christ is the goal of every Christian teacher for their pupils. *Hearing the Word* is designed as a tool for use by a church teacher who wants to equip others to handle the Bible text maturely.

3 The investigative method

Whenever we are faced with something to investigate, we instinctively approach it in the same way, be it a witness statement, a damp patch in the ceiling, a sales report, a letter, a failed recipe, etc! The method we use, consciously or subconsciously, involves the following stages:

a) *Notice*

We look carefully at the situation and take in the facts.

b) *Question*

We seek information about things we have noticed, by asking questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?

c) *Refer to experience*

We trawl through our memory to see if there is anything we have seen in the past that will help us to make sense of this.

d) *Answer the questions*

Drawing from observation and experience, we try to answer the questions.

e) *Hypothesise*

We look for the reason for the situation being as it is by posing possibilities.

f) *Test*

We try out these hypotheses to see if any of them fits all the facts we have noticed.

g) *Act*

Having made up our mind on the reason, we decide on a course of action.

Put like this, we may recognise the outline of a process that we all use. In its daily application, though, it is seldom so ordered in our minds! Different stages are often jumbled up and running concurrently.

The key to success is stage a), 'Looking / noticing'. Most of us skim over it in our haste to do something and make progress. However, properly done, this stage takes time and discipline. Reading with a casual glance can result in unwarranted conclusions and inappropriate action. The best cooks, research scientists, plumbers, businessmen or doctors are those who are thorough in stage a), noticing carefully and stage b) questioning exhaustively before acting. The same may be said of readers of the Bible, of whatever age or experience.

4 Reading the Bible.

Hearing the Word applies the above investigative principles to Bible reading. It slows the process down and applies it systematically to the text at hand. This is 'unnatural', but it does ensure that we treat the text with respect and do not jump to false conclusions. In doing this, it trains and disciplines us into good habits. There is nothing new or clever about what it espouses. It is, in fact, little more than an encouragement to do what our children are taught to do in English lessons at school as 'close reading'!

In processing any written communication, there are principles which are reflected in the stages of *Hearing the Word*:

a) LOOK – What does it *say*?

i) The passage is read slowly and carefully, and words and phrases of interest are noted.

ii) Questions are then formed that follow from the things noted – particularly things that surprise or confuse.

e.g. Who was he? When did it happen? Why was that word used?...

iii) The context is examined – around the text, in the individual book and by scanning the rest of the Bible, to gain data to help answer the questions.

(The first phase is akin to sorting the pieces of a jigsaw. By the end of this first stage, all the pieces are face up, grouped into similar colours – blue sky, green grass etc. – with edges pieces separate.)

b) LEARN – What does it *mean*?

Now it is time to put it together! We start to look for the author's meaning by:

i) Answering the questions

The questions and the things that have confused are addressed in the light of all the information gleaned from the context.

ii) Getting an overview

From all these answers, there is enough information to do a brief overview of the text. This is a précis that describes the content of the passage.

c) LISTEN – What is the *message*?

Having addressed the questions to get the meaning in the passage, we then look for the author's overarching thought in the communication and his purpose for it. To do this we look for:

i) **The Main Point**

A sentence is the unit of written communication. Every group of well-written sentences of whatever size – paragraph, section, chapter, book, or series – has a unifying common thought. Often, that thought can be expressed as a single sentence. This is the thought in the author's mind, his intended communication.

In trying to express the single thought in a Bible passage, we might begin our sentence: 'Here the author of the book shows us that …'

ii) **The Key Verse**.

In English classes at school, as a tool to establish the main point of communication, students are taught to look for a 'topical sentence' in each paragraph, chapter etc. This is the one that most accurately and fully expresses the main point in that particular passage.

This is a device, not a magic formula. There is no guarantee the author has provided a single sentence that is 'the right one'. However, the benefit is that the process of trying to identify a suitable sentence acts as a stone on which to sharpen the cutting edge of the main point of the passage.

That sentence might become a 'Text', often quoted at the start of preaching. Correctly used, it is a device that allows one to examine the whole of the passage.

A Text is not a *springboard*! It is not a convenient means to let a preacher jump from the reality of the passage out into an ocean of unrelated topics which he might delight to visit on a whim!

Rather, it is more like a *trampoline*, letting preachers and listeners 'bounce' all over the passage, examining it and its implications from every aspect, while their feet keep landing back on the main intention in the author's mind. That is how to use a text in expository preaching.

Spelling out the Main Point and a Key Verse is worth doing whenever we read the Bible, whatever the size of the text before us, whether a single incident, a set of chapters, a whole Gospel etc. It is not always easy, but with practice, it clarifies our grasp of Scripture.

For instance:

Examples of the Main Point and the Key Verse:

A single incident *e.g. John 5:1-18*

> *'**M**ain **P**oint': In healing on the Sabbath, Jesus demonstrated that He was God the Son.*
>
> *'**K**ey **V**erse': "Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal with God." (John 5:18)*

Chapters 1-12 *of John's Gospel*

> ***MP*** *Jesus performed a series of miraculous signs to demonstrate that He was God the Son, so that His disciples would believe in Him.*
>
> ***KV*** *"This is the first of his miraculous signs that he performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory and his disciples put their trust in him." (John 2:11)*

John's Gospel

> ***MP*** *God gives eternal life to anyone who acknowledges that Jesus is the King promised to the Jews, God the Son and who believes and trusts in Him.*
>
> ***KV*** *– "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)*

The New Testament

> ***MP*** *God the Son came, in God's time, as a human being, subject to the Law, to buy out people from under the Law, that they might be children of God.*
>
> ***KV*** *"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." (Galatians 4:4,5)*

The Whole Bible

> ***MP*** *Loving His creation, God redeemed His people from their sin through the gift of the death of His Son Jesus, so they might live with Him forever.*
>
> ***KV*** *"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16 AV)*

d) **LIVE** –What is my response?

Having got to the heart of the passage, the job is only half done. We are in the position of a sportsman who has donned all the right kit but not yet taken to the field! We need to act! The purpose of any communication is to effect a change in mind or action.

In one sense, up to now, our approach to the Bible text has been the same as we might make to any natural text. The Bible however has supernatural power. *"It is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)* It is the Word of God.

God's purpose is for the Bible to be the principal means by which God speaks to us, first changing our view of Himself and secondly empowering us to change our actions. So having used all our natural faculties to help us understand the meaning of the text, we *respond* by submitting ourselves to the Spirit of God, asking Him to apply His Word to any area of our life He chooses. In doing this we need to be open to…

i) what God has revealed about Himself in this text, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This should always lead us to praise and worship.

ii) what God wants people to *do* and *be* in response to it, first as it applied to the original hearers, secondly as it applies to us, today.

From a human perspective, we expect the main applications to arise from the Main Point / Key Verse. (Of course God may speak through His Word in any way He chooses to!)

5 Conclusion

Hearing the Word is therefore a tool that identifies the natural process of human investigation and applies it to reading the Bible. Its principles help to discipline our approach to God's Word, thus enabling us to use all our God-given faculties to the best effect. Having done that, we can only rely on His gracious response to speak to us as we seek Him.

‘The Tool’



LOOK – What does it ***say***?

The Text?

The Context?



LEARN – What does it ***mean?***

Answer the questions

Summarise the passage



LISTEN – What is the ***message***?

What is the **M**ain **P**oint?

Which is the **K**ey **V**erse?



LIVE – What is the ***response***?

What does it show about God?

What should be done?

Presenting The Introduction Course

Format; Timing; Process; Practicalities; Follow On Bible Studies

While it is possible to pick up the principles by doing a Bible study with others, it is very desirable to explain and demonstrate them beforehand in a context of guided learning. '*Hearing the Word - The Introduction'* has been designed to facilitate this.

It is an 'add-water' resource: that is, a leader can deliver it themselves with no preparation beyond this Manual. In a congregational context, however, there is great benefit in asking someone from outside to lead it. This creates 'an event' and increases the attention of participants. (It is not just 'Dad' or 'Mum' speaking!

FORMAT

After an introductory section: 'Approaching the Bible Correctly', the four principles are described and applied to a single passage, Mark 10:35-45, using a **Teach, Try, Talk** format:

Teach: The Course Leader reads out the material in this Leader's Guide, as the participants follow in their own 'Workbook'.

Try: The participants engage in an Exploration of the Bible individually for a few minutes, writing their findings in the Workbook.

Talk: They discuss their answers in small groups for a few minutes. Then with all participants together ('plenary'), the Course Leader collates feedback from the small groups and comments on it.

Everyone repeats this process for each of the Ten Explorations.

The following Leader's Guide (pages 1-32) contains the same material as the Workbook, on the same pages where possible. It provides extra comments, leader's instructions for group work (**in bold** and/or in a box), and suggests possible outcomes for the Explorations *(in Gill Sans font)*.

The Introduction Course Leader's Guide and Workbook are available at https://hearingtheword.org.uk as slides, or formatted like a book.

The course may be used in two ways:

1. In person
The leader presents it on a central screen, reading it out word for word, pausing for participants to try the Explorations themselves. They record their thoughts on paper or a mobile device, then discuss these in small groups of 3 or 4. The leader hears the groups' thoughts and proceeds.

2. Online
The leader presents the slides to the participants by 'sharing' his or her screen. At the Explorations, individuals first record their thoughts alone. All then share these thoughts together before moving on.

TIMING
The material can be presented in around four hours. The content is varied and interesting; people will not be bored. However, it does require effort and does take energy, so take this into account when deciding which of the following programmes is suitable: (Page numbers as in Workbook)

1. In Person:

a) On a single day *It will take about 4 hours, plus breaks.*

b) Friday evening / Saturday morning
7.30 - 9.00 pm Finish with Exploration 3 on pages 11/12.
9.30 am - 12.30pm Pages 13 to 32.

c) In two sessions of 2 hours, a week apart
Pages 2 – 16 Set Exploration 5 (p17-18) as 'homework'.
Pages 17 – 32 Begin with group work on Exploration 5.

d) In three sessions of 1½ hours
Pages 2 – 11 Set Exploration 3 (p12) as homework.
Pages 11 – 21 Set Exploration 7 (p22) as homework.
Pages 22 – 32 Show Follow On studies. Arrange feedback meetings.

e) In four sessions of 1 hour.
Pages 2 – 9; set Exploration 2 as homework
Pages 10 – 16; set Exploration 5 as homework
Pages 17 – 23; set Exploration 8 as homework
Pages 24 – 32 Show Follow On studies. Arrange feedback meetings.
*This is the optimum - 4 sessions a week apart. It gives participants time to digest the course, work at home and come **fresh** to the vital LIVE section.*

f) Weekend
It has been adapted for use in a church residential weekend.

2. Online:

*In seven **35 minute segments,** using the free version of e.g. Zoom.*

Meeting	Workbook	Manual	Start	Set as Homework
1	pages 1 – 6	1 – 7	Introduction	Read Mark 10:35 - 45
2	" 7 – 9	8 – 10	LOOK	Exploration 2, p10/11
3	" 10 –15	11 – 16	Expn 2 answers	Expn 4, p13b/16
4	" 13, 16 – 19a	16 – 20a	Expn 4 answers	Expn 6, p 19/20
5	" 19b – 23	20 – 24	Expn 6 answers	Expn 8, p24
6	" 24 – 27	24 – 28	Expn 8 answers	Expn 9, p28
7	" 28 – 32	28 – 32	Expn 9 answers	?Follow On Study 1

PROCESS

Hearing the Word is designed as an 'add-water' resource: a responsible Christian, even with limited Bible knowledge, can present it without difficulty in a smaller group. We strongly recommend four pointers:

1) Trust the material

Read it out word for word while participants follow in their Workbooks. Paraphrasing as you go along makes it difficult for others to follow. However, a few suitable extra comments or illustrations may be helpful.

2) Do not teach.

Teaching Bible facts is great in other settings; here, however, the main goal is not to impart Bible knowledge but to demonstrate principles that will help people to think for themselves when they read the Bible. If you adopt the position of Bible teacher, your listeners will sit back and let you do the thinking!

3) Encourage participation

Continually stress the need to learn together with one another in groups. Discourage individuals from dominating the time or regurgitating past sermons! If you give people time to think for themselves and write down answers, they will all have something to say during the sharing time. If such time is not given, it will be the most knowledgeable (or the most garrulous!) who will contribute, stifling the participation of others.

4) Make Time for Application

When presenting the course, make sure you leave at least **25 percent** of your time for the **LIVE** section. If need be, save time earlier by offering some set answers for Explorations 3 and 4. One of our most common failings is to open up the Word of God but leave no time to apply it to our lives!

PRACTICALITIES

1. In Person Course

The Leader presents the material in one room on a central screen.

In this Leader's Guide, ***Slide + a number*** means, 'Show next slide', while a red circle **(°)** means, 'Reveal within the same slide'. (In the pdf version, every single development gets a new slide, so 400 slides). If need be, use a second person to advance slides. It helps to practise beforehand!

This may be in the context of

a) A larger gathering

The leader can go through the **Teaching** in the booklet. Individuals **Try** it out on a Bible passage, alone at first. Then in small groups of 3 or 4, they **Talk** it over.

The leader then conducts a plenary session, hearing responses of selected groups. This has been done successfully in gatherings of over 60. Admittedly, a leader needs skill to handle larger groups.

b) House groups

The church leader can gather house group leaders and run the Introduction course with them. *They* then run it with their groups.

The OPTIMUM may be the four session option, (page xxv***) as people begin to tire after I hour. If people miss a session they can 'catch up'. A single weekend option (Friday night /Saurday morning) may provide the best chance of full attendance, but it is hard work!***

2) Online Course

a) Numbers?

It is best to have one person per screen. The host must be in control of anyone speaking. Avoid a second device in the same room with 'audio on', as it causes echo and feedback.

b) Materials

All need a copy of the Bible passages in Mark, a screen with internet connection, and a method of recording their responses. The presenter runs the 127-slide set, and shares his/her screen. Participants are emailed the Workbook as slides, in advance, so may view the text before or after the course on a computer, tablet, or phone held landscape.

c) Start

Participants read the Preface (slides 2-5) before the course starts.

d) Time-keeping

Be disciplined. Encourage contributions to be brief. Set a limit of time and try to stick to it. With a bigger group, a regular start time, e.g. 6.00pm on Fridays, is easier for folk to organise. A smaller group may allow more frequent and less regular meetings.

The free version of Zoom (40 minutes) can restart after 9 mins. After any lesson, you need to practise! This is as true of Bible reading as of golf and piano! The 4-hour introduction brings some benefit, but this will be greatly increased if what is learned is put into practice *at once.*

To facilitate this, the Manual and Workbook provide six 'Follow On' studies (p34). They cover Mark 10:46 – 12:17, subsequent to Mark 10:35-45, the passage studied in The Introduction. Each study provides background information and follows the layout of The Introduction. This Manual includes suggested answers to questions users might ask.

Ideally these studies should first be done individually at home.
This preparation beforehand greatly increases the benefit thereafter!

An opportunity is then given for people to come together and share, *e.g.*

i) A midweek gathering
   A larger group breaks into small groups where people share their findings. Then a single leader conducts a plenary and offers the answers in the Leader's Guide (e.g. p35-39).

ii) A house-group
   People in a house-group may share their thinking, after which the leader might offer the answers from the Leader's Guide.

iii) House-group then sermon
   The house-groups are not given the Leader's Guide. Instead, the Sunday preacher covers the passage all the groups have studied that week. That way, every method of learning will have been utilised!

iv) A meeting online
   People may come together and share their thoughts on the passage; one of them offers the Leader's Guide suggestions after each section.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES

The model, once established, can be applied to any passage. There is a series of studies available covering different *genres* of Bible books, for use by individuals or groups. (e.g. Law, Poetry, History, Wisdom, Prophecy, Letter, Vision, Parable)

Visit: **https://hearingtheword.org.uk**

Use in small groups

Once people have grasped the *Hearing the Word* method, it can be applied to any part of the Bible at any time. As such it is in the first instance a tool for an individual. However, it may also be used as a focus when people share round the Word, either with one other person or in a House Group / Bible Study.

It works both with people in the church, and with those who are not believers but would like to know more. Even the novice can join in when you start by listing all the *questions*. NB Although the Gospels are a good starting point, God may reveal Jesus through *any* part of His Word!

It is not passive. It will not lend itself to groups who anticipate a light and entertaining event. It requires work and application. The more effort put in beforehand, the greater the benefit to all concerned.

Preparation

If people do their homework and come ready to share, the long pregnant pauses that result when tired minds try to think 'on the hoof' are replaced by immediate replies from even the most timid!

To this end it is good to

a) **set aside time** through the week, at least 10 minutes a day of quality time if possible.

b) **read** the passage carefully, then work through the four steps.

c) **write down** your answers. Turn it over in your mind all week; keep re-reading the passage.

Even if folk do no more than write down questions about the text, it will act as a 'siphon' to get the time of sharing going.

Sharing together

It is hoped that folk would go through the whole *Hearing the Word* process with the passage when preparing in advance in private. However, in a group there is not time to go through and apply every aspect of that process. If this is attempted it can become very turgid. Instead, it would suffice simply to ask the leading question in each of the four stages. Other information gleaned may be shared in the passing.

The following may be useful in conducting a group study:

1+2) **LOOK & LEARN** Questions and Answers

a) Invite **short** questions, whether they know the answer or not! Assure the group that no questions are too simple. Show them an example in this.

NB *This gives folks liberty. Newcomers, with little knowledge, can contribute straight away. (Even the most timid might be invited to give their contribution if they have come prepared.)*

b) Go through the passage verse by verse, inviting folk to share questions. Invite the questioner to give any thoughts they might have before opening it out the rest of the group

NB *Be explicit in asking for* ***brief*** *answers. (Long-windedness may distract and intimidate others!)*

3) **LISTEN** – What are the **M**ain **P**oint and the **K**ey **V**erse?

a) Ask for the Main Point.

b) Invite suggestions for a Key Verse, and why they chose it.

NB *It may be helpful to take a) and b) together. Often trying to choose a key verse sharpens appreciation of the main point.*

4) **LIVE** – What is the response?

a) What does it show us of God ? looking for facts
(His character? His grace? Jesus / His salvation on the cross?)

i) from the Key Verse / Main Point

ii) from the rest of the passage

b) What should be done?

i) from the Key Verse –

by original hearers ?

by me, today?

ii) from the rest of the passage?

NB It is very important that the LIVE part does not get squeezed out, as this is the point of it all!

NB Important practicalities

A Preparation

The better prepared people are, the quicker the study will flow. With a *little* preparation, and folk willing to work at it, it may take an hour. With *good* preparation, however, there could be much meaningful sharing – even in just 15 minutes!

B Questions.

Questions are the key. They are the doorway to learning. Work at getting everyone to ask short, simple questions of the passage, whether they know the answer or not.

C Brevity

Encourage short contributions with simple, one sentence answers. It is difficult to say something briefly; but if you can, that brief comment is far more likely to be understood and then (in the LIVE section) applied, remembered, and subsequently acted upon!

D Domination

It is very important to learn from the Bible **together**. If one reader has more knowledge than another, it is tempting for them to dominate the answer-time by imparting that knowledge. Resist this! Try to ensure that the knowledgeable and confident don't dominate but rather that all sit and learn under the Word together.

E Multiple Groups

It is possible to hold a 'Hearing the Word' study with many groups together – if you have a leader who can control a crowd! In such a case, in the plenary of the LOOK & LEARN section, it may be best to go through the passage verse by verse, inviting a group to give their question and answer on that verse, before opening it out for comment of others. Then move to another verse and another group.

F 'Church'

The above could be done while sharing something to eat or drink. If you also took the opportunity to pray together, you would cover all the 'bases' to which the early church 'devoted itself'. (Acts 2:42)

The preacher and the congregation

Hearing the Word may be used as a 'two-edged sword'! It may have this effect if the congregation has the opportunity of study and discussion during the week *prior to* the sermon. It is hoped that it will then affect both the congregation and the preacher:

- *The congregation*
  It encourages the ordinary person to read the Bible with the expectation that they can understand it and hear God for themselves when they do so. They do not necessarily need notes, commentaries, sermons etc. to engage with it. That is not to say, of course, that these things don't have much profit, but God does not *require* them to communicate with His people; He may do so directly.

- *The preacher*
  It encourages the preacher to stick to the Bible text, closely! Both preacher and listeners have access to the same passage. If the latter have had an opportunity to study it before they hear a sermon on it, there is less likelihood of the preacher going off on a 'flight of fancy' in a sermon because his listeners will simply say that this was not what the passage was saying.

Hearing the Word is profitably used in conjunction with the Pastor/ teacher role. In this case people get to interact with and start forming their own opinions on a text. Only *after* they have begun doing so does the Pastor / teacher bring their ministry to bear. This is what education-alists call the 'guided learning' model and is by far the most effective mode of learning.

Bible Study Guides

Available as Workbooks, and some as Leader's Guides with possible responses.

When first written, the books of the Bible were simply read or spoken aloud. The goal of the *Hearing the Word* Study Guides is to provide relevant information that puts today's readers in the position of the original readers or hearers, so allowing them to process the Word of God for themselves. As such, each provides:

a) Some help in reading this particular type of Bible literature.
b) Background information about this book and its author.
c) Explanatory notes about contemporary customs and religious words whose meaning is not self-evident in the text.
d) Some basic references to relevant passages in the rest of the Bible.
e) A model for approaching the Bible: *Hearing the Word.*
f) Encouragement to share your reading of God's Word with others.

Studies cover seven different *genres* of Biblical material. For the list of **Studies currently available,** visit **https://hearingtheword.org.uk**

These have been in print:

Law	Leviticus
Poetry	Psalms Vol I (Psalms 19, 22, 23, 42, 51, 122, 150) Vol II (Psalms 2, 37, 45, 83, 90, 95, 110, 115)
History	Joseph (Genesis 37 – 50), Exodus 1 – 13, Esther, Daniel 1 – 6, Matthew 1-2, Follow On: Mark 10:46 –12:17 (p35-63 below) LUKE in 13 parts, John: 'Seven Miraculous Signs'
Prophecy	Isaiah 1 – 39; Isaiah 40 – 66, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah
Letter	2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, James *Planned for 2026:* Romans
Vision	Daniel 7 – 12
Parable	Parables in Luke. Parables in Matthew.

Caveat!

Though *Hearing the Word* is simple, and applicable to everyone, not everyone takes to it easily.

Often the people who find it easiest to assimilate are those who are thirsty for God but who have not done much Bible study before. They may quickly assume this is just the way you look into the Scriptures!

Others may struggle with it for a variety of reasons:

1) it is different

Some, who have been Christians for a long time and used to simply being taught by others, can find the change of ethos hard to grasp.

2) it requires personal effort

Bible study groups are often looking for new off-the-shelf material and approaches. Often these are expected to deliver within the context of the group without prior effort. If *Hearing the Word* studies are used within groups **without prior thought,** discussion can seem stilted.

3) it is 'intellectual'

Some may conform to the lie that it is too hard – they cannot do it. In fact, in its current form, anyone with motivation and a reading age of 12+ should be able to master it.

4) it is disciplined

Some are cautious that this approach may 'quench the Spirit.'
Any approach may be sterile if we ignore God. *Hearing the Word* seeks to do all we humans can do, while waiting on Him. A good practice is to give the final LIVE section – when we ask God to apply the Word to our lives – at least a quarter of the time spent in discussion.

How do we make people thirsty for the Word? The old proverb goes, 'You can take a horse to water, but you can't make it drink'. That may be true. What you can do, though, is to put some salt in its oats! For some, *Hearing the Word* may be the needed 'pinch of salt'.

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LEADER'S GUIDES

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(There is a WORKBOOK* with the same text as below, but omitting responses.
Use Presentation Slide set** version 8;128 slides in *Apple Keynote* ®, 404 in pdf.
* ** available from the Website at https://hearingtheword.org.uk

1. The INTRODUCTION Course

Preparation

Meeting in person

*Ensure that participants are **identified** – for a large group of strangers, provide name labels; in a small group, facilitate personal introductions.*

*Ask participants to organise themselves into groups of **3 to 4** persons. If possible, ensure newcomers are in a group with someone they know.*

Ensure all have Bibles and the means to write answers to the Explorations. It is easier to write if the seats are around small tables. Some groups find it helpful to have Mark chapters 9 – 12 printed very legibly on A4 sheets, available separately (see website).

Ensure everyone can see the screen. If projecting to a large screen, use the focus slide (No 125) beforehand to check screen ratio. Show Slide 2 (Bible, logo and title) as people arrive.

NB In this script, boxes and double "quotation marks" give the presenter extra words to say*, whereas italics convey* advice to the presenter*.*

Meeting Online

Arrange a date and time for the beginning of the Course. It may take seven sessions of 40 minutes.

Send participants the text of the Workbook by email.

Choose an app. that allows for several people to be online together (e.g. Zoom or Microsoft Teams). Send them log-in details in advance.

*Start the (Zoom/Teams) meeting, then on the same computer **run** the slide set of the Introduction Course Leader's Guide, then 'share your screen', revealing text as required. (View this script on a second device.)*

Participants write down their answers either on paper, or in their copy of the online Workbook; if the latter, viewed on a second device. After this Course, send participants the text of the Follow On Workbook.

PRAY!

Slides 1, 2, 3

Preface

In the 16th century, one of the earliest reformers of the church rediscovered that the Bible was for everyone.

This inspired William Tyndale to translate it into English and print it for mass circulation. As he said to a leading clergyman of his day,

> *"If God spare my life, e'er many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."*

Slide 4 When we were first developing *Hearing the Word*, a friend in the city of Glasgow used it with his congregation. As they went through the course, he noted two facts:

a) All kinds of folk benefited.

Someone who had only recently believed in Jesus and come to church interacted comfortably in a group with a student at Bible college.

b) The 'secret' of understanding the Bible was out.

A friend said to him later that he used to think what he did as a preacher on Sunday was clever, but now he knew how he did it!

Slide 5 It was perhaps a little shocking at first, but it made my heart soar. Notwithstanding God's treasured gift of preachers and teachers to the church, there was an echo of the promise of the New Covenant:

> *'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," because they will all know me, from the least to the greatest…. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'*
>
> (Jeremiah 31:33,34)

Introduction

LEADER: Use last slide (125) to focus before the audience arrives. Start Course here, Workbook p2 Slide 6 showing.

Slide 7 Welcome to *'Hearing the Word'.* This is a model intended to help everyone to read the Bible and understand it for themselves. It is simple and basic, which makes it suitable for someone new to Bible reading. However, it is also a reminder of good practice for a 'hardened' Bible student.

LEADER: Possible ice breaker: *Slide 8* "On a scale of 1 to 5, where (°) 1 = novice and (°) 5 = 'hardened' Bible student, (°) what score would you give yourself? (°) Share it with others. Give reasons."

Slide 9

People use different methods when reading the Bible: - the…

(°)	'Lucky dip'	a quick read from a calendar of texts
(°)	'Horoscope'	a speculative look to the future
(°)	'Crossword puzzle'	an interesting brain teaser
(°)	'Comfort blanket'	a recourse in troubled times
(°)	'Spring board'	a convenience to bounce from the text to a preferred platform
(°)	'Starling chick'	resource where a preacher can find 'worms' to feed his congregation
(°)	**'Kingly audience'**	a way to read God's autobiography with Him.

Slide 10 *Hearing the Word* assumes that The King is willing to speak with us through His Word! He expects us, though, to 'handle the Word ... *correctly*.' (2 Timothy 2:15) This is a skill and, as with all skills, we all need to learn the basic principles. For example:

Golfers: For a successful swing, keep the left arm straight, the head still and turn the shoulders.

Gardeners: For plants to flourish, you need suitable soil, the right climate, and correct timing.

Footballers: To take a penalty, you choose your spot, keep your head down, and strike the ball cleanly — international centre forwards included!

(°) Well, *Hearing the Word* lays out key principles for reading the Bible. In this course, we will **teach** the principles, **try** them out on a Bible passage and then **talk** about our discoveries in small groups, before having some feedback from the Leader.

Slide 11 Once these principles have been grasped, they can be applied with good effect to any passage in the Bible.

NB The goal of this *Hearing the Word* Course is to look at **method**, not to teach Bible **facts**. For the most part, no Bible knowledge is needed. Novice and expert can look at the principles in the same way. (°) So: Look with fresh eyes. Listen to one another. Avoid downloading sermons past!

Slide 12 (Bible)

The approach

Slide 13 In seeking to hear God's Word, we need to:

1 Be Prayerful

The Bible says, *"For God, who said 'Let light shine out of darkness' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.'* (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Thus, we depend on God to reveal Himself; so, as we approach God's Word, we ask God Himself to speak to us from it.

Slide 14 **2 Be Faithful**

(°) Believe that God will speak to you. *"Anyone who comes to God must believe that he exists and rewards those who earnestly seek him."* (Hebrews 11:6) i.e. read expectantly.

Slide 15 **3 Be Careful**

In reading, we utilise The Phenomenal Power of the Human Mind. *(Workbook and slide show: 'The Pomnneehal Pweor Of The Hmuan Mnid.')*

LEADER: (°) "Can anyone read the next sentence?" *Aoccdrnig to rseraech at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod ocucr; the olny iprmoatnt tihng is that the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae.* **LEADER: "Very good; can you go on?"** *The rset can be a taotl mses and you sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe*

Slide 16 So when reading the Bible, *beware!* We may overlook much significant detail. To avoid this, we must notice three dangers: ignorance, preconceptions and making careless assumptions.

a) Beware of ignorance. We may simply not recognise what is before us.

Slide 17 **Example 1 –** Read the sentence below. How many times does it use the letter 'F' for Foxtrot? Write your answer in the box.

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.

LEADER: **"Did anyone get three?** *(expect hands up)*
Anyone get 4?... or 5*?...*
(°) Most people see only three, *(pause)*
(°) and ignore the word 'of'. So who got all 6? Well done! Beware ignorance; don't ignore what is there!"

Slide 18

b) Beware of preconceptions. We may not allow the text to say things that appear not to match what we *already believe*. Preconceptions can prevent us from learning new things.

Slide 19

Example 2 – "Many years ago in Latin America, I was astonished to discover that the Roman Catholic students (who in those days had little or no exposure to Scripture) and Communist students were far better at group Bible Study than students from Evangelical Churches. The Communists and Catholics were quick to see what the passage actually said. **(°)** Many evangelical students, on the other hand, had a mental block at this point. They seemed able to see only what the Bible was 'supposed' to say. **(°)** It was as though they screened Bible statements through a doctrinal filter, seeing what they had been trained to expect. ('It *can't* say that because the Bible doesn't teach that.')"

John White, 'The Fight', p.44

Slide 20

c) Beware of making careless assumptions. The mind is by nature lazy, presumptuous and stubborn! It takes snapshots rather than movies, fills in the blanks for what it hasn't noticed, and once it has decided something, it is reluctant to change!

LEADER: Read out the instructions and the 'report' to the group; then give everyone 2 or 3 minutes for this exercise, working on their own. Later, ask for a show of hands for True, False, Unable to Tell, before revealing each answer.

Slide 21 **Example 3** Carefully read the report of a police incident below. Then, *without making any assumptions,* decide if each of the 10 statements on page **6** is True **(**in which case circle the **'T')** False **(**circle the '**F')** or Unable to tell **(**circle the question mark **?**)

Slide 22 Give time to address **(°)** *qns 1-6 +* *Slide 23 7-10 and jot down answers.*

Slide 24 **"A businessman had just turned off the lights in the store when a man appeared and demanded money. The owner opened a cash register. The contents of the cash register were scooped up and the man sped away. A member of the police force was notified promptly."**

(°) STATEMENTS ABOUT THE STORY

		T/F/?
1	A man appeared after the owner had turned off his store lights. **Ask:** '**How many ticked True?… False?... Can't tell? ... and why.**' (°) *(? Are the 'owner' and the 'businessman' the same person?)*	?
2	The store owner's age was not revealed in the story. (°)	T
3	The robber was a man. **Ask:** '**How many ticked T / F / ?**' (°) *(? Was there actually a robbery? Did the man who 'sped away' take any money?)*	?
4	The man who appeared did not demand money. (°)	F
	Slide 25	
5	The man who opened the cash register was the owner. (°) *(? Maybe the owner was female)*	?
6	The store owner scooped up the contents of the register. (°) *(? We don't know <u>who</u> scooped them up)*	?
7	Someone opened a cash register. (°)	T
8	The man who demanded the money ran away. (°) *(? We know he 'sped' away, but was it on foot, by bike, or in a car?)*	?
9	*Slide 26* The register contained an unspecified amount of cash. *(? If only cash, True.* (°) *But might have been cheques/money-off vouchers/IOU's.)*	?
10	The story refers to 3 people: the owner of the store, a man who demanded money, and a police officer. (°) *(? If the businessman <u>is</u> the owner, true; if not, it's 4 people; so 'Can't tell')* ?	

LEADER: *Slide 27* **"One statement is False (No 4). Of the rest, which look so plausible (°) only TWO are True (2+7). If we are genuinely making no assumptions, we are 'Unable to tell' no less (°) than SEVEN times!**
(°) Unlike the Bible, this puzzle was *designed* to catch you out! It makes one simple point:"

Slide 28 **CONCLUSION**
Our conscious minds are brilliant but not to be trusted! We often skim-read the Bible, ignore the detail and assume things. **Please underline that!** We tend to give as little time to daily Bible reading as we gave to first reading the police incident! ***When we approach God's Word we must give it our time and full attention.***

LEADER: "Summing up p 3-5/slides13-28: *Slide 29* **To read the Bible prayerfully, with expectant faith and care, we must guard against ignorance, preconceptions and careless assumptions. If you remember nothing more than to *read the Bible carefully,* this course is worthwhile!"**

(In Workbook turn to p6)

Slide 30

Overview

We are going to work on Mark 10:35-45 and practise the basics of handling the Word of God so we can learn to hear God speak.
This will include 4 steps : - (°)



LOOK (°) What does it say?



LEARN (°) What does it ***mean*?**



LISTEN (°) What is the ***message*?**



LIVE (°) What is the ***response*?**

Slide 31 *Bible*



Tackling the Passage

LOOK

Slide 32

The first task is to look carefully at the text itself before going on to look at its context in the rest of the Bible. **Read Mark 10:35-45**

1) The Text

To explore the text, it is helpful to ask questions of it, then follow them through until we are satisfied with the answers. Ask the 'W' questions: **W**ho? **W**hat? **W**hen? **W**here? **W**hy/**W**hy not? ho**W**?!

LEADER: *Read out the instructions in Exploration 1. Go through the examples for verses 5-37, carefully explaining the task, i.e. short simple questions. Give everyone* ***a few minutes by themselves*** *and* ***a few minutes in a group*** *of three or four. Draw them together. Hear their suggestions, offer the following examples and* ***discuss the kinds of questions*** *this passage has thrown up.*

Exploration 1

Slide 33 **Mark 10 : 35-45 – Questions Raised**

Read the passage carefully again. Use the examples given for verses 35-37 to guide you.
Then, write down a list of questions raised in your mind by the words or phrases noted in vv.38-42.
Note: a) The task at this stage is simply to ***ask*** questions; don't try to answer them yet.
b) Write down questions even though you know the answer.
c) No questions are too easy.

(This paragraph not shown till slide 37) **NB The Bible is *very* selective about the detail it includes - see John 21:25….**
'Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.'

Exploration 1 continued

Slide 34 **Examples in Workbook**

35 *'Then'* (°) *e.g. What were they doing before this?*

'James and John' (°) *e.g. Who were they?*

We want you…'

(°) *e.g. What does the manner of their approach suggest?*

36 *'What do you want?'*

(°) *e.g. Why didn't Jesus dismiss their request?*

37 *'Sit on right and left'*

(°) *e.g. Why did they ask this?*

'In your glory'

(°) *e.g. What did they imagine was His way to glory?*

(°) *e.g. What did Jesus know was His way to glory?*

Slide 35 **---Now try some yourself---** *(WB p 8, Slide shows all 8 'questions')*

Slide 36 38a *'You don't know'*

(°) ***Why didn't they know what they were asking?***

38b (°) *'Cup and Baptism'*

(°) ***What did Jesus mean by these things?***

39 (°) *'You will drink'*

(°) ***When and how would they share these?***

40 (°) *Places 'not for me to grant'*

(°) ***Who would allocate them?*** (°) ***Who were they for?***

Slide 37

41 *'Ten indignant'*

(°) ***Why were the others so annoyed?***

42 (°) *'Rulers of Gentiles'*

(°) ***Why 'of the Gentiles' not 'of the Jews' or 'the world'?***

(°) *Are there any other questions raised in the passage?*

(°) *What surprised you or caught your eye?*

(°) ***Jesus didn't rebuke His disciples. Why not?***

(°) ***The boldness and cheek of the disciples.***

Slide 38 quote foot of WB p7, LG p8, "The Bible is very selective…etc, John 21:25 , adding:

So, it is important to ask questions of the text:
Why does it say *this*? Why *here*, and why *in this way*?

2) The Context

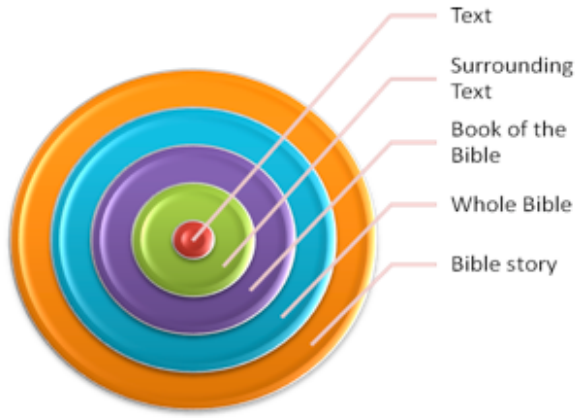
Slide 39 The questions raised help to open up the passage. However, to answer these, and understand the meaning of the passage, *knowing the context is vital*.

For example: what does the Bible mean when it says, *Slide 40* 'There is no God'? **[**Leader: **(°) Really?.. Where? Psalm 14 v 1 (°) Better look it up!** *Slide 41 Quote whole verse:* **]** **(°)** Seen ***in context,*** the Bible's actual point is the exact opposite of the partial quotation!

Slide 42

We may approach the context of a passage in ever widening circles.

4 clicks slowly **(°) (°) (°) (°)** *to show the four headings)*



Slide 43

a) The SURROUNDING Text

When invited to a wedding, it's always interesting to note who has been placed beside you for the meal. Much thought, blood, sweat and tears have been dedicated to the seating plan. e.g. Have you never said, "Why have they put me next to great aunt Agatha?!'

(°) Now, under God, the Bible has been carefully constructed. Each word, verse and passage has been placed deliberately, and for a reason. So, when we seek to understand a verse, we must look at passages around it.

> ***LEADER:*** *Read out the instructions in Exploration 2. Give everyone* ***a few minutes by themselves*** *and* ***a few minutes in groups****.*
>
> *Draw everyone together and* ***discuss*** *anything that they noticed in the context that might be relevant.*

Exploration 2

Slide 44 Text SURROUNDING Mark 10:35-45

Glance through the passages before and after Mark 10:35-45 **(i.e. Mark 9:1 to 11:11**). (Yes, this time, *glance!* Save your close attention to detail for Mark 10:35-45.) Write down anything that seems to be *relevant* to the questions raised in Exploration 1.

Slide 45

Here are two examples:

(°) ***James & John:*** ***(Mark 9:2ff)***

(°) ***disciples of Jesus and part of privileged inner three***

(°) *(and after our passage,* ***Mark 11:10) People expected the Messiah to restore David's kingdom.***

(°) Now look for other relevant passages in Mark 9:1 – 11:11.

(Don't advance till after participants have suggested an answer.)

Slide 46 ***The disciples had argued before about being the greatest. Jesus had told them that the greatest would be the servant of all and the last would be first. (Mark 9:33-37)***

(°) ***John was 'jealously protective' of the disciples' status. (Mark 9:38)***

(°) ***After the rich man had left sadly, Jesus told the disciples that those who sacrificed things for His sake would be rewarded; the first would be last and the last would be first. (Mark 10:31)***

(°) ***Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. (Mark 10:32)***

(°) ***Jesus had just spoken of His death. (Mark 10:33,34)***

(°) *We've had Surrounding Text, now:*

Slide 47 *(Context rings again, showing Surrounding Text and Book of the Bible)*

Slide 48 **b) The BOOK of the Bible**

There are 66 books in the Bible. Although God is the ultimate 'author', they have been written through a variety of people from many backgrounds, over a period of around 1,500 years. As we read the Bible we need to take into account the context of each book.

Slide 49 So we need to ask: -

- (°) *Who wrote* this book of the Bible?
- (°) *What* is its background?
- (°) *When* was it written?
- (°) *To whom* was it written? and
- (°) *Why* was it written?

Slide 50 e.g. Mark's Gospel is thought to have been written:-

- (°) by John Mark, from Peter's preaching,
- (°) during the 60's AD,
- (°) for the church in Rome, (°) under persecution

(see 'The New Bible Commentary')

Slide 51 **c) (°) The WHOLE BIBLE**

Slide 52 God's unchanging truth about different subjects is revealed throughout the Bible. As this is drawn together, a unifying whole emerges. *i.e.* what does the Bible say about sin, death, Jesus etc? (The collecting together of Biblical material on one particular subject is referred to as "Systematic Theology." *Cf* WB p.15 slide 63)

The Bible interprets itself. As we seek to understand one passage, it is important to look for other parts of the Bible which relate to it.

> ***LEADER:*** *Read out the instructions in Exploration 3 and then offer the responses below.*
> *NB This bit is IMPOSSIBLE for those new to the Bible.*

Slide 53 *(Workbook, p11)*

Exploration 3

Context of Mark 10:35-45 in the WHOLE BIBLE

"Here are some of the subjects unearthed when we ask-ed questions of the passage**.** Other passages from the rest of the Bible are given as examples that might help understand Mark 10:35-45?**.**

(A Concordance is a useful tool in this exercise. You can even look some up online, e.g. www.blueletterbible.org)

Slide 54 **Exploration 3 continued:** Here are four examples:
(Note, the order of topics here differs from p 12 of the printed Workbook)

1. The importance of seating

(°) ***A sign of honour***

(°) *a) On earth:* ***(Jesus) "noted how the guests (Pharisees) picked the places of honour." (Luke 14:7)***

(°) *b) In heaven:* ***Jesus is seated on God the Father's right. (Colossians 3:1)***

2. Greatness in Kingdom

(°) ***'Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' (Matthew 11:11)***

3. *Slide 55* Sharing in Jesus / with Jesus

(°) ***'I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrect-ion and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.'***
(Philippians 3:10)

4. Servant leader (°) ***Jesus washed the feet of His disciples – a servant is paid but a slave is bought and owned***

(°) **Some others -**

Slide 56 **5.** Baptism

(°) ***'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.' (Mark 1:8)***

(°) ***'When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was baptised too.' (Luke 3:21)***

6. The Cup

(°) ***'Take this cup (of suffering) from me… Yet not what I will, but Your will be done.' (Mark 14:36)***

7. Suffering

(°) ***'He (the Servant) was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities.' (Isaiah 53:5)***

LEADER: Quote the circle on Workbook p12:

(°) N.B. In looking for cross references that may be relevant, we cast the net wide! However, what we 'catch' needs to be sifted. Some references will shed light on the passage before you, some will not!

Slide 57 *(Context, showing 4 lines, ready to add:* 'Bible Story'*)*

Slide 58 **d) The BIBLE STORY**

The Bible tells a story.

(°) From all eternity, God purposed a people for Himself who would bring Him glory. They were to be a bride for His Son: He would love them and they would love Him. The Bible describes how this relationship came about and so may be seen as a 'love story'.

(°) It begins in Genesis with God's creation of man, male and female, in His image, and their expression of it in human marriage. It concludes in Revelation with The Marriage in Heaven of Jesus and His People, 'The Church'.

Slide 59

The story of the Bible is in fact, ***the*** Love Story from which all the 'classic' love stories get their pattern - Jane Austen, Mills and Boon, Walt Disney and all! The plot-development in these human love stories mirrors that of the one described in the Bible:

(°) *Introduction of the characters.* **(°)** *The Problem – separation.*

(°) *The hope – rescue.* **(°)***The need – reconciliation etc.*

(°) See how the parallel stories progress on the next four slides. (p14-15)

Leader: *Give the familiar 'Human' examples first, unlike Workbook*

Slide 60

i) The introduction of characters

Human: The lovers are introduced. All is well. What can go wrong?

Bible: *God created man (male & female) in His own image & they are happy together in the Garden of Eden*. **(Genesis 1, 2)**

(°) ii) The Problem – separation

Human: The path of true love seldom runs smooth! There's an obstacle: a 'baddy' threatens to separate the lovers forever.

Bible: *The Devil tempts man to sin. This sin is a barrier that separates mankind from God. Death results.* **(Genesis 3)**

Slide 61 iii) The Hope – rescue

Human: One day, somehow, someone will bring the lovers together.

Bible: *God calls an individual, promises and preserves a nation (Abraham, Isaac etc) from whom would come the rescuer.* (**Genesis 12-50, Exodus, Joshua)**

(°) iv) The Need – reconciliation

Human: A means is presented which *could* enable the lovers to come together again.

Bible: The Law is given to Moses. Fulfilment of this will bring reconciliation and peace between God and mankind.
(Leviticus, Deuteronomy)

Slide 62 v) The Emotions – Extreme!

Human: The passions of the lovers, their hearts and minds, are made known.

Bible: The thoughts and feelings of God and man are expressed.
(Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of *Solomon*
i.e. the **Wisdom Literature**)

(°) vi) The Attempts - thwarted

Human: Efforts to overcome the obstacle are thwarted. The love seems doomed.

Bible: God's people are unfaithful to Him; they do not / cannot keep the law. The problem seems insurmountable.
(Judges to 2 Kings, Isaiah to Malachi: **The 'Prophets')**

Slide 63 vii) The Solution – surprising

Human: The obstacle is overcome. The 'baddy' is defeated - As an expression of love, the lover makes a great sacrifice.

Bible: Jesus fulfils the law and pays the price of sin for the church he loves, by dying on the cross. **(The Gospels)**

(°) (If it had ended here it would be tragic, but the Bible is no tragedy!)

(°) viii) The Resolution – effective

Human: The solution is effective, the obstacle removed and the lovers may marry. The Kiss is delivered and the proposal is made!

Bible: Jesus rises from the dead, demonstrating that the barrier has been removed. God's 'proposal' is given to all nations, who are invited to respond in faith to His love. **(Acts, Letters)**

Slide 64 ix) The finish – marriage

Human: The lovers marry and live happily ever after.

Bible: God and those who have received and believed in Him are united forever. **(Revelation)**

(°) As a love story unfolds, more is revealed about the characters involved. In the same way, as God's story of the salvation of mankind progresses, He reveals more and more about Himself. The revelation of God is therefore *cumulative,* and so every text is relevant and may be looked at within its setting in the overall story. (This approach is described as 'Biblical Theology'. Cf WB p11)

Slide 65 From this perspective as we approach a text we can ask:

- (°) At what stage (i – ix) does this text occur? and
- (°) What relevance does it have to the overall story?

(°) LEADER: ***Either*** *let everyone try* **Expl 4 (Workbook** back to **p 13)** *by themselves, then in their groups, and follow by a plenary;* ***or*** *to save time, stay in plenary, give a moment for them to answer the first question, then just read out what's below as an example:*

Slide 66 (Exploration 4) In which section… **(°)** *In 2 or 3 sentences , summarise …* *(Allow time)*

Exploration 4 ***(WB, go back to p 13)***

Context of Mark 10:35-45 in the BIBLE STORY

In which section of the Bible story does this text occur? Select an answer from categories (i) to (ix) . (WB p14/15)

Slide 67 ***Just between § vi) 'The attempts' and § vii) 'The Solution'***

(°) Human: ***As an expression of his love, the lover is about to pay a great price to win his bride.***

(°) ***Bible: The Problem (separation) is about to be overcome. Jesus, because of His great love for the world, is about to defeat the Devil, fulfilling the law thro' dying on the cross.***

In a couple of sentences, **very briefly summarise** the Bible story to this point.

(°) ***Humanity and God have been separated by our sin. God's requirements - the Law - have not been met. God's solution is about to happen.***

(°) ***This is approaching the 'crux' of the story – literally!***

Slide 68 (Bible)



LEARN

Slide 69 The next stage is to try to learn what the particular passage of the Bible *means*. To do this we need to

1) (°) Recognise the type of writing.
2) Answer the questions the passage raises.
3) Get an overview.

Slide 70 1. Recognise the type of writing

God's Word was given…

a) (°)…through a variety of writers – a shepherd, a king, prophets, a fisherman, a tax collector, a doctor, etc.,

b) (°)…over a period of 1,500 years,

c) (°)…within a variety of types of writing –
Law, Poetry, History, Wisdom,
Prophecy, Letter, Vision, Parable.

Slide 71

We usually approach different types of reading material in different ways: we don't read Shakespeare, a newspaper report, a car manual, a rule book, a poem and a *'txt msg'* in the same way! We take into account why each was written and how it uses words.

(°) So it is with the Bible. We acknowledge the miracle of the Bible: it is all given by God, and all reveals His Truth. However, we need to take into account the *type of writing* in which His Word is given to be able to see *how* it is true and *what* we should *do* with it.

LEADER: Read out the instructions, the 3 questions and examples a) & b).
Then a few minutes alone, in groups, and a ***plenary****.*

Exploration 5

Slide 72 **Type of writing in Mark 10:35-45**

Ask yourself three useful questions:

(°) **1) What TYPE of literature is this?** (Law, Poetry, History, Wisdom, Prophecy, Letter, Vision, Parable)

(°) **2) In what way would you say this passage is *TRUE*?**

(°) **3) How might God want us to RESPOND to it?**

(°) Here are two sample texts and answers: (Workbook p 17)

Slide 73

a) *'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho'* (Luke 10:30)

Type: (°) This is a **Parable**, not history. There was no man.
Truth: (°) It illustrates a truth Jesus taught.
Response: (°) Heed the point of the parable.

(°) b) *'Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne…He had seven horns and seven eyes.'* (Revelation 5:6)

Type: (°) This is a **Vision**.
Truth: (°) It describes **truth** in the form of a picture.
Response: (°) Imagine it and interpret it.

Slide 74 **Now try some yourself:** *(Workbook p 18)*

(Literature type? How is it true? How should I respond?)

(Law, Poetry, History, Wisdom, Prophecy, Letter, Vision, Parable)

(°) *(Show all the verses; give time to think of answers)*

Slide 75

c) *'The God of Jacob is our fortress.'* (Psalm 46:7)

Type: (°) This is **Poetry**.
Truth: (°) God is not made of stone: the metaphor points to the **truth** that God is our security.
Response: (°) Take refuge in God.

Exploration 5 continued

(°) d) *'When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas and my scrolls, especially the parchments.'* (2 Timothy 4:13)

Type: (°) This is a **Letter**.

Truth: (°) It was a true instruction given to Timothy.

Response: (°) Take no 'direct' action.

Slide 76

e) *'You shall have no other gods before me.'* (Deuteronomy 5:7)

Type: (°) This is **Law.**

Truth: (°) It is truly a command of God. Obedience and disobedience have consequences.

Response: (°) Obey it!

(°) f) *'Afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy….'* (Joel 2:28)

Type: (°) This is a **Prophecy**.

Truth: (°) Peter says that this day has come. (Acts 2:17) It is a present truth today.

Response: (°) God expects us to believe the prophet and receive the Spirit.

Slide 77 g) *'Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.'* (John 20:1)

Type: (°) This is **history**.

Truth: (°) It is a historical **truth**, an account of an actual event. It expects us to believe it. (John 20:31)

Response: (°) Believe it!

Slide 78 **Conclusion** *(Users of the Workbook are now on page 19)*

Therefore, in trying to find out ***what*** an author is saying, we must take into account ***how*** he is saying it.

(°) e.g. In the passage in question (Mark 10:35-45),

Type? (°) Mark is reporting **a historical incident** in the life of Jesus.

Truth?(°) It is a **true** record of an actual event, embarrassingly honest!

Response? (°) (More on this later!)

Slide 79 2) Address the questions

Once we recognise the type of writing in our passage, we can use the information gathered from the context to address the questions that the passage has raised.

LEADER: *Read out the instructions and 6 examples for vv.35-37; encourage everyone to answer the rest of the questions raised previously. Give them a few minutes by themselves on vv.38-42, before looking at a couple of answers on each then offering the Leader's Guide suggestions.*

(°) Exploration 6 of Mark 10:35-45
Questions Answered

Below are some of the 'W' questions (underlined) that might have been ***asked*** in **Exploration 1** (Workbook, p 8**)**

Try to ***answer*** them by drawing on what you now know of the wider context of the passage.

Slide 80 Here are some examples for vv.35-37:

35 **'Then'**: What were they doing before this?

(°) *Jesus had just told them that he was going to be betrayed and killed but later he would rise.*

(°) **'James and John'**: Who were they?

(°) *They were privileged disciples of Jesus who had been at His transfiguration. They had previously argued about who was the greatest.*

(Users of the Workbook are now on p 20)

(°) **'We want you'**: What does the manner of their approach suggest? e.g.

(°) *They were trying to trap Jesus into granting their request.*

(°) *They were very at ease with Him.*

Slide 81 36 **'What do you want?':** Why didn't Jesus dismiss their request?

(°) *Jesus was patient, loving, determined they should learn.*

Exploration 6 continued

37a (°) '**Sit on right and left**': Why did they ask this?

(°) *The request was for a place of glory and honour.*

37b (°) **'In your Glory'**:

What did *they* imagine was Jesus' way to glory?

(°) *'Glory' to them meant Jesus being enthroned as king in Jerusalem.*

(°) What did *Jesus* know was His way to glory?

(°) *Jesus knew this meant crucifixion. (John 17:1; 19:19)*

Slide 82 **Now try some by yourself** *(showing all the remaining questions)*

Slide 83 38 a '**You don't know**' Why didn't they know what they were asking?

(°) *The disciples did not understand that He was to die.*

38b (°) **'Cup and Baptism'** What did Jesus mean by these things?

(°) *Cup suggests they will suffer with Jesus.*

(°) *Baptism points to inclusion in His death/ resurrection and sharing of His Spirit.*

(Users of the Workbook are now on page 21)

39 (°) '**You will drink**' When and how would they share these?

(°) *After the Holy Spirit came, they would share 'the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.' (Philippians 3:10)*

40 (°) '**Places not for you**' Who *would* allocate them? Who were they for?

(°) *At the crucifixion, (Jesus' way to glory: John 17:1), Pilate/soldiers put robbers on each side. (Mark 15:27)*

(°) *In heaven, the Father places Jesus on His right. (Colossians 3:1b)*

Slide 84

41 **'Ten indignant'** Why were the others so annoyed?

(°) *They had all been jockeying for position and prestige.*

(°) *They resented James and John getting their requests in first.*

(°) *Peter especially might have felt left out. (Mark 9:2)*

Exploration 6 continued

(°) 42 **'Rulers of Gentiles'** Why 'of the Gentiles', not 'of the Jews', or 'of the World'?

(°) *Gentiles would be the ones to crucify Jesus.*

(°) *That is the way the world operates, not God's kingdom.*

(°) Were there any other questions raised in the passage? *See your notes on page 8.* Try to answer them now.

(°) Can you resolve anything that surprised you? Jesus didn't rebuke His disciples; why not?

(°) *To want to be great in the Kingdom was not a sin.*

He had to explain that being great involved sacrificial service.

(°) The boldness and cheek of the disciples!

(°) *They felt completely safe and accepted in His company.*

Slide 85 3) Gain an Overview

Now we have taken the passage to 'bits', we need to reassemble it and take an overview. We do this by trying to summarise it in a few sentences. (In English lessons they call it, 'making a *précis'*.)

LEADER: Read out the instruction below. Give everyone a few minutes by themselves and a few minutes in the group. When sharing in the group time, ask them to select one of their summaries to share in the plenary. ***(If you need to save time, just give the reponse below as an example.)***

Slide 86 ('An Overall Picture')

Exploration 7

An Overall 'Picture' of Mark 10:35-45

Summarise the passage as briefly as you can.

(°) *James and John sneakily asked for places of honour in Jesus' glory.*

(°) *He promised they could share all that was His ...*

(°) *... if they followed His self-sacrificial example.*

Slide 87 (Bible)

Slide 88



LISTEN

1) The Main Point

Any unit of written communication (sentence, paragraph, chapter, book) has a central, unifying theme. It's the same with the Bible. Although we might learn *many* things from a passage, there will be a main point that the author is trying to communicate.

(°) To miss this is to 'miss the point'. Indeed, the tradition of calling a reading of the Bible, "***The*** Lesson", points to this fact.

(°) *NB* The main point / lesson is a *statement of fact,* not a command requiring action. Our *reaction* to it comes in the last section, LIVE.

Slide 89

2) A Key Verse

At school, English teachers encourage us to look for a 'topical sentence' in a paragraph or passage. This is a sentence that sums up its theme. The exercise of looking for this may help us to crystallise in our minds what the main point of a passage is.

(°) The same is true of reading the Bible. Indeed, the key verse is sometimes used by preachers as a "text" when they start to preach, to give a window into the meaning of the passage.

Slide 90

NOTES– Trying to spot such a verse (if there is one) can be a helpful discipline - *but it's not a guaranteed formula!*

(°) Sometimes it is easier to spot the Key verse *first*, which may make the Main Point clearer.

LEADER: **(°) 'Try Exploration 8 by yourself for a few minutes, then share your thoughts with the others on your course. It asks 3 questions'***:*

(Give everyone a few minutes by themselves and a few minutes in the group before the ***plenary.)***

Slide 91

Exploration 8

The Message of Mark 10:35-45

1 What do you consider to be the 'lesson' or the main point of the passage?

(°) ***Being 'first' in following Jesus involves, like Him, total, gracious self-sacrifice for others.***

2 Which verse best sums up the message of this passage?

(°) ***44b, 45: "Whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.***

3 What are the reasons for your choice?

(°) ***James' and John's goal was not wrong – Jesus did not rebuke them. However, they misunderstood 'greatness'.***

(°) ***He told them they could share His greatness – by sharing His example and becoming servants of all.***

Slide 92 (Bible)

Slide 93



LIVE

Once we've discovered the theme or main point in a passage, we must then decide how to **respond**. The Word of God is meant to change how we *live*.

(°) In doing this, however, we need to keep in mind that the subject of the Bible is *God*, not *people*! The Bible is *God's* Word. It is His 'autobiography' in history. It describes how *God* worked out His unfolding plan of salvation for humanity. It is written by God 'with' human authors, just as many sports 'autobiographies' are written by others listening to the words of a famous athlete. Everything written is *about* God and *inspired* by God.

Slide 94

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

(°)

"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as those carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)

(°) God's purpose in His Word is to reveal Himself to us, so that we might glorify Him and become like Him. When we look at the implications of the Word for our lives today , we should ask *first*,

(°) 'What does this passage ***show*** us about **God**?'

(°) and only *secondly*, 'What should **I** then **do?'**

(NB Indicative and Objective **before** Subjective and Imperative!)

Slide 95

1. What does it show about God?

We are looking for truths about -

(°) a) God's nature and character

(°) God is always the same, though the extent to which He reveals Himself progresses through the Bible. True, the supreme, complete revelation came when the eternal Word, Jesus, was made flesh and lived among us. (John 1:1,14) But God shows us what He is like throughout the *whole* Bible, Old *and* New Testaments.

Slide 96 **b) God's grace to mankind**

(°) God's supreme act of *grace* (giving to the undeserving) was the gift of His son (John 3:16). This was the full revelation of His 'grace and truth'. (John 1:17)

(°) However, God has *always* been gracious and has shown His grace in *all* His dealings with His people; e.g. God brought His people out of Egypt *before* He gave them a Law to keep!

(°) It is therefore good to ask of every text – 'What do I see here that reminds me of God's grace: He does not treat us as we deserve, but gives to us freely?'

Slide 97 **c) God's revelation in Jesus**

(°) God revealed Himself gradually to the people of Israel, but in Jesus we saw *'the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being.'* (Hebrews 1:3)

(°)Jesus is the subject of the autobiography. It is all about Him! As with all autobiographies, every part can be connected to its author.

Slide 98 For instance, if page 127 line 7 of a biography says . . .

(°) *'Mrs Daniels led her class through the reading drill'*
. . . it must have something to do with the subject.

(°) (This is from the autobiography of former U.S. President George W Bush, describing his visit to Booker school, Florida on Sept 11, 2001, when he was told of the second aircraft hitting the Twin Towers in New York.)

Slide 99 In the same way *everything* in the Bible revolves round and is connected to Jesus. This is why He told the Pharisees:

(°) *'"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me…. Moses wrote about me."' (John 5:39-46)*

Slide 100 *(picture on WB, p 27)*

Look at the picture; what do you see?

(°) **Is it 'a *couple by the shore?*'**

(°) **There's another way of looking.**



(°) Can you see *'a baby in a tree'*

Slide 101 *Wait* **(°)** *Wait* **(°)**

Slide 102 Once you see the baby, you will never be able to miss it again. In the same way, **once you start to recognise Jesus in the whole Bible, you will see Him everywhere you look!'**

There are a few, rare places where Jesus specifically identifies Himself in the Old Testament, e.g.

(°) *John 3:14 "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up." – cf. Numbers 21:6-9*

(°) *Matthew 12:40 "…for as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." – cf. Jonah 1:17*

Slide 103 *Luke 4:15-21 "'The Spirit of the Lord is on me'… Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." cf. Isaiah 61:2*

(°) Many other OT verses allude to Jesus *indirectly*, as Cleopas and his friend discovered on the day of His resurrection:

Luke 24:27, 32 'Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.'

(°) The Bible is not a patchwork of stories and bits and pieces, but a seamless garment made of one cloth. At any given point, this unfolding Bible either **anticipates**, or **reveals** or **explains** Jesus!

Slide 104 The Bible reveals that the crucifixion was the central event of His life *and* of world history. Jesus was **(°)** the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (John 1:29). He came to give His life as a 'ransom for many'. (Mark 10:45)

(°) Therefore, as we read any part of the Word of God, it is right to ask how it relates to Jesus and His work of saving humanity from sin through His death on the cross.

Slide 105 A way of acknowledging this is to write a sentence about the passage using the word, 'Jesus':

e.g. **(°)** Like **Jesus** …

Unlike **Jesus** …

… pointing to **Jesus**.

… as fulfilled by **Jesus** on the cross.

(°) **"Now try Exploration 9, responding to what Mark 10:35-45 shows about God."** *Do one question together as an example. A few minutes alone, a few more in group. Ask for a couple of responses; offer suggestions below; be ready to* ***lead in prayer****.*

Exploration 9 What is the response to Mark 10:35-45?

Slide 106

1. What does it show us of God? *(Looking for facts)*

a) His character b) His grace c) Jesus / His salvation on the cross

i. from the **K**ey **V**erse –

(°) ***44b, 45 Grace – Jesus gave His life to buy back the lost.***

ii. from the rest of the passage?

(°) a) His nature and character?

e.g. (°) ***35 God (Jesus) is approachable.***

Slide 107 ***36 God is patient with His dim disciples.***

(°) ***37 God is generous in sharing Himself.***

(°) ***40 God the Father is in sole charge of the 'seating plan' in Glory.***

(°) ***45 God is humble, being willing to serve His creatures.***

b) (°) His grace?

(°) ***45 God paid our ransom, as we could never do it ourselves.***

c) (°) Jesus / His salvation on the cross?

(°) ***39 Jesus is willing to share all that He has and is with us.***

Slide 108 **"NB After every reading of the Bible, it is possible, and desirable, to *stop and praise God for all that He has revealed about Himself in that passage.* *Let's do so now*."**

Slide 109 **2. What should be done?**

This time we are looking for *commands*.

James writes (°) *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22)*

The Bible's purpose is not only to change our ***attitude*** to God; it is also meant to change our response in how we *live*.

Slide 110 In seeking how God would have us do this, it is good to try and discern, from all we have learned about the context in which the Word was initially given, how we think God might have wanted those who first received it, to respond in their day.

(°) Dick Lucas, an influential minister in 20th century London, used to teach that, in seeking a Godly response to the letters to the Corinthians, you had to *"go to Corinth"!* This means that, discerning how God might have wanted the first readers to respond to the letter in *their* situation gives us a steer as to how God might expect us to discern its implications in *our* lives today.

Slide 111 So, we look at the possible response of the original hearers, **before** asking how we might respond today. Onlly ***then*** do we ask, *'What would God have me do to change my own actions?'* To hear this, we let the Holy Spirit scan our lives highlighting the areas for a response. After that it is up to us to act!

*LEADER:***(°)** *In a plenary, invite suggestions of God's desired response by the original hearers to KV/MP, and by us today. Then give examples of responses to other verses, allow time for personal reaction, share with groups and end with a plenary.*

Slide 112 **Exp 10 What is the response to Mark 10:35-45?**

2. What should be done? *(Looking for commands)*

i. from the **K**ey **V**erse

a) by the original hearers

(°) ***44b,45 As servant leaders, be ready to die with and for Jesus***

(°) b) by me, today

(°) ***44b,45 Work to be like Jesus – a 'slave' of others.***

(°) **ii.** from the rest of the passage *e.g.*

(°) ***35 Don't try and 'get around' God.***

(°) ***37 Look for the benefit of others before yourself.***

(Now suggest some yourself)

(°) ***39 Be prepared to 'drink His cup' (share Jesus' sufferings) and receive 'His baptism' (His Holy Spirit).***

(°) ***40 Respect God's sovereign choices.***

(°) ***41 Beware of self-righteous indignation.***

(°) ***43 Don't try to lord it over other people.***

Slide 113 **CONCLUSION**

As we read the Word, we may think that God wants us to act on it in some specific way. How can we be sure that it is God's 'voice', and what should we do when we hear it?
Slide 114

1) Is it God?

Ways in which we may test this are by referring to:

(°) The rest of the Word
If it is God, it will always be in line with the general teaching of the Bible – God doesn't contradict Himself.

a) *Slide 115* Other believers
(°) We might usually expect other believers to confirm this is what the passage means. The 'witness of the Spirit' means that the same God who inspired the writers can today help readers who are *'seeking God's will, in God's Word, so as to join in doing God's work'.* (Mark Greene)

b) *Slide 116* Experience
(°) God's is a *still, small voice* (1 Kings 19:12, AV), but it is one that is *known by His sheep.* (John 10:27) The more we listen for and obediently live out the Word of God, the more familiar we will be with God's voice.

Slide 117

2) What should I do?

Have faith in God! This is not an inward feeling or an outward proof. It is the action that follows the belief that God may be speaking to you. You will not *see* till you *do*!

(°) *"Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see".* (Hebrews 11:1)

Slide 118 (Bible + Hearing the Word large Logo)

Summary

Slide 119



LOOK – (°) What does it *say*?

The Text

a) What questions does it raise - p8

b) What surprises you?

The Context?

a) the surrounding text p10

b) the Book of the Bible p11

c) the whole Bible p12

d) the place in the Bible Story p14



LEARN – (°) What does it *mean*?

What type of writing is it? p17

Answer the questions p20

Summarise the passage p22



LISTEN – (°) What is the *message*?

What is the **M**ain **P**oint? p23

Which is the **K**ey **V**erse?



LIVE – (°) What is the *response*?

What does it show *about God* p25

(His nature, His grace*, Jesus and His cross**)?

a) in the Key Verse?

b) in the rest of the verses?

What should *be done* p28

a) from the Key Verse

(i) by the original hearers?

(ii) by me, today?

b) from the rest of the passage?

* God's undeserved generosity is evident *throughout* the Bible, and is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

** The Bible, from 'the fall 'onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through His Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

The Next Step?

Slide 120 LEADER: *Read out this page. Arrange an opportunity for feedback after they do each of the Follow On studies for themselves. This Leader's Guide will help you lead Feedback sessions.*

Practice is essential to cement the principles learned!

The Follow On material (pages 33-64) contains six studies covering Mark 10:46 – 12:17, the passages immediately after the one studied already. **(°)** After a page of background information, (common knowledge at the time, plus some relevant Bible references), they provide an expanded outline of the *Hearing the Word* model giving you space to write down your thoughts.

(°) Completing these studies provides a good way for those who have learned the principles to try them out by themselves on passages whose contexts they already know.

Slide 121 If, thereafter, there is an opportunity for people to gather to talk about their findings, then receive some feedback, it will recreate the 'Teach, Try, Talk' learning method of the Introduction.

(°) Bible Study Material. Once established in our minds, the model can be applied to any passage. Over 30 studies are available for use by individuals or groups. They cover seven different types of writing in 20 Bible books (see p68). The materials give help in reading the particular type of literature, in the context of social, historical, geographical and religious information that was familiar to those who first received the Word.

Slide 122 *Hearing the Word* can be used alone, with one other person, or in a Bible Study or House Group. It works in person or online, both with people in the church, and with those who are not believers but would like to know more. Even the novice can join in when you start by listing all the *questions,* and God may reveal Jesus through any part of the Word!

(°) If the studies happen *prior to* a sermon on the passage, the benefit may be great – the preacher then speaks into a context where his hearers have thought about the text beforehand.

Here is a way you might 'Share the Word' together: *Slide 123*

Sharing the Word

Use Can be used *alone*, with *one other person,* or in *a group.*

(°) Preparing for a group

Time put in before will ***greatly benefit*** time together.
Work through the stages – LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.
Write down your thoughts.

Slide 124 Format

LOOK **Go verse by verse** – Invite **short** questions/answers.
and Look for other parts of the Bible that might connect.
LEARN Pay attention to anything that puzzles.

(°) **LISTEN** Share views on the Main Point and a Key Verse.

(°) **LIVE** Response
a) What does it show of God / His grace / Jesus?
(°) b) What should be done, by first hearers/by me, today?

(°) NB Be sure to leave **adequate time for the LIVE** section.

Slide 125 Operation

As you gather round God's Word together:

(°) a. Listen to the views of others.
(°) b. Welcome new people. (All can join in when you start with simple questions, whether you know the answer or not)
(°) c. Encourage people to think for themselves. (Don't let the knowledgeable dominate or rehearse sermons past!)
(°) d. Include all who might wish to, in your sharing together.

Slide 126 Growth

The goal is to **Share** the Word. Discuss soon who might join you, particularly those out-with the church. When your group grows to about 5, plan to divide. (see: Sharing the Word – 'Meristems').

Click to glide into Slide 127 ***End of Course*** *(Slide **128** is a black screen. **129** for **Presenters***
(Use the very last slide to check screen ratio/focus before viewers arrive, and for Copyright terms.)

2. Six FOLLOW ON Studies

Conducting a Bible Study

When we learn something, we need to put it into practice *soon*, so our skills move forward. So, we now apply the *Hearing the Word* model to the next six passages in Mark's Gospel after the James and John incident.

1) Preparation

Ideally, participants should work on the passage on their own beforehand, writing their responses in their workbooks. One way of doing this is to read the passage early in the week and then spend ten minutes a day working on it. This gives plenty of time to chew it over.

Advance preparation is not essential to participate in group discussion – but it will make it very much more *worthwhile.*

2) Groups

When you meet, try to maintain the original small groups, as a degree of intimacy may have already been established. **Three or four is best for discussion.**

3) Format for Bible Study

It is very time consuming to go through the whole Hearing the Word process again in the group, section by section. The following is a more basic outline that may be useful to fit the study time available. It could last from 15 minutes to an hour. (The less group time available, the more the benefit from good preparation by all.)

Having read the passage together, discuss it as follows:

a) and b) **LOOK & LEARN** – Questions and Answers

Go through the passage verse by verse, asking questions of it. As each question is posed, invite the person asking it to suggest a possible answer, before opening it out to the rest of the group.

Allow just <u>short, simple questions</u> at this stage; this needs discipline! Encourage all to give questions even if they know the answers. Stress, 'No question is too simple.' This encourages everyone's participation, including the novice.

Ask people if this passage reminds them any other parts of the Bible.

NB. It is important to learn from the Bible **together**. If one reader has more knowledge than others, they may be tempted to dominate the giving of answers by imparting that knowledge. Resist this! A goal of doing this together is to equip us to **think for ourselves** – and work things out if possible.

c) **LISTEN** – **M**ain **P**oint / **K**ey **V**erse?

Invite suggestions as to what is the main point in the passage and which key verse best sums it up. This will prompt further discussion as folk explain their reasoning and choices. Try to come to a consensus based on what the passage says.

d) **LIVE** – Action?

Invite participants' thoughts, first on the application of the Key Verse and Main Point, then on the rest of the verses, showing -

(i) what the passage shows about God,

(ii) what God might want us to do.

Always ensure sufficient time for the LIVE section, e.g. allocate a QUARTER of the total available time.

4) Teaching

To encourage participants, and enable them to get the most benefit, it is good to take the opportunity to complete the 'teaching loop' and give feedback. This might work in a number of ways, e.g.

a) Midweek meeting or Bible Study

Expect everyone to come prepared. The meeting might happen in small groups in which participants go through the four stages (LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE), with the host doing a plenary at each stage, hearing views and offering views from the Leader's Guide.

b) Teacher

Either The teacher might hear people's thoughts at each stage and then give their reflection, drawing on the Leader's Guide;

Or Groups may complete their study and then the teacher preaches from that passage on Sunday.

5) Online

Where the study is totally online, the Leaders' Guide of the study in question on the website may give its perspective ***after*** participants have shared thoughts on each section together.

Study 1 Mark 10:46-52

Faith in Jesus leads to salvation

Word List

46	*Jericho*	City in Jordan valley, 15 miles NE of Jerusalem, and over 3,000 feet below it, on the main road south along the valley from Galilee. Last stop before dangerous ascent to Jerusalem.
	Timaeus	means defiled. *Bartimaeus* = 'son of the defiled one'
47	*Son of David*	Title for the Messiah, the awaited King
50	*cloak*	a beggar's most important possession, which protects night and day.
51	*rabbi*	means teacher.
52	*healed*	literal meaning in Greek is 'saved'.

Bible Connections

46	*Jericho*	The city that barred Israel's way to the promised land. Joshua 5:10 Destroyed and never to be rebuilt, on pain of death. Joshua 6:26 However, rebuilt on new site over 500 years later. 1 Kings 16:34
47	*Son of David*	*cf* Mark 11:10; Psalm 2:8; Isaiah 9:6,7 An eternal kingdom had been promised under the rule of a son of King David. 1 Chronicles 17:14
48	*blind man*	*cf.* John chapter 9
52	*healed/saved by faith*	*cf.* Ephesians 2:8,9

LOOK (Workbook, p36)

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

46 'Then' – what has been happening before this?
What was the significance of Jericho?
Who were 'the large crowd'?
Why did this occur as Jesus was leaving the city?
Why does Mark repeat – 'Son of Timaeus'?

47 How did Bartimaeus hear it was Jesus coming?
What does 'Son of David' mean?
Why did he ask for mercy?

48 Why did the people rebuke him?

49 What is the importance of Jesus 'calling' him?

50 Why does Mark mention 'throwing his cloak aside'?

52 Where did Jesus expect him to go?
When did he start to follow Jesus?

What surprises or confuses you?

47 Bartimaeus asked first not for pity or even healing, but mercy.

51 Jesus asked him what he wanted: wasn't it obvious?!

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

The surrounding text

48 The crowd thought Jesus was the Messiah, Son of David, restoring His Kingdom. (11:10)

51 Jesus had recently asked His disciples, "What do you want me to do for you?" (10:36) They wanted status! (9:33-34)

52 Therefore I tell you that whatever you ask for in prayer, believe you have received it and it will be yours. (11:24)

The Book

47 Many thought the Messiah was coming soon. (14:61)

48 The disciples were astonished and the crowd fearful as Jesus led them to Jerusalem. (10:32)

50 Cloak of Jesus (5:27; 6:56)

52 The disciples had also followed Jesus straight away! (1:17,20)

52 "Your faith has healed you," was also said to the bleeding woman who dared to touch Jesus. (5:34)

The whole Bible

46 All who do not believe in Jesus are 'blind'. (John 9:35-41)
All mankind is unrighteous ('defiled'). All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:10-18, 23)

49 Jesus stops as we seek Him – see also Zacchaeus. (Luke 19:1-10)
Jesus calls us to come to Him in faith. (Matthew 14:29; John 11:28)

50 The rich young ruler refused to leave all he had to follow Jesus. (Luke 18:22,23)

51 Make your requests known. (Philippians 4:6)

52 It is by grace you have been saved/healed, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8,9)

The Bible Story

God and humanity have been separated by sin.
God's requirements – the Law – have been given but not met.
God's solution is about to happen with His Son, Jesus, as King.

LEARN (Workbook, p37)

1) What type of literature is this?
Gospel narrative

2) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

46 Jesus has asked the disciples what they wanted Him to do – and they had asked for honour.
Jericho was a 'cursed' city that had at first barred God's people from the promised land.
The 'large crowd' were pilgrims / followers of Jesus / people hoping for the Messiah. (cf 11:9)
Perhaps Bartimaeus had heard of Jesus' ministry and was waiting for Him expectantly as He left the city.
Mark repeats 'Son of Timaeus' to emphasise – defiled.

47 He had heard the crowd and asked a bystander.
'Son of David' stated his belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

The blind man felt mercy was his primary need – more important than healing for his blindness.

48 The crowd rebuked Bartimaeus for being so noisy, assuming Jesus was not interested in him.

49 Jesus wanted the blind man to come to Him and express his faith.

50 Leaving his cloak could be a sign of his faith. He left everything of his old life behind.

52 Jesus may have expected him to go and stop begging. He followed as soon as he saw Jesus.

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

47 Mark is illustrating that our greatest need is a relationship with Jesus. For this we can simply ask for mercy.

51 God requires our co-operation in receiving His blessings.

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Bartimaeus, believing Jesus is the Messiah, humbly calls to Him and asks for mercy. Jesus calls for him, and asks what he wants. Bartimaeus asks to see again. Jesus notes his faith, grants his request and Bartimaeus follows Him.

LISTEN (Workbook, p38)

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Humble faith in Jesus heals / saves us.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? *verse **52a***

"Go", said Jesus, "your faith has healed you."

3) What are the reasons for your choice?

Bartimaeus believed and confessed that Jesus was the Messiah. He recognised his need of God's mercy and entrusted himself to Him. Thus, he received sight (physical and spiritual) and then followed Jesus.

LIVE (Workbook, p39

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

i. from the Key Verse **52 a**

Jesus responds to simple faith by healing / saving us.

ii. from the rest of the passage

a. His nature and character

49 God hears those who call for mercy in Jesus' name.
Jesus may require us to transmit His call to someone else.

51 God wants us to verbalise our requests to Him.

52 The Lord pronounces healing / salvation by His Word.

b. His grace?

51 God requires no payment from us – all we have to do is ask.

c. Jesus / His salvation?

2) What should be done?

a. from the Key Verse **52a**

i. by the original hearers

Bartimaeus – follow Jesus to Jerusalem / His death

ii. by me, today

Believe in and follow Jesus wherever He lead.; whatever the cost.

b. from the rest of the passage

48 Do not discourage any, however unworthy, who cry to Jesus for mercy.

49 Realise God hears and answers all who earnestly seek Him.

50 Leave behind everything as you come to Jesus.

51 Make your requests known to Jesus.

Study 2 Mark 11:1-11

Jesus is the peaceful Saviour

Word List

1	*Jerusalem*	'Capital' of Holy Land with the Temple.
	Bethphage / Bethany	Villages outside Jerusalem (1 to 2 miles)
	Mount of Olives	Small hill opposite Jerusalem on route from Bethany
2	*colt*	Foal of an ass. Transport of a King coming in peace
3	*The Lord*	Coinciding with the word Jews used when reading the OT, to avoid saying 'Yahweh', the God of Israel, in case the reader inadvertently took God's name 'in vain' (Exodus 20:7)
7	*cloaks*	Outer garments
9	*Hosanna*	An exclamation of praise; literally, 'save now'
10	*Kingdom of David*	The territory of David, a former King of Israel
11	*the Temple*	Centre of Jewish religion, where God's presence was manifest and sacrifices were made
	the twelve	The disciples Jesus had chosen

Bible connections

1	*Bethany*	The raising of Lazarus	John 11
2	*colt*	A prophecy of the Messiah	Zechariah 9:9
10	*kingdom of David*		see 1 Chronicles 17:14
	Hosanna		*cf* Psalm 118:25; 2 Kings 6:26

LOOK (Workbook, p41)

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

1 *Who are 'they'?*
Where are Bethphage and Bethany?
Why did Jesus stop before entering the village?
Why did He send two?

2 *What is significance of riding a colt that has never been ridden?*
How did Jesus know the colt would be there?

3 *What did He mean, and what did they understand, by 'The Lord'?*

5 *Who were the people who objected?*

6 *Why did they then let the disciples take the colt?*

7 *Why did they put their cloaks on the colt?*
What does the spreading of cloaks and branches mean? (What did Bartimaeus do?!)

9 *What did the crowd mean by 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes …Hosanna in the highest'?'*
How was it they all shouted the same thing?

11 *Why did he go straight to the Temple?*
If it was that late, why didn't He wait until the next day to enter Jerusalem?

What surprises or confuses you?

3 *Jesus told the disciples to say, 'The Lord needs it'; was this Jesus claiming to be The LORD' ?!*

5 *The people standing around let it go; were they expecting Jesus? Did they believe He was 'The LORD' ?*

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

The surrounding text

9 *The disciples were expecting glory.* *(Mark 10:37)*

10 *Jesus said the Kingdom of God was coming soon…* *(Mark 9:1)*
…and He was teaching them about it. *(Mark 9:47; 10:15,23)*

10 Bartimaeus was the first non-disciple (cf Mark 8:27-30) to recognise that Jesus was the expected King. (Mark 10:48)

The Book

9,10 Peter had confessed Jesus as the Messiah / Christ / King, but Jesus had warned them not to tell others yet. (Mark 8:29)

The whole Bible

1 Every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. (Matthew 18:16)

10 'My Kingdom is not of this world.' (John 18:36)

Pilate had had a notice prepared: 'Jesus of Nazareth. The King of the Jews'. (John 19:19)

11 'God's ways are not our ways.' (Isaiah 55:8))

The Bible Story

God and humanity have been separated by sin.

God's requirements – the Law – have been given but not met.

God's solution is about to happen with His Son, Jesus, as King.

LEARN (Workbook, p42)

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 'They' means not just His normal 12 disciples, but some at least of the Jericho crowd (10:46), including Bartimaeus. (10:52)
Bethany was two miles from Jerusalem, via the Mount of Olives.
He stopped because He wanted to prepare the village to receive Him and/or to go on to make a dramatic entry to Jerusalem.

2 The colt signified a claim to be The King. That it could calmly accept a rider without being broken in points to Jesus' power over nature.
The Spirit revealed the colt's situation to Him; or, pre-arranged (?)

3 'The Lord' refers to Jesus personally, the one who would send the colt back soon afterwards. It was a claim to be divine.

5 The objectors knew the colt belonged to someone else.

6 They let them take the colt as they too were waiting for Jesus (?)

7 Putting their cloaks on the colt honoured Jesus (?)

9 They were not shouting to Jesus but announcing to the world.
The crowd accepted Jesus' claim, quoting Psalm 118:25,26, and called on Jesus to establish His Kingdom and save them (from Roman occupation?).
They were in agreement – Jesus was Messiah.

11 He went to the Temple (not the Roman garrison) to assert that His mission and Messiahship were spiritual.
He wanted the crowd to shout / announce His claim then. They had just walked up from Jericho and would disperse that night.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

3 Jesus was 'breaking cover'. He laid claim to the titles 'Messiah' and 'The Lord'.

5 News had gone before Him that Jesus was coming. Crowds were waiting to receive Him.

7 Jesus alone was going to save / deliver His people.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Jesus approaches Jerusalem in a way that deliberately makes a public claim to be the long-awaited Messiah. The crowds acknowledge this and receive Him joyfully. They expect Him to free Jerusalem and become their earthly King. Jesus goes straight to the Temple to show that His kingdom is not of this world.

LISTEN (Workbook, p43)

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Jesus enters Jerusalem as a peaceful Saviour and King and invites a response from everyone.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? ***v 7***

'When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, He sat on it.'

3) What are the reasons for your choice?

By sitting on the colt, Jesus encouraged those around to believe and announce that He was the Lord / Saviour of Israel. (Zechariah 9:9)

LIVE (Workbook, p44)

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

i. from the Key Verse **7**

Jesus is the King who presents Himself as a peaceful Saviour

ii. from the rest of the passage

a) His nature and character?

2 God fulfils His Word given by the prophets.

The Lord can lay claim to our possessions.

9 The Lord welcomes our praise. It rightly belongs to Him.

b) His grace?

7 Jesus alone was king / was going to do it all for everyone.

9 Everyone was able to join in and praise God.

c) Jesus / His salvation?

10 Jesus is King in the line of David.

2) What should be done?

i. from the Key Verse **7**

a) by the original hearers

Receive Jesus as long-expected Messiah

b) by me, today

Receive Jesus as the Lord of your life

ii. from the rest of the passage

2 Trust Jesus' commands, even when they seem strange!

3 Be ready and willing to give what you have to Jesus.

7 Not only receive but proclaim Jesus as the King.

9 Participate in the praise of God.

Go before or come after Jesus and tell people who He is.

10 Discern the Kingdom.

Treat Jesus as king (not only in the 'light' of a sympathetic, enthusiastic crowd, but also when darkness comes).

11 Be sure to follow God's timing.

Study 3 Mark 11:12-25

God forgives the sin of the faithful

Word List

15	*temple area*	The outer courtyard was as far as Gentiles could go. It was meant to be a place of prayer for them, but also a place where Jews could prepare to go further in.
	money changers	Roman coins in everyday use were secular, deemed unfit for the temple. So, temple tax and purchase of 'spotless' lambs had to be paid for in Jewish shekels. With a monopoly, the changers could extort huge profit on other currencies.
	doves	A poor man's sacrifice (Leviticus 12:8; 14:22)
18	*chief priests*	Those in charge of Temple sacrifices
	teachers of the Law	Scribes and Pharisees

Bible connections

13	*fig tree*	Symbol of Israel at peace:	1 Kings 4:25
		The blessing conferred on Israel	Romans 9:4,5
		No fruit results in judgment	Matthew 21:33-45
		Sign of harmonious relationship between God and people.	Micah 4:4
13	*fruit*	*cf* John Baptist looking for fruit of repentance	Luke 3:8
15	*driving out*	Similar incident early in Jesus' ministry	John 2:15
17	*'house of prayer for all nations'*		Isaiah 56:7
	'a den of robbers'		Jeremiah 7:2,11
18	*amazed at Jesus*	*cf* Mark 1:22,27; 2:12; 6:2,6,51; 7:37	
21	*the power of the Word to create / destroy*		Genesis 1:3
22	*faith in God*		*see also* 2:5; 4:40; 5:34
24	*requests not granted*		Matthew 26:36-39; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
	requests granted		Luke 11:13; Mathew 7:11
25	*forgiveness of others*		Matthew 6:12; 18:21-35; Luke 23:34

LOOK (Workbook, p46)

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

12 Who are 'they'?

13 Why did Jesus go to the fig tree if it was 'not the season for figs'?

14 What motivated Him to curse the fig tree?

15 Why did He overturn the tables before He taught the traders?
What were the doves for?

16 How could one man stop them?

17 Why did He quote the Scriptures to them?

18 What did the leaders fear about Jesus?
What was it about His teaching that 'amazed the crowd'?

19 What does 'withered from the roots' imply?

20 Why did Peter point out that the fig tree had withered?

22 Why did Jesus tell him to have faith in God?
How had Jesus caused the tree to wither?

24 How can you believe you have received it - if you haven't?!

What surprises or confuses you?

Jesus 'blamed' a tree for not bearing fruit out of its season. (Seems unreasonable since He created it, and its seasons?!)
Verse 25 – (forgiveness of those who have wronged you), appears not to bear any relationship to the rest of the passage.
How does 'cursing of fig tree' connect to clearing of the Temple'?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

The surrounding text

15b,16 Next day the priests etc. will question Jesus about how, and by what authority, He had done these things. (11:28)

18 On His approach to Jerusalem, the crowd professed faith in Jesus as Messiah. Later they melted away. (11:9-10)

22 Jesus had told Bartimaeus his faith had healed him. (10:52)

The Book

22 faith and peace in danger (4:40)

24,25 faith and forgiveness (2:5)

The whole Bible

13 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. (Matthew 3:80

22 Abraham believed the LORD and He credited it to him as Righteousness (Genesis 15:6)

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and being certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)

The Bible Story

God and humanity have been separated by sin.

God's requirements – the Law – have been given but not met.

God's solution is about to happen with His Son, Jesus, as King.

LEARN (Workbook, p 47)

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

12 'They' are Jesus and His disciples.

13 He knew there would be no figs but did it for the benefit of His disciples.

14 He cursed it, not out of anger or frustration but to create a teaching situation (parable) for His followers.

15 He drove out before teaching, because they had already had the chance to respond (3 year's ministry). He had made the assessment and judged now was the time for action.

Doves were sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins.

16 One man could stop them as He had authority. (1:22)

17 He quoted the Scriptures as the source of His authority.

18 The leaders feared what Jesus was teaching.

The authority of His teaching amazed the crowd.

19 Withered from the roots means dead, beyond retrieval.

20 Peter pointed it out because he was surprised / hadn't expected it?

22 Jesus said have faith in God, because <u>God</u> had done it.

Jesus caused it to wither by His word.

24 Believing before receiving is faith.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

13 Jesus was not acting petulantly, but deliberately, to teach His disciples a lesson.

25 The sacrifices bought in the Temple court were the symbols of theforgiveness of sin. Jesus says we receive forgiveness through faith in God. This is linked to, and expressed in, our forgiveness of others. The incident with the fig tree was an illustration / parable of the events at the Temple.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Jesus curses a fig tree as it has not produced fruit. He then goes to the Temple and halts all the religious commerce (12-19). Next morning, when the disciples have noticed the withered fig tree, He encourages them to have faith in God, promising forgiveness of sin for those who forgive others.

LISTEN (Workbook, p 48)

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Trust in God instead of dead ritual, and He will forgive all your sin.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? ***v 21-22***

(Peter said…) "The fig tree you cursed has withered."
"Have faith in God," Jesus answered.

3) How do you think it does this?

The alternative to trying to 'buy' the forgiveness of God is to 'Have faith in Him.' If we do, we will receive whatever we ask for. He has promised forgiveness of sin. The evidence for such faith is the forgiveness of others.

LIVE (Workbook, p 49)

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

i. from the Key Verse **21-22**

God grants to the faithful forgiveness of their sin.

ii. from the rest of the passage

a) His nature and character?

13 God desires the fruit of repentance and faith in our lives.

15 God hates self-serving, dead religion.

b) His grace?

24,25 Forgiveness is not paid for by us. To receive it, God requires only that we believe in Him, and ask.

c) Jesus / His salvation?

12 God the Son was fully man – He felt hunger.

2) What should be done?

i. from the KV 22

a) by the original hearers

Note – the Temple / sacrificial system is dead / passing.

b) by me, today

Trust in Jesus for forgiveness of sin and not in dead ritual.

ii. from the rest of the passage

14 Listen to God – you may 'overhear' things you can learn from.

18 Note: some religious leaders feared Jesus' teaching.
Be amazed at the teaching of Jesus.

24 Pray for forgiveness, believing you have received His answer.

25 Forgive others, so that your prayers for pardon are not affected

Study 4 Mark 11:27-33

Jesus reveals Himself to the humble faithful

Word List

27	*temple courts*	Areas where Rabbis would walk with followers and teach them. This courtyard for Gentiles came first; anyone could enter it. Further in was the courtyard for Jewish women, then one for Jewish men. Beyond that was the Temple itself, entered only by priests.
	chief priests, *teachers of Law, elders*	The three groups in the 'Sanhedrin' (the religious governing body, which could sit as a court) i.e. this was an official deputation.
	John's baptism	A baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
32	*a prophet*	One who speaks God's Word on His behalf

Bible connections

28	*Jesus & authority*	Luke 4:18; Matt 28:18; Mark 2:10; John 10:18
	Pharaoh doubted Moses' authority	Exodus 5:2
38	*John's baptism*	Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8, Luke 3:1-18; John 1:19-34

LOOK (Workbook, p51)

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

27 Who are 'they'?
When did 'they' arrive again?
Why was Jesus walking in the Temple courts?
Who were the chief priests, elders and teachers of the Law?
28 What authorities were there?
What do 'these things' refer to?
What is 'authority'?
29 What was 'John's baptism'?
31 What does 'From Heaven' mean?
What does 'from men' mean?
32 What was a prophet?

What surprises or confuses you?

27 Why had Jesus not been arrested for vandalism? (11:15)
33b Why did He not take the opportunity to try and persuade them?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

The surrounding text

31 Jesus told Bartimaeus that his faith had healed him and Bartimaeus was presumably still with Him. (10:52)

32 On His approach to Jerusalem, the crowd had professed faith in Jesus as Messiah (11:10).

The Book

28 At the start of His ministry, 'people were amazed…. he taught… as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the Law.' (1:22)
30 John preached a baptism of repentance and forgiveness. (1:4)

The whole Bible

28 All authorities are by and under God. (Daniel 4:25; Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:14)

Jesus was rejected by His own people. (John 1:11).

29 Jesus claimed authority at the beginning and end of His ministry. (Luke 4:18, Matthew 28:18).
30 John the Baptist looked for the 'fruit of repentance'. (Luke 3:8)

32 The 'crowd' were persuaded against Jesus. (Matthew 27:20)
33 God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

The Bible Story *As before.*

LEARN (Workbook, p52)

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

27 'They' means Jesus and the twelve. (cf v 11)
Mark keeps mentioning it to show the close sequence of events.
They arrived 'again' – the day after Jesus had cleared the Temple.
Perhaps He was checking to see if they were trading again cf v 11.
Jesus was walking in the courts teaching people.

28 The chief priest, elders and teachers of the Law were the religious authorities, in charge of sacrifices, teaching and enforcing of Law.
'These things' refer to Jesus making a triumphal entry and clearing the Temple.
Authority is an absolute – it is all derived from God, including civil (Rome) and religious authorities.

29 'John's baptism' was a preparation for the coming of the One who would baptise with the Holy Spirit? (1:7,8)

31 'From Heaven' means sent by God with His authority. 'From men' means authorised by a merely human agency

32 A prophet spoke the truth from God, so the Messiah's coming really was near.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

Jesus had not been arrested for vandalism because the authorities feared the crowds. (18) It was not His time yet. cf. Luke 4:29 He did not try and persuade them as their hearts were hard; they were going to fulfil God's purpose and have Jesus killed.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Jesus returns to the Temple the day after He forced the money changers out of its courtyards. As He teaches, those in charge of theTemple confront Him. They demand to know by what means and authority He has done this. He refuses to reveal this to them and silences them with a question about John the Baptist's authority, which they decline to answer.

LISTEN (Workbook, p 53)

1) What is the lesson or the main point?
The divine authority of Jesus is revealed to those who seek sincerely.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? ***v 33***
They answered Jesus, 'We don't know'. Jesus said, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.'

3) How do you think it does this?
It shows that those who question Jesus' authority, and are more concerned about the reactions of others than they are with finding the truth, will not receive a response from Him.

LIVE (Workbook, p 54)

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

i. from the Key Verse 33

33 God is sovereign as to whom He reveals Himself.

ii. from the rest of the passage

a) His nature and character?

28 God is obscure to sinful human beings.

33 God is all-knowing – He is never outsmarted.

b) His grace

29 Jesus is prepared to dialogue with sinful people.

c) Jesus / His salvation on the cross

27 The people who questioned His authority were the very ones who handed Him over for, and forced, His execution. This was the very means of His giving His life for the sins of the world.

2) What should be done?

i. from the KV **33**

a) by the original hearers

Note: it is impossible to argue with Jesus

b) by me, today

Note: God does not answer questions to Him born out of unbelief.

ii. from the rest of the passage

29 Note: Questions are often good replies to those who seek to trap believers in matters of faith in Jesus.

30 Acknowledge that John's baptism <u>was</u> from heaven – repent for the forgiveness of sins.

33 *Humbly seek God to reveal Himself to you.-*

Study 5 Mark 12: 1-12

God awaits your verdict

Word List

1	*parable*	A story with one main point. Jesus often used them in his teaching.
	v*ineyard*	Literally, a field for growing vines to produce grapes
	wine press	e.g. two hollows in rock, one for trampling the grapes, the other at a lower level so the juice could run into it
	watchtower	Allows a farmer to guard his vineyard at a time when thieves might steal the ripe grapes.
7	*The heir*	Son of the owner
	capstone	A large stone on top of e.g. a dry-stone wall to finish it by applying pressure on stones below, increasing friction and so permanence; a flat stone as a roof of a megalithic chamber. *Figuratively*, a concluding achievement.
	Alternative translation:	
	cornerstone	The first stone the builders lay, chosen or dressed to have all its faces at right angles; it determines the alignment of the whole building and whether the walls will be vertical.

Bible connections

1	*God speaks about His beloved Israel as a fruitless vine.*	Isaiah 5:1-7
5	*Slow to anger but not leaving the guilty unpunished.*	Exodus 34:6
7	*The oldest lie – Man can ignore God's Word and take His place*	Genesis 3:5
8	*Stephen tells the story of Israel with the same conclusion: the Son / 'the righteous one' dies.*	Acts 7:51-53
	The rejection of the Son by His own people.	John 1:11
	The righteous one dies.	Romans 5:6-8
9	*In the past God has overlooked such ignorance but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.*	Acts 17:30
	The wages of sin is death.	Romans 6:23
10	*God raises His servant, despite the 'builders' rejection.*	Isaiah 53:3,11,12; John 11:47-53; Acts 9:13, 26,27

LOOK (Workbook, p56)

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

1 *After what did He begin to teach?*
Why in parables?
Why detail the construction of the vineyard?
In the parable, who were the tenants and what was the vineyard?

2 *How much of the fruit was due?*
Why fruit and not money?

3 *Why did they beat him?*

5 *Why did he keep sending servants when they abused them?*

6 *What relevance is there to the fact that he loved his son?*
Why did he expect them to respect his son?

7 *Why 'inheritance' not just 'vineyard'?*

9 *Why kill – is that necessary?*

10 *Why did Jesus mix His metaphors – vineyard / building-and-capstone?*
What did this verse mean to His hearers?
Who was the 'capstone'?

12 *Who is 'they'?*
In what way were they afraid of the crowd?

What surprises or confuses you?

6 *In the parable the owner is not intending his son to die.*

6,7 *In the parable, the son presents himself to the tenants as such, yet Jesus has just refused to say He has come from the Father. (11:33)*

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

The surrounding text

1 *The day before, Jesus had driven the moneychangers out of the Temple (11:15). He is back in the Temple courts again and has just refused to tell the leaders the source of His authority. (11:27,33)*

6 *Entering Jerusalem Jesus presented Himself as Messiah. (11:9,10)*

8 *The chief priests/teachers of the Law are trying to kill Him. (11:18)*

The Book

8 Plot to Kill Jesus (Mark 3:6)
Jesus knew He would be killed by them. (Mark 10:34)

The whole Bible

2 Harvest from a new vineyard in 5th Year (Leviticus 19:23-25)
Servants = prophets e.g. (Joshua 14:7; Amos 3:7; Zechariah 1:6)
The privilege of being God's people (Romans 9:3b)
5 Killing the Prophets (Matthew 23:30; Luke 11:48)
The patience of God (2 Peter 3:9; Exodus 34:6)
6 The beloved son (Mark 1:11) representing the Father (John 12:4)
7 Rejection of the son (John 1:12-16; John 19:1)
The decision to kill the son (Jn 5:18;11:53; Luke 19:47 cf Gen 37:20)
8 … we were God's enemies (Romans 5:10)
He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:11,12)
9 Giving the vineyard to others (Acts 13:46; Matt 21:43; Romans 11:15)
The implications being understood (Luke 20:16)
Killing the 'tenants' (Revelation 20:14,15)
10 In Ps 118:22,23 the 'stone the builders rejected' refers to Israel; when the NT quotes it, it refers to Jesus. (Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:4,7; (Romans 9:32,33; Ephesians 2:20)

The Bible Story

God and humanity have been separated by sin.

God's requirements – the Law – have been given but not met.

God's solution is about to happen with His Son, Jesus, as King.

LEARN (Workbook, p 57)

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *After they had refused to acknowledge Jesus' authority was from God, He taught in parables to veil His meaning, at that time.*

The detail underlines that God created / provided all things.
The tenants were Israel, the vineyard perhaps referred to the privilege of being God's people.

2 Amount of fruit unspecified (a tenth?)
Fruit not money, because owner and tenants were meant to be in partnership.
3 They beat him as they resent his rightful claim.
5 Perhaps he kept sending servants because he was patient.
6 The fact that he loved his son underlines a family relationship.
It highlights his value of the vineyard.
The Son was the authority, not simply a representative.
7 The issue may have been about ownership not merely possession.
9 Death was the just penalty for rebellion and murder.
10 Mixed metaphors: In Israel the 'capstone' was the Jews. In the NT it is Jesus.
The hearers / the Jews saw themselves as the rejected stone.
12 'They' are the Chief Priests and teachers of the Law.
They may have been afraid of the power of the crowd.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

They understood His claim to be the Son and that He knew they were going to kill Him.

It is a parable and is making one main point.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

To the religious leaders Jesus tells a parable which describes God's rightful expectation of 'fruit' (Godly living) from the people of Israel. In it He reveals that He is the Son sent by the Father and that He knows that they will reject Him. They understand its implications.

LISTEN (Workbook, p58)

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

To reject the authority of the Father in His Son Jesus, is to forfeit His gift to us of life.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? ***v 9***

What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.

3) How do you think it does this?

Having rejected the prophets, the Jews would kill God's own Son. Therefore, they would be rejected and the Kingdom given to others who woud believe iin the resurrected Jesus.

LIVE (Workbook, p59)

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

i. from the Key Verse **9**

God's judgment leads to death for those who reject His Son, Jesus

ii. from the rest of the passage

a) His nature and character?

1 God is the Creator of all that we have / are.

5 God is patient.

6 God loves / values His creation enough to send His Son.

b) His grace

4,5 He gives many chances to hear His Word.

c) Jesus / His salvation

9b It is through the death of Jesus that God's invitation to share in His 'vineyard' goes out to all mankind.

2) What should be done?

i. from the Key Verse **9**

i. the original hearers

Note: If the chosen people reject Jesus, the Father will reject them.

ii. by me, today

Beware of rejecting Jesus.

ii. from the rest of the passage

1 Listen when God speaks.

3 Avoid rejecting or resenting the rightful claim of God on my life. Beware: God's servants are persecuted.

6 Know God the Father loves Jesus as His Son – a family relationship.

8 Acknowledge my responsibility in the Son's death.

12 Note: Hearing the Word does not necessarily lead to obedience.

Study 6 Mark 12: 13-17

God awaits His right from us

Word List

13	*Pharisees*	A strict group of Jews who upheld the letter of the Law.
	Herodians	Not a distinct group; a term referring to collaborators who sided with non-Jew Herod and agreed to pay tax to Rome.
15	*Denarius*	A Roman coin, equivalent to the daily wage for a labourer. Previously translated 'penny'. (In UK money up to 1971, one penny was written: *'1d',* abbreviated from the Latin, denarius.) On the reverse was an image of the Roman Emperor, guaranteeing its authenticity and value.
		A poll tax that was levied from every person.

Bible connections

15	*Woe to hypocrites*	Matthew 23:23-29
16	*Caesar ordered a census. Once he knew the population of an area, he could calculate how much tax to charge each person in it to raise the revenue needed that year.*	Luke 2:1
17	*No king but Caesar*	John 19:15c
	Obeying the state	Romans 13:1,2
	Honour the Father and Son	John 5:23
	Spiritual worship	Romans 12:1

LOOK (Workbook, p61)

1) The Text

What questions does the text raise?

13 Who were 'they'?
Who were the Herodians and the Pharisees?
Why did they send them together?

14 What did calling Him 'teacher' imply?
Why the preamble about Him?
What is 'the truth'?
What were the 'taxes'?15 What was the trap?
Why did Jesus answer if He knew they were trying to trap Him?
Why did He not have any money on Him?

17 If the coin belongs to 'Caesar', what belongs to God'? (Does not the whole earth belong to God and all that is in it – Psalm 24:1?)
Who were 'they'?
Why were they amazed?

What surprises or confuses you?

13 The unholy alliance

17 They were silenced by His answer. Was there no other question to ask? e.g. <u>What</u> is to be given to God?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible might help you understand this passage?

The surrounding text

13 Jesus has come to Jerusalem & presented Himself as Messiah.(11:9,10)
The chief priest and teachers of the Law are trying to kill Jesus after He had cleared the temple. (11:15, 18)

15 They challenged the source of His authority. (11:33)
He reveals in a parable both His source of authority - His Father (12:6) – and that He knows they are out to kill Him. (12:8)

The Book

13 Pharisees and Herodians plot to kill Jesus. (Mark 3:6)

14 Tax collectors and sinners (2:14-16)

15 Hypocrites – act as if holy; but honour with lips not hearts. (7:6)
17 Amazed (2:12; 5:20, 6:2,6:51; 10:24,26; 11:18; 15:5)

The whole Bible

14 Jesus is 'the Way of God' and 'The Truth'. (John 14:6)
15 God knows our thoughts. (Psalm 94:11; 139:2)
17 God requires us to act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:3)
Given the words to say (Luke 12:11,12)
We are God's people – living sacrifices. (Romans 12:1)
They saw the child with His mother and they bowed down and worshipped Him. (Matthew 2:11)

d) The Bible story

God and humanity have been separated by sin.
God's requirement of the Law has been given but not met.
God's solution is about to happen as He sends His Son, Jesus.

LEARN (Workbook, p 62)

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

13 'They' were the chief priest, teachers of law, elders. (11:27)
Herodians were worldly collaborators; Pharisees were religious legalists.
They sent them together, hoping Jesus would side with one of them.
14 Did calling Him 'Teacher' mean He was obliged to give an answer?
The preamble was meant to close off the option of a vague answer.
'The truth' is the Word of God in the Law and prophets.
'Taxes' = money demanded by Rome.
15 The 'trap' was to unite one group of the people against Jesus.
He answered because He was confident.
He had no money on Him; Judas handled it.. (John 12:6).
17 Not our money but our soul belongs to God.
'They' were the Herodians and Pharisees.
They were amazed because He was irrefutable.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

13 *The leaders of both groups loved power and were threatened by Jesus; so both wanted rid of Him.*

17 *His authority was unquestionable (cf demons, wind, sickness) – they were <u>unable</u> to answer back.*

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

The religious authorities sent a carefully selected group to Jesus with a question about paying taxes, intended to force Him to side with either the religious conservatives or the collaborators. He avoids the trap and irrefutably challenges them to give God His due – to receive His Son.

LISTEN (Workbook, p 63)

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Temporal authorities must be obeyed and respected but only within the greater context of obeying and respecting God's Son, Jesus.

2) Which verse best sums up the passage's message? ***v 17***
Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

3) How do you think it does this?

It gives correct deference to the earthly authority (that covered the Herodians), under the greater authority of God (covered the Pharisees), without taking sides with either, or having to spell out where one authority stopped and the other one started.

LIVE (Workbook, p 64)

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

i. from the Key **Verse 17**

God expects us to submit to His supreme authority.

ii. from the rest of the passage

a) His nature and character?

13 God has authority over human beings, but they resent it.

17 God endorses the concept of human authority.

Face to face with Jesus, we find His Word is unanswerable.

God is amazing!

b) His grace

15 Jesus answered the insincere question.

17 God is willing to delegate His authority to sinful men.

c) Jesus / His salvation

14b The way of God (14b) was about to be revealed in Jesus by His death on the cross, resurrection and sending of His Spirit.

2) What should be done?

a. from the KV **17**

i. the original hearers

Obey the Roman laws while acknowledging your highest calling – the worship of God

ii. myself, today

Obey civil authorities but not beyond the point where they conflict with the expressed will of God.

b. from the rest of the passage

13 Never try to catch Jesus out!

15 Beware 'Sweet talkers' / Enemies of the Gospel who try to 'trap' you.

Realise God sees your heart.

16 Lay your questions before Jesus.

Note: Face to face with Jesus, we find His Word is unanswerable.

Be amazed at Jesus' wisdom.

Give God what He requires – yourself.

Bible Study Guides

Once you have grasped the Hearing the Word method, you will find you keep using it. When you have finished the six Follow On studies in this workbook, try Hearing the Word Study Guides for other books of the Bible. Their goal is to provide relevant information that puts today's readers in the position of the original readers or hearers, so allowing them to process the Word of God for themselves. As such, each provides:

a) Some help in reading this particular type of Bible literature.

b) Background information about the book and its author

c) Explanatory notes about contemporary customs and religious words whose meaning is not self-evident in the text.

d) Some basic references to relevant passages in the rest of the Bible.

e) A copy of the Hearing the Word model shown on pp xxiii, 31 and 66 above.

f) Encouragement to share your reading of the Word of God with others.

Studies cover seven different genres of Biblical material, as shown below.
For the list of Studies currently available, visit hearingtheword.org.uk

The following have been in print:

Law	Leviticus
Poetry	Psalms Vol I (Psalms 19, 22, 23, 42, 51, 122, 150) Vol II (Psalms 2, 37, 45, 83, 90, 95, 110, 115)
History	Joseph (Genesis 37 – 50), Exodus 1 – 13, Esther, Daniel 1 – 6, Matthew 1-2, Mark 10:46 –12:17 *see Follow On* p35-64 above LUKE in 13 parts, John: 'Seven Miraculous Signs'
Prophecy	Isaiah 1 – 39; Isaiah 40 – 66, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah
Letter	2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, James *Planned for 2026:* Romans
Vision	Daniel 7 – 12
Parable	*'Six Parables Jesus told', now* Parables in Luke, Parables in Matthew

The basic Studies come as Workbooks, offering short introductions to each study, but many also have Leader's Guides showing questions others have asked, linked to possible answers. (These are *to stimulate your group to ask their own questions*, ***not*** for a leader to read out.)
These may be alternated with Bible Studies Guides from other publishers to vary group interaction.

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