

Appendix i: Discovery Bible Study Purpose and Process

DBS

Introduction

Many people in the West (US and Europe) have heard of Christianity for much of their lives. They have heard various things about the faith whether from pastors or churches growing up, Christians in their lives, news media, higher education, and even unbelievers who claim to have knowledge of the faith. Much of what people have heard and seen of Christianity is misconstrued or hypocritical when compared to true faith. This leaves people far from God, not knowing the truth of what scripture says and not knowing who God truly is.

God is at work in those that are far from Him all over the world, as well as in our families, neighborhoods, workplaces and cities. Many who are far from God are open to exploring things of faith when it can be done in a safe, judgement free setting in which they can search out truth for themselves. The majority of these people will not respond to a simple invitation into a church building or small group which are often viewed as not a safe place to explore faith for a non believer..

The *Discovery Bible Study* is a tool that has been and is being used all over the world in missions to unreached people groups and is specifically designed for non believers and new believers to discover faith in a safe and pure way, directly through the scriptures. These studies are recently being done in the West and are beginning to produce significant fruit among the lost. DBS's are done in homes, workplaces, coffee shops, non-profits, county jails, prisons... etc. and usually consist of people without relationship with God outside of the facilitator. The facilitator's only task is to pray, ask questions and teach others how to do the study, the earlier the better. The Word of God and the Holy Spirit do the rest of the work. It has been found to be more fruitful the higher the percentage of non believers as opposed to believers in a study. Participation in this study has proven to produce maturing disciples who, from the beginning of their faith, are taught how to glean straight from the Word of God, directed by the Holy Spirit and obey the truth in their daily lives.

Turn over for a few helpful tips as you consider starting a DBS on your own.

Discovery Bible Study How To:

Who to start a study with:

- A person who shows openness to faith. Don't try to force someone to study the bible. Ask God to show you who he is already at work in.
- When a person is open to a DBS ask them, "who else do you think is curious about God and would want to do this with us." Let them bring in other non believers.
- Where would you like to do the DBS? Ask them where they'd like to meet. Preferably not at a place chosen by you, and definitely not your house.

Before the study:

- Lot's of prayer
- Selection of the series; for non believers, usually start with Discovering God
- Print off Worksheets for all participants including a few extra in case others join.
- Print off the 2Training Worksheets (1) for yourself (1) for the person you will train first.

Doing the Study:

- Be thankful to God for who is there, even if it's only one person.
- Explain the process at the beginning of each study in which there is a new person.
 - Hand out Worksheets
 - Explain: "As facilitator I'm just going to be asking questions, not giving answers. We are going to trust that the Bible has better answers than me." :)
- Get used to saying a few things a lot during the study
 - "Where do you see that in the passage"
 - "Let's stick with this passage"
 - "That's a great question, I promise we'll get to that as we work through the scripture over the next several weeks.
 - "Let's hear from somebody who hasn't shared yet."

A few things learned from experience:

- Remember, this study is for non believers to discover God through the scriptures, not for believers to preach or share the depths of their biblical knowledge
- The Bible/Holy Spirit is the only teacher in a DBS. The gift of teaching(1 Cor. 12) is important once a church is formed but can be a hindrance to discovery.

- No cross referencing other passages, we stick with one passage and glean all it has to say. For many learned believers this is a hard thing to put into practice but it produces greater understanding and depth of the passage at hand.
- Don't skip the last two questions, they are very important in learning obedience and in multiplication of groups.