

Youth Bible Study Summaries

Michael R. Daily, 9/3/2011

Purpose

The following pages contain summary descriptions of Bible studies developed for teens and pre-teens. These studies provide a Biblical basis for addressing some of the more common challenges teens and pre-teens face.

The studies were developed over a number of years and provided to mid-school and high-school AWANA groups that my own children were involved in. These lessons are intended for the serious Bible student who really wants to know what God says about some challenging issues and difficult topics. Although the studies are enjoyable and interesting, the primary intent is to prepare students for the intense challenges to their faith that Satan and the World System have planned for them in the near future.

The author's stance on the Bible is that it is the inerrant Word of God and, as such, it is to be taken as literally true unless the Bible itself makes it clear that it is using figurative or symbolic language.

The studies were originally documented to provide visibility and accountability in case a parent or pastor wanted to know what was being taught in a particular lesson. It is my hope that others can benefit from these studies as well.

These studies may be downloaded and/or forwarded to others as long as they are used for non-commercial, educational purposes and no fee is charged for them. They are available at the web site of Grace Community International (GCI), Houston, Texas: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Process

The approach used is to provide Biblical principles in combination with real-life stories, examples, and analogies to immerse the students in experiences, using their imaginations. The intent is to help them develop a sense of the look and feel for the situations they will be faced with and develop insight as to how different decision options can lead to outcomes, both good and bad, that they may not have considered.

To fulfill this intent, mid-school lessons are focused on the challenges they will face in the high school years and high school lessons are focused on the challenges they will face in college or in otherwise starting their adult lives. There is also one lesson for grade schoolers intended to address one of the challenges they will face in the mid-school years. Reference materials used by the author in researching and preparing these studies are cited in each individual study.

Payoff

By mentally working through these topics and issues before students actually face them, the hope is that they will be better prepared to recognize what is happening in future situations and to make better decisions in the "emotion of the moment" than they otherwise might.

Studies Appropriate for Grade Schoolers & Older

The Bible: Our Instruction Manual for Life

This study shows why the Bible can be trusted to be our "instruction manual for life". It addresses the primary challenge of the World system that science and modern knowledge are better than ancient Biblical wisdom. The approach used is to take the students through a story about them having appendicitis and needing surgery. No problem - except that their surgery is not taking place in the 21st century, it is taking place 200 years ago in the 1800's! By walking them through a brief history of surgery they begin to see that even the smartest, best educated, most well-intentioned experts were limited in what they knew and often got things wrong. The moral of the story: When the wisdom of the World's experts disagrees with the wisdom of a perfect God (as presented in the Bible), we will put our faith in the Bible and reject the World's wisdom.

Studies Appropriate for Mid-Schoolers & Older

Why Study the Bible? – Engineering Analysis of Noah's Ark

How would you like to have more insight than all your teachers? Psalm 119 says, “I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation”. This study demonstrates the truth of this verse by comparing Noah’s Ark to the development of the largest all wood ship in US history, the USS Wyoming - a schooner built in 1909. The engineering failure of the Wyoming stands in stark contrast to the ancient Ark, a ship whose dimensions have been found to be optimal for the ship’s mission, based on computer simulations. If the designer of the Wyoming had used the dimensions of the Ark as given in the Bible his ship would have been a success, he would have been considered an innovator, and people would have said that he had “more insight than all his teachers”.

How to Make Your Parents Happy

According to Ephesians 6, human fathers have a tendency to irritate, greatly annoy, and make their teenage children angry and resentful in the way they treat them. Bosses have a tendency to threaten. When this happens what are we supposed to do? This study will explore what the Bible has to say about the benefits we will receive from making our parents happy, what it means to honor and obey them, and why it is a bad strategy to wait for them to deserve to be honored and obeyed. Stories and analogies will be used to see if lessons from how adults deal with bosses can be applied by teens in dealing with their parents. Insight will be gained into how you can help your parents begin to view you as more of an adult and less of a child.

Walking with Wise Men

The Bible teaches that wisdom is extremely valuable in life. It can be acquired by trial & error, following Biblical principles, and by walking with wise men. This study explores how to go about “walking with wise men” and the challenges that must be overcome since most wise men will not be in your age group – they will usually be older. This study will discuss the three types of wise men, how to recognize them, what makes them different from you, and how you will need to act toward them if you want access to their wisdom. Stories and scenarios will be used to give the students a feel for what interacting with wise men will look and feel like and to gain insight into how wise men think. Examples of tangible benefits a teenager will receive by walking with wise men will also be presented.

Overview of Leadership for Teenagers

Colleges, businesses, and the US military all want to know if you have leadership skills before you join them. Why all the interest in “leadership skills”? Because research in this area has demonstrated that people who are leaders have, on average, 15 times more productive impact than people who are diligent and hardworking but who are not viewed as leaders. This study explores what leadership is, are leaders born or can they be made, and if you can make someone into a leader how exactly do you go about doing that? In addition the most common “fatal flaws” that can short-circuit your leadership potential will be discussed. This knowledge can be used by the student to focus their energies on those few things that will enhance their ability to be a leader (most can be worked on in the mid-school years) and protect them from Satan’s attempts to get them to settle for less than what God intends for them.

Overcoming Satan's Deceptions

This study starts by demonstrating how easy it is to deceive someone who has a casual knowledge of the Bible but does not search the details of the scriptures. The study continues with an overview of the capabilities of fallen angels to deceive and how knowing the Bible in detail is the only protection from this type of deception. Satan’s desire to try to get people to destroy themselves is discussed including the two primary “kill zones”: 1) deception during the teen years and 2) testing during the mid-life years.

The Gospel for Youth Ministries (The Bridge Challenge)

Ever wonder what its like to be the special speaker at a church event? If you are mid-school age or older its time to find out! This study presents a proven method for mid-schoolers (and older) to present the gospel to groups of kids as young as 5 years old. The study also covers how to tell if kids are making a genuine decision to receive Christ or not and some of the pitfalls to avoid in sharing the gospel with children, who are still under the authority of their parents.

Eternal Rewards – Compilation

You are a Christian. You're going to heaven when you die, no matter what. God loves you and nothing you could do for God would ever make him love you more than he already does. In fact there is no sin you could ever commit that he would not forgive and let you into heaven. Since all this is true it seems to me that the smart thing to do is to give in to temptation and go along with the crowd. That way you get to enjoy the things of this world and you still get God's love and heaven so you have not missed out on anything, right? Am I right? When Satan brings this challenge to you how will you answer? The truth is that if you give in to temptation you will be missing out on something – the eternal rewards God would have given you. This study explores the reward system God has set up to help us stay motivated when temptation comes our way. Examples of what the Judgment will be like for the Christian and for the non-Christian will be presented to clarify how "each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body...whether good or bad" (II Corinthians 5).

The New Jerusalem - An Engineering Feasibility Study

Satan works hard to get us to think that heaven is not all that great. What we call "heaven" the Bible describes as a city called "The New Jerusalem" and details are provided about what the city is like such as its shape, size, and some of the building materials used in its construction. Because God has provided us this information, we can do an engineering feasibility study on the claims of the New Jerusalem. An engineering feasibility study uses the information known about something new and unfamiliar and applies known laws of physics, historical records, and mathematics to get a feel for whether or not the claims of the new invention are reasonable or unreasonable. The New Jerusalem claims to be able to provide the experience of paradise for billions of people for all of eternity. Are these claims reasonable or unreasonable? You be the judge!

The Prime Directive

In the fictional universe of Star Trek, the Prime Directive, Starfleet's General Order #1, is the most prominent guiding principle of the United Federation of Planets. The Prime Directive dictates that there can be no interference with the development of pre-warp civilizations including efforts to improve the natural course of such a society, even if well-intentioned and kept secret. What about us Christians? What is the Prime Directive for us? Is it our happiness? Is it Evangelism? This study develops the case that the Prime Directive for Christians is the development of a Godly Faith and a Christlike Character and that one of God's primary tools for developing these in us is His use of human authority, both Christian and non-Christian.

Wholeheartedness

Matthew 22 says that the great and foremost commandment is to "...LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.....". This study looks at why this is a better way to live than the alternative - being lukewarm or mediocre. Satan wants us to think being mediocre is a good way to live. We seemingly get the "best of both worlds" with the least amount of effort, but its not true. This study will also explore how to tell if you are wholehearted or not and some practical ways you can get on the path to wholeheartedness if that is what you decide you want to do.

Purity Before Marriage (Sensuality Before Marriage)

We all know pre-marital sex is wrong. But what about kissing? What about touching? What does God say about these things? This study, intended for mid-schoolers or older, explores the Biblical principles that apply to this topic. Scenarios and stories are used to show the hidden dangers of the World's advice to "follow your heart" on issues of boy-girl relationships. God's ways, although not always popular, are shown to lead to long-term happiness while avoiding the downward spiral that can occur from a broken heart.

Should I Go to College?

God does not want everyone to go to college. However, a trend has emerged in the last few years where fewer men than women are now attending college. This disturbing trend indicates that men in particular are being deceived into foregoing a college education at a time when it has never been more important. This study helps provide a realistic picture of what life with and without a college degree will be like, by establishing the costs required to support oneself and comparing those to the average salaries of common professions. Insight into what employers think is important in a college degree and what is not (measured by how much they are willing to pay you) will be provided. Stories will be used to help the students get a feel for what college is like and what the transition from college graduate to employee is like. Biblical principles will be reviewed that can be used by students to guide their decision-making process.

What Is The Difference Between The Old & New Testaments?

At the time of Abraham, all the nations of the world believed in multiple gods. Instead of worship, people came up with elaborate rituals and sacrifices to try to manipulate their gods into doing things they wanted – a good harvest, victory in battle, etc. Israel's God was different. He told them what to do. He took miraculous actions on their behalf. Israel's job was to worship and obey Him. Into this Old Testament world God revealed Himself through His relationship with the nation of Israel. God also gave man the Law to show him he was incapable of meeting God's standards and therefore, needed a Savior. In the New Testament, God sent His Son to be our Savior, making eternal life possible for individuals. Although it is currently the "Time of the Gentiles", God has plans to use Israel once again as His witnesses to the world after the Church is raptured.

Will My Pet Be In Heaven?

"Will our pets be in heaven?" This study looks at this issue as well as the broader issue of, "are the things we love on Earth going to be in Heaven?" God mentions some things that will be in Heaven and some things that won't be but most of the things we love about life on the Earth are not mentioned either way. God does not say "yes" and He does not say "no". Why is that?

Why Did God Create Us If He Knew We Would Sin?

Because there was something very valuable that would result. Something more valuable than the extreme costs of sin. What is it? Its you! God's desire was to create a group of people that would spend eternity with Him. But these would not be just any people. These would be people who chose to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. People who would make this choice against the constant resistance of their own flesh, the oppression of a hostile world, and the attempted deceptions of the most powerful angelic being to ever exist. These would be people who would rather believe what God says than believe their own eyes. People who would sacrifice the treasures of the only world they had ever known for the treasures of an eternal world they had never seen. These would be people who had come through the refining furnace of testing and emerged a "mature man". In Ephesians 1 God calls these people "His inheritance". Although the cost of sin is extremely, unimaginably high, the value of sharing eternity with such a people was even higher in God's view.

Questions Asked By Mid-Schoolers, Parts 1, 2, & 3

This is a list of questions submitted anonymously by groups of mid-schoolers who regularly attend church and AWANA club. A short answer is given along with supporting scriptures.

Studies Appropriate for High Schoolers or Older

Money, Money, Money

God protected Israel from the dangers of poor money handling with the Year of Remission and the Jubilee Year. These protections made it in people's best interest to handle money properly and effectively short-circuited the negative effects of two types of business cycles that would otherwise occur. However, if you live in an economy that does not have these two protections (today that's everybody) then your money is going to be exposed to risks that you will need to manage. This study examines the assumptions that underlie most of the World's principles for managing money and how these assumptions become invalid during parts of these business cycles, exposing the uninformed to serious financial risks. God's principles for handling money are presented in contrast to the World's principles. Topics include inflation, tax deductions, investing, why free economic markets are unpredictable, what the purpose of money is and is not, diversification and preservation, loaning money, the risks of borrowing money and how to mitigate those risks, proper use of credit, the difference between credit and debt, credit cards, and what it means to be "able to afford" something.

The Dating Game

The Bible has virtually nothing directly to say about dating. Why? Because it is a cultural phenomenon that was non-existent until about 100 years ago! Nevertheless, God has much to say about marriage and singleness. This study explores the history of dating, where it came from, and the variety of reasons people date. In its modern form, dating can no longer be assumed to be about finding a marriage partner. As a result, dating carries a wider variety of risks today than at any other time in history. These risks will be discussed in detail so that students can make better decisions on what their purpose for dating is, who to date, when to date, and how to avoid the more common dangers. A question & answer section is also included.

Marriage Convictions (Introduction to Marriage for Teenagers)

Although the divorce rate in the United States is around 50%, your overall chances of having a happy, successful marriage are closer to 20% (1 out of 5) – with no statistical difference existing between Christians and non-Christians. Why so much failure? The dramatic differences between men and women mean that the actions needed for success in marriage are not obvious and don't happen naturally for the new husband or wife. These differences, and the corresponding actions required of the spouse, will be discussed as revealed from the Bible. Specific examples and scenarios will be reviewed to give the students a feel for the more challenging issues, decisions, and trade-offs they will be faced with in marriage so that they can be prepared.

Modesty in Dress for Teenage Women

This study explores why proper dress is important for teenage girls. The Bible teaches that the female body is intoxicating to boys. If a girl does not dress appropriately, some of this intoxicating power can be released in public. This study uses stories and analogies to demonstrate the effect this can have on boys, both godly and ungodly. Surprisingly, the negative effects for the girl are more serious, ultimately affecting her ability to find someone who will love her with all their heart.

Success At Work for Teenagers

It's the year 2030. You're sitting at your desk at Nano-Tunes International. As Director of New Product Development you have 25 people working for you. Your company has been in a life or death battle with McApple Corporation for domination of the teen electronics market. Winner takes all - the loser will close its doors and everyone will lose their jobs. You've just received your once a year money to give raises to your employees. Your task is to decide who you will fire, who you will keep but give no raise to, who you will give a small raise to, and who you will give a large raise to. Do well and you will keep productivity high, payroll costs low, and your company will stay in business. Do poorly and your best people will be lured away by McApple and you will be saddled with an unproductive but costly workforce - thus dooming your company to extinction. Your first step is to identify those characteristics that make a good employee. What are they? This study will use God's Word, scenarios, and examples to give insight into how to be successful at work.

What Good is Church?

2/3 of children who grow up in a Bible believing church will stop attending church as young adults. Half of these will eventually return to church when they have kids, the other half will not. This study explores some of the reasons why and how to address the issue.

Spiritual Gifts (If God Has A Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get A Copy?)

Have you ever heard someone say, "God has a plan for your life"? If that's true do you know what God's plan for you is? How are you going to figure out what the plan is? It's in your spiritual DNA. It's kind of like asking, where is the plan on how to construct my physical body? Well, it's in your DNA. The cells of your body each have a copy of the plan on how to construct YOU that was put there by God. Your job is to eat, sleep, exercise, and practice good hygiene (keep yourself clean) and the DNA will make sure the plan gets executed in combination with God's intervention in the circumstances of life that are outside your control. This study explores the major elements of your "spiritual DNA" which include your work capacity with people & tasks, your natural talents & aptitudes, your developed skills, your physical presentation, and your spiritual gifts. The spiritual equivalents of eating properly, sleeping, exercising, and practicing good hygiene will be studied since these are the things you must do for the plan to unfold properly.

Teens Teaching the Bible to Teen Audiences

Teaching the Bible is a solemn responsibility that God wants to use to make an eternal impact in people's lives. This study addresses some of the most common mistakes teens make when teaching the Bible in a group setting. The more common mistakes include: not taking the effort seriously because they don't think God will use it, not preparing diligently, not expecting and planning for Satanic opposition, not praying for God's guidance and power, sharing opinions that conflict with the scriptures, not using the scriptures, not being interested in what they are teaching, drawing attention to themselves instead of meeting the needs of the audience, not thinking through the most obvious objections and answering them from the scriptures, and failing to create an experience for the audience so that people will enjoy and remember what was taught. Examples from how Jesus taught will be used to clarify these points.

Why Isn't Life Like a Horror Movie?

This study addresses the following four questions, all of which are related to each other: How can a loving God allow suffering in the world? During the days of Noah, God sent a flood to destroy all mankind including innocent children and babies - how can a loving God do such a thing? Many times the Old Testament records that, in battle with other nations, Israel was specifically commanded by God to not only win the battle but to put to death every man, woman, child, and newborn baby and to leave no survivors - how can a loving God command his followers to do such a thing? The Bible teaches that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (Satan). If that is true then why isn't life on the Earth like a horror movie?

History of Israel and the Dragon (Satan)

Why is Israel, one of the tiniest nations on Earth (only 15 miles wide, border-to-sea, at its most populated part), in the news all the time? For some reason we think of the Israel of today as different from the nation the Bible talks about. We call them Israelites in the Bible and Israelis today. The truth is it is the same nation that God is still watching over and protecting miraculously, and Satan is still trying to destroy. God has allowed Satan to attack Israel for purposes of disciplining them for their disobedience but He has not allowed Israel to be destroyed. This study surveys the history of Israel from its beginnings to today with a focus on Satan's constant attempts to destroy the Jewish nation and God's miraculous deliverance time after time.

Indiana Jones and Revelation 12 – Is There A Link?

After the abomination of desolation (desecration of the Temple) occurs at the halfway point of the future seven year Tribulation, Israel flees to a place God has prepared for her in the wilderness. Where could a whole nation flee to in the wilderness and live for 3.5 years? Daniel 11 indicates it will be somewhere in the lands of ancient Edom, Moab, and Ammon. If we go out and look in this area to see if there is a place suitable for a nation to flee to, we find one place that appears to be appropriate. That place is an ancient city named Petra. Today, Petra is Jordan's most popular tourist attraction – you can visit it on your next vacation if you wish. We don't know for sure if Petra is the place referred to in Revelation 12, but it could be. The link to Indiana Jones: Petra was the film location of the last scenes of the movie, "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989).

Starlight and the God of the Universe (Starlight in a 6,000 Year Old Universe)

The Bible makes it clear that the universe was created in only 6 days, about 6,000 years ago. This study addresses the question, "If the universe is only 6,000 years old and was created in 6 days, how come we can see galaxies and stars that are 15 billion light-years away?" In other words the stars and galaxies are so far from us that it takes the light from them 15 billion years to reach Earth so that we can see them. The implication being that those objects were in existence 15 billion years ago so the universe must be a least 15 billion years old, if not older. This study will explain the Big Bang Theory (its not what you think it is), where it came from, and the faulty premise it is based on. The physics of Special and General Relativity will then be used to explain how a "White Hole" cosmology provides a more credible explanation of the beginning of the universe that is compatible with scientific observations as well as the Biblical account of Genesis 1.

Darwin Was Right!...and Wrong

Although Charles Darwin was not aware of DNA at the time, his basic concept of "Natural Selection" has been experimentally demonstrated many times over the last 150 years - so has Artificial Selection (Gregor Mendel's work). However, "Evolution" as it is commonly referred to, has not been proven or observed. This study sorts through the confusion caused by the mixing of observational science with philosophical assertions, the difficulty of the idea of "species", macro-evolution and micro-evolution, why random mutations cannot generate the vast amounts of new information needed for evolution to work, and why the Biblical account of the creation of animals, plants, and people can be trusted.

Aliens Among Us

During the presidential election campaign of 1976 future president Jimmy Carter spoke about his own UFO experience - "It was the darndest thing I've ever seen. It was big, it changed colors, and it was about the size of the moon. We watched it for 10 minutes, but none of us could figure out what it was. One thing's for sure, I'll never make fun of people who say they've seen unidentified flying objects in the sky.....I am convinced that UFOs exist because I've seen one". On September 2, 2009 ABC News reported that Japan's new first lady, Miyuki Hatoyama, claimed to have been abducted by aliens some years ago and flew on their spaceship to Venus and back. On November 10, 2009 the Associated Press reported that the Catholic Church's Vatican Observatory held a 5-day conference that gathered astronomers, physicists, biologists and other experts to discuss the budding field of astrobiology - the study of life's origins and the possibility of alien life existing elsewhere in the cosmos. Are UFOs real? Is there sentient life on other planets? Are aliens visiting the Earth? What does the Bible say about aliens & UFOs? Perhaps more than you think!

Christ Living In Me? I Don't Get It!

There is nothing you can do for God that He could have done much better Himself without you. Because God does not need us He is not focused on what we can do for Him, He is focused on having a relationship with us. But God wants to deepen the relationship with us by doing things together with us – by living life with us. The tasks are not the focus, they are a means to a deeper relationship. However, as important as the relationship with us is to God, its not so important that God would change who He is for it. There is no room for Him to compromise when it comes to having a relationship with us. Instead He comes to live in us to help us keep our part of the relationship going. Because Christ lives in me I can have a relationship with God that would otherwise be impossible! This study also explores how these truths played out in the lives of men in the Bible.

How To Avoid False Doctrine

Doctrine is the universal truths of the Bible that apply to all people, living at any time in the past, present, or future, living at any place on the Earth, in any culture. It is those parts of the Bible that sound like God is preaching a sermon to you when you read it. Historical narrative are those parts of the Bible that describe what happened to some guy at a particular place and time in history but its not universal truth. It is like watching God's TV show about someone else's life. This study helps students learn how to tell if a Bible passage is Doctrine or Historical Narrative by working through various passages of scripture. This is important because reading a doctrinal passage as if it was historical narrative, or vice versa, is a common source of false doctrine and confusion. The study also includes general rules of Bible interpretation and how to avoid the most common mistakes people make in understanding scripture. A one page summary sheet of Biblical Interpretation is also included.

Choosing To Say Yes To Married Sex, No To Sensuality

The world is talking about sex constantly and is selling a pathetic counterfeit to married sex. According to a 1994 research study conducted by the University of Chicago on sexuality in America, "...the public image of sex in America bears virtually no relationship to the truth. In real life, the unheralded, seldom discussed world of married sex is actually the one that satisfies people the most." This study found that, of all sexually active people, "the people who reported being the most physically pleased and emotionally satisfied were the married couples." The lowest rates of satisfaction were among single men and women – the very group thought to be having the hottest sex. In addition, married people are significantly more likely to say their sex life makes them feel "wanted, satisfied, loved, and cared for." This study reviews God's standards for purity and the reasons why married sex is so much better than unmarried or pre-marital sex. The study also provides specific physical guidelines for dating, a question & answer section, and an appendix on sexually transmitted diseases.

Youthful Experimentation & Addictions (available in 2011)

There is a force at work in your flesh that has the power to control you. A force more powerful than hormones. Its - your memory! Because our flesh has a memory, any experience that brings feelings of pleasure or relief from pain will be remembered by the flesh for a long time – perhaps a lifetime. If these pleasurable or pain-neutralizing experiences also happen to be destructive in nature, a serious problem can result. We can become enslaved to a destructive behavior. This is the essence of behavioral addictions & compulsions. This study discusses the process of how an addiction or a compulsion forms and how to prevent it from happening. The similarities and differences between behavioral and biological addiction will also be briefly discussed.

Same Sex Attraction & Homosexual Behavior (available in 2011)

In 1973 Dr. Robert Spitzer, a prominent psychiatrist, successfully spearheaded an effort to remove homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) list of mental disorders. He asserted that homosexuality could not be changed and therefore should not be treated by therapy. To the amazement of many, 28 years later (May 2001), Dr. Spitzer altered his stance and presented his findings at the annual meeting of the APA acknowledging that some homosexuals can make a substantial shift toward heterosexuality. Today, the public discussion surrounding same sex attraction and homosexual behavior is a confusing mix of moral, political, biological, behavioral, cultural, and psychological assertions – some supported by data, some by the Bible, and some only by ideology and political power. This study attempts to untangle the confusion from a Biblical perspective and to provide insight on the factors that can increase the probability of a person drifting toward same sex attraction and some things you can do to short-circuit this drift. Although this topic is very serious we will also have some fun. For example, this study also answers the question, "Did Jesus have long hair"?