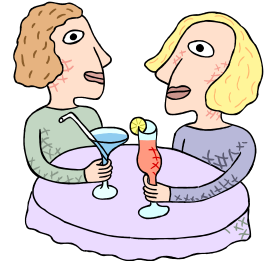


Conversational Bible Study:

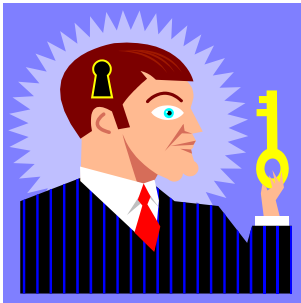
Introduction:

When was the last time you read a great book or saw an exciting movie? Did you get together with one of your friends afterwards to sit down and talk with them about it? This type of reflective conversation usually stirs even more excitement, enthusiasm about the book or film and probably helped you understand it better. Now ask yourself, when is the last time you had a conversation like this about the Bible? Unfortunately for some the answer may be never.



This Bible study format attempts to change this. Its goal is to read certain passages as individuals and then come together as a group to discuss it. There really is no structure or a certain format. Its goal is to have the group talk about the Bible passage in the same manner they would their favorite movie. What did they like? What didn't they understand? What surprised them? Wouldn't it stink to be that character? Below are some suggestions that may help you prepare for the group discussion.

Individual Preparation:



1) Choose a theme: Tracing a theme though the Bible encourages people to connect the Bible with the realities of daily life. Ask yourself: What am I struggling with? What is frustrating me? What do I like? What do I want to know more about? Themes can be linked to specific concerns such as work, home life, relationships, social concerns, or church. Themes can deal with wider concerns such as “dealing with fear”, “taking risks”, “being content”, “dealing with being single”, “contentment”, etc. You could also deal with religious themes such as “prayer”, “how God relates to me”, etc. It is important to choose a theme that is important to you. Choosing a theme that relates to one of your

practical concerns will make this exercise more helpful for you. Here is a list of theme examples:

Friendship
Trust
God's Character
Role of Women
Role of Men
Singleness
Parenting
Key Images (Bread, water, light)
Eating & drinking

Crafts in the Bible
Justice
Peace-making
God's use of dreams
God & Animals
Discipline
Decision-making
Mobility
Attitude to time
Mission

Forgiveness
Freedom
Music in the Bible
Worship
Love
Spending money
Patience

2) Read the Bible passage as a story (quickly). There is always a temptation, when reading the Bible, to try to squeeze out every



drop of meaning from each verse. This is not the goal of this study. It is important to read the Bible as a story and simply allow it to make its own impact on you. Try to put yourself in the passage. Imagine the setting, the people, etc.

3) Reread the Bible passage & think about your theme and other

questions: Reread your passage and look for thoughts or ideas that have to do with your theme. There may not be too many connections in this particular passage. If this is the case, try answering some of the following questions.



What are the emotions of the various characters (author of book, recipients, story characters, etc.)?

What parts did you not understand?

What surprised you?

What made you angry?

What confused you?

What encouraged you?

What challenged you?

What did you learn?

What is the point of the particular passage?

Where does it fit into the overall story that you've been reading?

What was the author trying to convey to the audience for which he wrote?

What does this say to us now, in our particular context?



4) Take notes about your thoughts: It is important to take notes to help you remember your thoughts about the passage. These will form a record of what you're learning, provide a handy summary to refresh your memory before going to the group discussion, and act as a prompt for while you're there. It may also be helpful to jot down some notes after the discussion if you want to remember what others shared.

Group Discussion:

1) Group Members must prepare: This Bible study method hinges on its participant being prepared for the discussion. They should come with their Bible, reference notes (study book, concordance, etc.), and notes.



2) Participants must engage in a conversation: The informality of this Bible study requires participants to share their frustrations, insights, concerns, etc.! Participants must engage in a conversation about this passage. It doesn't have to be a deep or theological conversation. Group member should try to talk about the passage in manner similar to a discussion about their favorite movie. Your thoughts are important! Share them!