

TEACH CONTENT

SHORT TERM GROUPS MODULE #5

COMPETENCY: Teach group members information relating to the topic of the short-term group. Our goal for teaching is to help people to not just learn for the sake of obtaining more information but to also apply Biblical teachings to our lives.

Opening Question: As a kid, who was your favorite teacher in school? What did they do and how did they teach that made them memorable?

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Read, *Colossians 1:9-10*, and answer questions

Assignment 2: Read, *The Danger of Teaching Information without Application*, and answer discussion questions.

Assignment 3: Think of a topic that you are knowledgeable in or a special skill/talent that you possess (it can be anything). Now imagine that you were going to teach a co-worker, family member, friend, or group member about that subject. Write a sample lesson plan, considering both information and application, showing how you would teach it. Be specific.

Assignment 2

The Danger of Teaching Information Without Application

<https://pastors.com/the-danger-of-teaching-information-without-application/>

I believe the number one problem with preaching in America is its lack of application. Too many pastors use an academic model in which they simply lecture their congregations. As a result, people often walk out of worship services with their lives unchanged.

The lack of application in preaching has led to half-empty, financially strapped churches around the country. Many of the moral issues that plague our society are consequences of this lack of personal application. We're teaching doctrine and knowledge without ever making the point of how it applies to the lives of people.

In the first 15 years of Saddleback, we had no building. In fact, we used 79 different buildings throughout those 15 years. We even worshiped in a tent for a few years. We would freeze in the winter, get soaked in the spring, burn up in the summer, and blow away in the fall. Despite those disruptions, our church kept growing. People will put up with a lot of adversity if God is changing their lives through the teaching and preaching.

Next Sunday, in churches all around the world, thousands of messages will be taught. Although preachers will speak a lot of words, far too many Christians will do little with what they hear. The result? Churches and society will continue to struggle because people aren't applying God's Word to their lives.

So why don't more pastors build applications into their sermons?

- **We assume people will make their own connections to the applications.** We think that if we teach people the Bible and interpret it for them, they can figure out the application. But they typically don't. It requires hard work to apply God's Word to our lives; most people won't even try.
- **We leave the application to the Holy Spirit.** Here's the problem with that kind of thinking: You're the Holy Spirit's tool for making this happen! He will speak through you, but you need to explain the application to people.
- **The application is too convicting and makes people feel uncomfortable.** We're afraid that if we preach the application of Scripture, people will say we're meddling and should mind our own business.
- **It takes more time and effort.** We spend so much time interpreting the Bible that we run out of time before we get to the application. It takes time to think about and process biblical application.
- **We're afraid to be labeled "simplistic."** You have to care more about God changing lives in your church than impressing other pastors or denominational leaders.

I don't care what the reasons are. It's dangerous—to you and your church—to preach information without application, and here's why.

Knowledge Without Application Produces Pride

The Bible says, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1 CSB). Some of the most carnal, cantankerous people I know are storehouses of Bible knowledge. They can quote the Bible frontward and backward, but they use it to hammer on people. They can explain any passage and defend any doctrine, but they're unloving.

The Bible says, “I may have the gift to speak what God has revealed, and I may understand all mysteries and have all knowledge. I may even have enough faith to move mountains. But if I don’t have love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2 GW).

Without application, Bible knowledge doesn’t help anyone. It just produces pride, which destroys all that it touches, just as Proverbs 16:18 teaches.

Knowledge Without Application Brings Judgment

James 4:17 says, “Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it” (NLT). Deeper knowledge brings deeper responsibility. Most people in our churches know a lot more of the Bible than they’re actually living out. Whenever we teach people the Bible and they don’t apply what they’ve learned, we’re increasing the judgment upon our church. That should scare us.

Pastor, you’re a bridge-builder. Every time you preach, you’re building a bridge between the timeless truth of God’s Word and the contemporary world. We preach the “faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3 NKJV). We don’t have the authority to change the message, but the application and delivery must change for every generation.

We should never forget that there are dramatic consequences for not teaching people how to apply God’s Word to their lives.

We need pastors who, like the men of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32, understand the times in which they live and challenge their congregations to live out the truth of the Bible.

Discussion Questions

1. The author of this article stated that he thinks a major problem in churches today is the academic approach to teaching without having any application taught.
2. Describe a time when you left church and felt totally unchanged (please omit pastor and church names).
3. What do you think contributed to that feeling?

Read: 1 Corinthians 8:1–3 (NIV)

We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. But whoever loves God is known by God.

5. The author goes on to say that knowledge without application produces pride.
6. Share a time when you encountered a person or heard a teaching that was filled with knowledge but lacked love.
7. What is one way we can ensure we are communicating love as we share content?

Assignment 3

Think of a topic that you are knowledgeable in or a special skill/talent that you possess (it can be anything). Now imagine that you were going to teach a co-worker, family member, friend, or group member about that subject. Write a sample lesson plan, considering both information and application, showing how you would teach it. Be specific.