

Miracles of Jesus

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Healing of physical and mental disorders				
Lepers	8:2-3	1:40-42	5:12-13	
Centurion's servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
Peter's mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:30-31	4:38-39	
Two Gadarenes	8:28-34	5:1-15	8:27-35	
Paralysed man	9:2-7	2:3-12	5:18-25	
Woman with a haemorrhage	9:20-22	5:25-29	8:43-48	
Two blind men	9:27-31			
Man dumb and possessed	9:32-33			
Man with a withered hand	12:10-13	3:1-5	6:6-10	
Man blind, dumb and possessed	12:22		11:14	
Canaanite woman's daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Boy with epilepsy	17:14-18	9:17-29	9:38-43	
Barthimaeus, and another blind man	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Deaf and dumb man		7:31-37		
Man possessed, synagogue		1:23-26	4:33-35	
Blind man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Woman bent double			13:11-13	
Man with dropsy			14:1-4	
Ten lepers			17:11-19	
Malchus' ear			22:50-51	
Official's son at Capernaum			4:46-54	
Sick man, Pool of Bethesda			5:1-9	
Man born blind			9	
Command over the forces of nature				
Calming of the storm	8:23-27	4:37-41	8:22-25	
Walking on the water	14:25	6:48-51	6:19-21	
5,000 people fed	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:5-13
4,000 people fed	15:32-38	8:1-9		
Coin in the fish's mouth	17:24-27			
Fig-tree withered	21:18-22	11:12-14		
Catch of fish		20:26	5:1-11	
Water turned into wine			2:1-11	
Another catch of fish			21:1-11	
Bringing the dead back to life				
Jairus' daughter	9:18-19,	5:22-24,	8:41-42,	
	22-25	38-42	49-56	
Widow's son at Nain			7:11-15	
Lazarus			11:1-44	

Parables of Jesus

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Lamp under a bushel	5:14-15	4:21-22	8:16: 11:33
Houses on rock and on sand	7:24-27		6:47-49
New cloth on an old garment	9:16	2:21	5:26
New wine in old wineskins	9:17	2:22	5:37-38
Sower and soils	13:3-9	4:3-8	8:5-8
Mustard seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19
Tares	13:24-30		
Leaven (yeast)	13:33		13:20-21
Hidden treasure	13:44		
Pearl of great value	13:45-46		
Drag-net	13:47-48		
Lost sheep	18:12-13		15:4-6
Two debtors (unforgiving servant)	18:23-34		
Workers in the vineyard	20:1-16		
Two sons	21:28-31		
Wicked tenants	21:33-41	12:1-9	20:9-16
Invitation to the wedding-feast: man without a wedding-garment	22:2-14		
Fig-tree as herald of summer	24:32-33	13:28-29	21:29-32
Ten bridesmaids	25:1-13		
Talents (Matthew); Pounds (Luke)	25:14-30		19:12-27
Sheep and goats	25:31-36		
Seedtime to harvest		4:26-29	
Creditor and the debtors			7:41-43
Good Samaritan			10:30-37
Friend in need			11:5-8
Rich fool			12:16-21
Almsgiving			12:35-40
Faithful steward			12:42-48
Fig-tree without figs			13:6-9
Places of honour at the wedding-feast			14:7-14
Great banquet and the reluctant guests			14:16-24
Counting the cost			14:28-33
Lost coin			15:8-10
The prodigal son			15:11-32
Dishonest steward			16:1-8
Rich man and Lazarus			16:19-31
The master and his servant			17:7-10
The persistent widow and the unrighteous judge			18:2-5
The Pharisee and the tax collector			18:10-14

October 18, 2007

Willow Creek Repents?

Why the most influential church in America now says "We made a mistake."

Few would disagree that Willow Creek Community Church has been one of the most influential churches in America over the last thirty years. Willow, through its association, has promoted a vision of church that is big, programmatic, and comprehensive. This vision has been heavily influenced by the methods of secular business. James Twitchell, in his new book *Shopping for God*, reports that outside Bill Hybels' office hangs a poster that says: "What is our business? Who is our customer? What does the customer consider value?" Directly or indirectly, this philosophy of ministry—church should be a big box with programs for people at every level of spiritual maturity to consume and engage—has impacted every evangelical church in the country.

So what happens when leaders of Willow Creek stand up and say, "We made a mistake"?

Not long ago Willow released its findings from a multiple year qualitative study of its ministry. Basically, they wanted to know what programs and activities of the church were actually helping people mature spiritually and which were not. The results were published in a book, *Reveal: Where Are You?*, co-authored by Greg Hawkins, executive pastor of Willow Creek. Hybels called the findings "earth shaking," "ground breaking," and "mind blowing."

If you'd like to get a synopsis of the research you can watch a video with Greg Hawkins [here](#). And Bill Hybels' reactions, recorded at last summer's Leadership Summit, can be seen [here](#). Both videos are worth watching in their entirety, but below are few highlights.

In the Hawkins' video he says, "Participation is a big deal. We believe the more people participating in these sets of activities, with higher levels of frequency, it will produce disciples of Christ." This has been Willow's philosophy of ministry in a nutshell. The church creates programs/activities. People participate in these activities. The outcome is spiritual maturity. In a moment of stinging honesty Hawkins says, "How it might sound crazy but that's how we do it in churches. We measure levels of participation."

Having put all of their eggs into the program-driven church basket you can understand their shock when the research revealed that "Increasing levels of participation in these sets of activities does NOT predict whether someone's becoming more of a disciple of Christ. It does NOT predict whether they love God more or they love people more."

Speaking at the Leadership Summit, Hybels summarized the findings this way:

Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn't helping people that much. Other things that we didn't put that much money into and didn't put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for.

Having spent thirty years creating and promoting a multi-million dollar organization driven by programs and measuring participation, and convincing other church leaders to do the same, you can see why Hybels called this research "the wake up call" of his adult life.

Hybels confesses:

We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become 'self feeders.' We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their bible between service, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own.

In other words, spiritual growth doesn't happen best by becoming dependent on elaborate church programs but through the age old spiritual practices of prayer, bible reading, and relationships. And, ironically, these basic disciplines do not require multi-million dollar facilities and hundreds of staff to manage.

Does this mark the end of Willow's thirty years of influence over the American church? Not according to Hawkins:

Our dream is that we fundamentally change the way we do church. That we take out a clean sheet of paper and we rethink all of our old assumptions. Replace it with new insights. Insights that are informed by research and rooted in Scripture. Our dream is really to discover what God is doing and how he's asking us to transform this planet.

How Students Learn

Since all sensory input is organized by the person receiving the stimuli, it cannot always be directly transferred from the teacher to the student. This means that a teacher cannot "pour" information into a student's brain and always expect them to process it and apply it correctly later. For example, think of a time when you were taught something in a lecture-type class. Then contrast that against a time when you had to prepare to teach someone else something. You will probably agree that you learned the material better when you were preparing to teach the material. This is because you constructed the knowledge for yourself.

Below is a list of different methods of learning. The percentages listed represent the average amount of information that is retained through that particular learning method. Note what method produces the highest retention rate.

1. Lecture = 5%

2. Reading = 10%

3. Audiovisual = 20%

4. Demonstration = 30%

5. Discussion Group = 50%

6. Practice by doing = 75%

7. Teach others / immediate use of learning = 90%

Here are some great sites for Bible research:

www.blueletterbible.org – very user friendly and helpful [this is especially helpful for looking up the Greek and Hebrew]

www.enduringword.com

www.studylight.org – a Calvary Chapel Pastor

www.biblos.com [a great place to see parallel translations with multiple commentaries on each verse directly below]

<http://www.dannychesnut.com/Bible/WilliamBarclay.htm> = William Barclay. Barclay is a bit unconventional in some of his theology, but his background in New Testament studies is unparalleled.

<http://preceptaustin.org> – this is a HUGE resource!!!

A great commentary is John Gill. I believe he is included in some of those above - but he gives great detail

For Jewish background, I would strongly recommend two books:

First, the writings of Josephus - the antiquities of the Jews and the wars of the Jews. These are typically found in the same single book.

The second is Everyman's Talmud by Abraham Cohen [Schocken Press] I think you would especially appreciate the chapter on jurisprudence!! You will find this extremely helpful and interesting as you provide detail to both Old Testament and New Testament teachings.

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3 Keys to Creating Lessons That Help Kids Grow Spiritually

By
Dale Hudson

1. Anchored to the Word.

The Word is what causes kids' faith to grow. [1 Peter 2:2](#) says, "Long for the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation."

The foundation of any lesson must be God's Word...not a value...not an object lesson...not a cute theme. These can all be used to illustrate God's Word but should not be the starting point.

Our lessons must be filled with the seed of God's Word. When planted in the hearts of kid, it will result in spiritual growth.

2. Application of the Word

Once the Word is planted in the hearts of kids, it must be applied to their life.

Information without application results in lack of transformation. Obedience should always be the bottom line of the lesson. Filling kids' head with knowledge without showing them how to apply it will short-circuit their faith.

[James 1:22](#) says, "But don't just listen to God's Word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves."

If we don't challenge kids to live out what they hear, we are causing them to be hearers-only. Hearers-only are like a person that looks in the mirror and sees they need to comb their hair, but quickly moves on without taking time to fix their appearance.

Spend as much time teaching kids how to apply the truth as you do teaching them the facts of the truth. How can they live this out at school? How can they live this out in their neighborhood? How can they live this out on their sports team? How can they live this out at home?

3. Accountability to the Word

[Psalm 1](#) tells us, "Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers."

To help kids bear the kind of fruit we see in [Psalm 1](#), we must hold them accountable to what we've ask them to apply. Accountability will help kids develop spiritual growth habits that over time will shift to intrinsic spiritual disciplines.

Let's tie all three of these keys together in a practical example:

Anchored in the Word (start with a Bible passage):

Please forgive your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly. So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive our sin. When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. "Look, we are your slaves!" they said. But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children." So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them. –

[Genesis 50](#)

Explain the story of Joseph's brothers harming him. He had to decide if he would obey God and forgive them or get revenge. Joseph made the choice to forgive them.

Application of the Word:

God wants us to forgive people when they hurt us. Who do you need to forgive? Will you forgive the person at school who tripped you? Will you forgive your brother or sister who got you in trouble? Will you forgive the kid on your team who called you a name? If someone hurts you this week, will you forgive them?

Accountability of the Word:

The next week, take time at the beginning of the lesson to ask kids if they forgave anyone. Have them share about it with their leader or with you.

These three keys will activate kids' faith and move them forward spiritually.

How to handle conversation hogs and rabbit chasers

by Mike Hurt

Group meeting time is here. With your group plan in hand, your goal as a leader will be to engage everyone in the study. Some people in the group will need you to draw them out; others will need you to remind them that others in the group have things to say, too. What can you do to balance each of these extremes? Give the person who doesn't talk time. Odds are they are figuring out if they can trust the group before they engage in the conversation. You may want to talk to them outside of group time and ask them how you can help them join the conversation safely. Get their permission to ask them direct questions during your group time. With these boundaries established, odds are even the shyest person will engage in the discussion.

Then there is the person who talks too much. Don't be afraid to directly confront this in the group by gently cutting them off saying something like, "Thanks for sharing Mike. Does someone else have something to share?" Don't wait for them to stop. It will kill the group. No one wants to be a part of a group where one person dominates the conversation. If the pattern continues, you will need to talk to them one-on-one. Let them know that they are dominating the group time and that you need their help to engage the rest of the group.

Sometimes you will need to redirect the whole group not just one member. This happens when the group begins to chase rabbits that pull you away from the focus of the discussion. Be sensitive to this, because God may be redesigning the time before your eyes. A good rule of thumb? Allow them to chase rabbits that lead you to a place where people are talking about God's activity in their lives or places where people feel challenged by God to take new steps of faith. If your rabbit trails lead you to places other than this, you need to call the group back to the focus of the study.

Others May, You Cannot – G.D. Watson

If God has called you to be really like Jesus, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put upon you such demands of obedience, that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by other Christians, and in many ways He will seem to let other good people do things which He will not let you do.

Other Christians and ministers who seem very religious and useful, may push themselves, pull wires, and work schemes to carry out their plans, but you cannot do it; and if you attempt it, you will meet with such failure and rebuke from the Lord as to make you sorely penitent.

Others may boast of themselves, of their work, of their success, of their writings, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing, and if you begin it, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

Others may be allowed to succeed in making money, or may have a legacy left to them, but it is likely God will keep you poor, because He wants you to have something far better than gold, namely, a helpless dependence on Him, that He may have the privilege of supplying your needs day by day out of an unseen treasury.

The Lord may let others be honored and put forward, and keep you hidden in obscurity, because He wants you to produce some choice, fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be produced in the shade. He may let others be great, but keep you small. He may let others do a work for Him and get the credit for it, but He will make you work and toil on without knowing how much you are doing; and then to make your work still more precious, He may let others get the credit for the work which you have done, and thus make your reward ten times greater than Jesus comes.

The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch over you, with a jealous love, and will rebuke you for little words and feelings, or for wasting your time, which other Christians never seem distressed over. So make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign, and has a right to do as He pleases with His own. He may not explain to you a thousand things which puzzle your reason in His dealings with you, but if you absolutely sell yourself to be His love slave, He will wrap you up in a jealous love, and bestow upon you many blessings which come only to those who are in the inner circle.

Settle it forever, then, that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit, and that He is to have the privilege of tying your tongue, or chaining your hand, or closing your eyes, in ways that He does not seem to use with others. Now when you are so possessed with the loving God that you are, in your secret heart, pleased and delighted over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, you will have found the vestibule of Heaven.

Subject: Thought you would like this from Kevin DeYoung

Permit me a brief word about a disconcerting trend I see in young, and sometimes very popular, preachers. I mention this concern knowing full well my own temptation to it. Let me pose the problem as a question:

Preacher, are you at your best when you are closest to the text?

Too many preachers are at their best when they are telling a personal anecdote or ripping into some sacred cow or riffing on in a humorous fashion. There is a time for all of that, but we ought to beware if those times are when we are at our best. We can be orthodox preachers of good, gospel truths and still tickle people's ears. If we're not careful, we'll train the large conference audience and our local congregation that the time to really pay attention is when we start drifting not when we start digging.

"Got it. Understood. Text means this, not that. Sound good. Now get back to that funny, over the top, in your face thing you do."

I've done that thing; probably will again. If the rant is honest and true, the Lord can use it. But, again, I repeat myself, it must not be the best we have. The congregation should be most aflame with gospel zeal when they are beholding new things in the chapters and verses at the end of their noses. God uses all of the preacher—personality, humor, gestures—all of us. But the indelible impression left on our people must be a sense of the presence of God arising from careful attention to the word of God. If the best stuff we have every Sunday is disconnected from our hard won exegetical work, our people will learn to trust us and not the Book. They will look forward to our new antics, not our new discoveries in the text.

Ask yourself this Saturday: "Can I make my best point—the one I'm most excited about, the one I can't wait to deliver—without noting anything from this week's passage?" Everything you want to say isn't everything you should say. We must be constrained by what we can sincerely say from these verses. If we want fresh power from the pulpit let us labor to demonstrate that our most passionate appeals come from the most precise exposition.

The best preacher is the preacher who is at his best when he is closest to the text.

7 Principles of Biblical Interpretation

By Wayne McDill

The word interpret can be used to mean “to understand,” “to translate,” or “to explain.” These three functions of the interpretive process are also appropriate for preaching. First we seek to understand what the text is saying. Then we translate that information into the intended theological message. Finally we explain that message to the congregation.

The interpreter needs to have a working knowledge of basic principles of interpretation. These hermeneutical principles are like the tricks of the trade for an interpreter. They guide us in our examination of the text so that our work is kept within the bounds of legitimate hermeneutics. The assumption behind these principles is that, properly handled, the text will disclose its meaning to the interpreter.

Interpreting the Bible—hermeneutics—is the science and art of understanding, translating, and explaining the meaning of the Scripture text. To guide this process the preacher can follow basic principles that help the interpreter discern the intended meaning of the text writer rather than imposing his own ideas on the text. Here are seven principles I would recommend.

1. Identify the kind of literature your text is for insight into its meaning.

Bible scholars call this the genre of the text. That means the general form the text takes—narrative, prophecy, poetry, history, gospel, epistle. The various kinds of literature present their message in differing styles and with different structure. Narrative texts do not operate the same way epistles do in getting their message across to the reader.

The variety in literary forms can become a complicated study. Bible scholars go beyond the basic forms I mentioned here to subforms with subtle differences the ordinary reader might not notice. Often they disagree with one another about these subtleties. In spite of these technical distinctions, the preacher can still recognize the text’s form and how it affects the meaning.

2. Consider the context of the passage for a better understanding of its meaning.

This is often considered the first and most important principle for accurate interpretation. Bible scholars use the term context to discuss various aspects of the original writing of the text—historical, social, political, religious, literary. It is this literary concern I have in mind as the context of the passage.

The writer follows a logical line of thought in what he writes. What he said in the previous verses or chapters and what he said in the ones that follow will help make the text in question clear. Taking the text out of that context risks misinterpreting it. Often clues in the surrounding verses will open aspects of the meaning in your text you would have otherwise missed.

3. Read the text for its plain and obvious meaning.

A common and persistent myth about the Bible is that its real meaning is hidden behind the surface message. Even though the Bible uses symbolic or figurative language, most of it is clear to the reader. Even when you do not know about the people, places, and events in question, you can grasp the point of the text.

The use of figurative language in Scripture only enhances the plain meaning of the text. “Why do you complain about the splinter in your brother’s eye when you have a plank in your own eye?” Jesus said (Matt. 7:3 NIV). Even though this is figurative language, we have no trouble understanding what he meant. His use of the metaphors makes it even clearer.

4. Try to discern the writer's intentions when he wrote the text.

This principle of intentionality is critical for the expository preacher. You study the text not to find a sermon in it but to discover the writer's intended message. Unless you can learn the intended meaning of the text writer, you will not be able to preach the message of the text in your sermon. Remember, "The text cannot mean what it never meant."⁴ Discovering the writer's original meaning is your first task as you prepare to preach to your own generation.

The intended meaning of the text writer will also be the intended meaning of the Holy Spirit who inspired him to write. As you read his words, you are dealing with a revelation from God. Remember, "All scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16 NIV). The same Holy Spirit who inspired these words in the first place wants this message to be preached again through your sermon. And you want to preach in a way that is in line with the Spirit's purposes.

5. Look carefully at the language of the text for what it reveals about its meaning.

Words carry thoughts. The words of the text are all we have of the writer's thoughts. If he hadn't written it down, we wouldn't know what he was thinking. So we can look closely at his words, examining each one carefully for the part it plays in his message. Also look at how the words and phrases connect with one another and how the sentences are constructed.

If you can study the text in the original language, you can gain greater insight into the meaning. Many preachers study Greek and Hebrew for that reason. But even if you cannot read your texts in those languages, you can still use lexicons and word study books to guide you. Though your congregation is probably not interested in the Hebrew and Greek, your study will open insights that will make the message clearer to them. You can do this without going into detail about tenses and forms in the original languages.

6. Notice the various theological themes in the text.

Though a text has one intended meaning, it can have a number of significant theological themes. It can also have a number of different applications. When you do the structural diagram and your observations, you will list these themes and what the text says about them. Identifying these themes and understanding how they relate to one another in your text is a most helpful key to grasping its meaning.

These same theological themes will show up in different combinations in various texts throughout the Bible. In your preaching text you will try to discover the best wording for the writer's subject and the modifier that limits and focuses it. You will also look through the text for the predicates, the various things the writer is saying about his subject. The theological themes in the text will give you what you need for these tasks.

7. Always take a God-centered perspective for interpreting your text.

This means looking at the text in terms of what it reveals about God and his dealings with his creation, particularly man. This is theological interpretation. It arises from the assumption that the Bible is really God's means of making himself known to us. What it says about him will always be central to every text.

The Bible was not given by God to tell us about ancient religious people and how we should all try to be like them. It was given to tell us about the faithful God whom they either served or denied. Their response is not the central message; God's will and his involvement with his creation are. Even texts that give instructions as to how we should behave reveal something about God.