

## CULTIVATE

Teaching in the Local Church:

# Creating a Culture of Teaching Bible Studies

By Tom Trimble

## Session Focus

Many churches believe in Bible studies. Fewer churches actually build a culture of Bible studies.

A **culture** is not formed by occasional emphasis. It is formed by what is repeated, modeled, celebrated, expected, and reproduced over time.

**BIG IDEA:** A Bible-study culture is built when leaders make disciple-making *visible, relational, repeatable, and celebrated* until it feels normal in the life of the church.

## The Uber Driver Story

The session opened with a simple story from an Uber ride. That story set the tone for the entire lesson: ministry opportunities often begin in ordinary moments, not dramatic ones. Many people are more open than we assume, and a simple spiritual conversation can become the doorway to something much deeper.

The lesson of Louis's story is clear: do not wait for a perfect moment, a perfect script, or a perfect setting. Be aware, be warm, and be willing.

I have attached the entire story of Louis and Mary and the Uber ride in an additional essay entitled "Tuesday or Thursday."

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## 1. Believing in Bible Studies Is Not the Same as Building a Culture

Many churches sincerely believe in Bible studies, but belief alone does not create a culture.

Culture is “That which goes without saying” (Tom Trimble).

A church can say, “We believe in Bible studies,” but if Bible studies are rarely mentioned, rarely modeled, and rarely celebrated, they are not yet part of the real culture.

**“Stated values do not build culture by themselves. Repeated practices do.”**

A culture is built by what becomes normal. It is formed by repetition, not aspiration alone.

**Reflection:** Is disciple-making a real practice in our church, or mainly a stated value?

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## 2. What a Bible Study Culture Looks Like

A Bible-study culture is more than having curriculum. It is more than encouraging saints to witness. It is when a church begins to think:

1. It goes without saying that we teach Bible studies.
2. It goes without saying that we look for spiritually hungry people.
3. It goes without saying that this is part of normal Christian life.

This is the difference between a program and a culture. Programs require repeated announcements. Culture becomes part of the shared language and expectation of the church.

**“Culture is what we repeatedly do, what we repeatedly praise, and what we repeatedly expect.”**

When Bible studies live only in leadership burden, they remain a program. When they live in the language of the church, they begin to become culture.

**Reflection:** What do we talk about so often that people assume it must matter here?

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## 3. We Shape Culture by What We Emphasize

People in a church learn what matters by watching what leadership repeatedly pays attention to.

If leaders consistently emphasize services, events, attendance, and platform ministry, but rarely mention personal Bible studies, the congregation receives that message.

But if leaders pray about Bible studies, ask about Bible studies, tell Bible-study stories, and celebrate those who step out in faith, the church begins to understand: this matters here.

**“Whatever leadership repeatedly pays attention to becomes part of the culture.”**

This is why visible examples matter. When pastors, leaders, staff, and respected saints visibly engage in Bible-study ministry, the atmosphere begins to change.

**Reflection:** What are we teaching our church to value by what we repeatedly notice?

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## 4. Relationship Over Information

Bible studies are not merely about transferring information. They are about building relationships.

People are usually disciplined at the speed of relationship, not merely at the speed of information. Truth matters deeply, but truth is often best received in the context of trust.

Many people will not remember every outline point, but they will remember whether they felt loved, respected, and seen.

(“How to Know a Person” by David Brooks was mentioned. And the quote, “The purest form of love is to pay attention.”)

The session emphasized what might be called a second layer of love:

1. Warmth
2. Prayer
3. Consistency
4. Follow-up
5. Remembering details
6. Showing up again

**“Truth is best received in the context of trust.”**

**“People do not want to be a project.”**

**Reflection:** Do people feel genuine care from us, or do they feel like a project?

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## 5. Remove Fear and Friction

1. Ministry often begins in ordinary places.
2. God is already working before we arrive.
3. Follow-up matters.
4. One connection can affect an entire family.
5. A simple invitation can open a life-changing door.

One of the most practical lines from the session was intentionally simple:

### **“Is Tuesday or Thursday better?”**

That line matters because it removes vagueness and makes action easy. Many people never begin because they overcomplicate the ask.

A practical invitation is often stronger than a perfect one.

**Reflection:** Am I waiting for the perfect moment when I should begin with a simple invitation?

Many people do not resist Bible studies because they are opposed to evangelism. They resist because they feel intimidated.

Common fears include:

1. Fear of questions
2. Fear of not knowing enough
3. Fear of awkwardness
4. Fear of rejection
5. Fear of failure

This means leadership must do more than cast vision. Leadership must lower anxiety and increase clarity.

That happens when churches:

1. Make materials easy to obtain
2. Make the process simple
3. Model the process publicly
4. Teach people that they do not need every answer before they begin
5. Provide a clear next step when someone is stirred to act

**“Vision without access frustrates people. Burden without tools often dies.”**

If someone says, “I want to teach a Bible study,” the church should not hand them a maze. The church should put the material in their hands and show them the next step.

**Reflection:** Are we making reaching others easier?

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## **6. Celebrate and Mentor**

Culture is reinforced by what gets rewarded, highlighted, and celebrated.

If Bible studies only happen quietly in private corners, they may bless individuals, but they will not shape congregational imagination.

What happens publicly helps normalize what happens personally.

The session highlighted the value of visible demonstration and testimony. A simple living-room setup on a platform can make Bible study feel possible. Testimonies do more than inspire; they teach the room what matters.

**“What gets celebrated gets repeated.”**

**“Stories do not merely inspire culture; they transmit it.”**

Things worth celebrating include:

1. Invitations extended
2. First Bible studies taught
3. Consistent follow-up
4. Spiritual hunger
5. Holy Ghost infillings
6. Baptisms
7. Quiet steps of obedience

**Reflection:** What are we celebrating publicly, and what culture is that building?

**A Bible-study culture is built when a church stops treating disciple-making as a department and starts treating it as part of its identity.**

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## **Summary: Building a Culture of Teaching Bible Studies**

A culture of Bible studies is built over time through repeated emphasis, visible modeling, loving follow-up, accessible tools, and public celebration.

The central ideas of the session can be summarized this way:

1. Belief in Bible studies is not the same as building a culture.
2. Culture is formed by repetition, praise, and expectation.
3. Leaders shape culture by what they consistently emphasize.
4. Bible studies are relational, not merely informational.
5. Simple invitations often open significant doors.
6. Fear and friction must be intentionally reduced.
7. Celebration makes obedience visible and repeatable.
8. Real culture multiplies when learners become leaders.

## **Final Charge**

Creating a culture of teaching Bible studies does not begin with complexity. It begins with clarity, consistency, and conviction.

Talk about Bible studies often.  
Make starting simple.  
Celebrate participation visibly.

Follow up with genuine love.  
Mentor people until disciple-making becomes normal.

That is how a church moves from admiring Bible studies to embodying them every day.