

TUESDAY or THURSDAY?: The Value of Personal Bible Studies

by Tom Trimble

In the dark, quiet pre-dawn hours of a Tuesday morning in early August, I pulled into the church parking lot and opened Uber on my smartphone. I was surprised to find a ride so fast at 4:30 in the morning, but in minutes, a black full-size SUV pulled into the parking lot. A kind gentleman in his sixties got out of the driver's side wearing a sand-colored straw fedora, loaded my luggage into the back, and invited me to sit in the front. As we slowly pulled out of the parking lot and headed toward the interstate, I commented on his hat. The distance was short, and we would reach Lambert Field in about ten minutes. "I notice you're playing Christian music," I said. He hesitated, and said, "Yes...I don't normally, but I've been going through some things." "Tell me about it," I replied. "Well, I've been diagnosed with cancer, and I have surgery scheduled for Friday." I turned in my seat, looked him in the eye, and said, "Louis, this is no accident. The Lord sent me to pray with you today. My son is battling cancer, and I feel God sent me to encourage you." We clasped hands while he kept his eyes on the highway, and we prayed. God's Spirit came into the cab of that SUV during that early morning drive. We exchanged numbers when we arrived at the airport a few minutes later, and I told Louis I would be at the hospital the day I returned to St. Louis.

On Saturday, at the hospital, I asked if we could go to lunch when he felt better, and he said he would love that. At that lunch, somewhere between the salad and the sandwich, I suggested Louis and I do a Bible study together. I asked him, "Is Tuesday or Thursday better for you?" "I think Tuesday will work," he answered, and we set a time. After a few Bible studies, I invited Louis to Power Weekend at our church, and the second service he attended, he was marvelously filled with the Holy Ghost. Shortly after, Louis was baptized in the matchless name of Jesus and came up smiling from ear to ear.

Louis's wife, Mary, had been living in Colorado for a while, but she returned after Louis had been baptized and filled. On a Wednesday night during the worship Mary was surprised when she could no longer pray in English because she was speaking in tongues, and she was baptized a few services later.

A brother in the church jokes with me that I need to sell my car because three Uber drivers have come in through Bible studies. Nothing is more exhilarating than feeling God flow into an emerging situation and touch someone we may never have another opportunity to speak to again. If Jesus were here, He would reach out to his Uber driver. He would teach others the Word of God as He did in the gospels. Lord, let this be the culture of our church.

The Bible study "Into His Marvelous Light" has been valuable and effective. When we finish this, we will go into a more extended Bible study and continue building relationships. I met a former prizefighter at a car wash and asked him how to work the vacuum hose, which

was different from the others I had seen. He was a nice guy! I might have never seen Yogi again, but I set up a Bible study that afternoon. "Is Tuesday or Thursday better for you, Yogi?" "I'll be there Tuesday," he said, and we've been in Bible study ever since.

Breaking the Bread of Life with hungry hearts is the most rewarding thing to be involved in. We can be no closer to the ministry of Jesus Christ than when we participate in His mission to seek and save the lost.

Think of the reasons we should teach Bible studies:

Bible studies keep our hands in the harvest.

Bible studies provide opportunities for new visitors to our churches.

Bible studies help our personal growth as we teach others about Jesus.

Bible studies allow the Spirit and the blood to flow through us and keep us from spiritual stagnation.

Bible studies will enable us to fulfill the directives of Jesus and align us with the mission of the first-century church (Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Acts 2, 8, 10, 19.)

Through Bible studies, we can provide a customized experience tailored to the biblical knowledge and faith background we encounter in each individual and situation.

A personal Bible study, accompanied by prayer and love, is the most effective personal evangelism tool that I have observed. We have seen dozens of lives changed, entire families come to God, and friends introduce friends who have been baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost.

Bible studies transcend culture and reach all people groups. Another Uber driver who is part of our church today is from the Dominican Republic. In our brief Uber ride, we began talking about the Lord. He said, "I had a dream that I spoke in tongues, and I have never done that before." I said, "Ysmael, this is no accident! The Lord sent me today to tell you how this can happen in your life! Let's do a Bible study! Is Tuesday or Thursday better?" Now Ysmael and his twin brother, Maximo, and Maximo's wife, Neyilen, are born again and worship weekly at Restoration Church. God's Word will work if we will plant the seed. You can populate heaven by investing one hour a week in a Bible study with someone.