

Be *Prophetic* in Your Group Studies

What should we study next? That's the question every group leader must answer about every 6-8 weeks on average. This is a perfect time to ask, what did Jesus do? As the master Teacher and Son of God He wasted no effort. Everything was intentional. So what did Jesus choose to teach and how?

Jesus brought Scripture to bear on **key heart issues** and beliefs. He never taught on trivial topics, though 100% of the recorded teaching of Jesus was in fact topical. At the same time, Jesus also **expected** his hearers to change their lives, their values, and their beliefs and follow Him.

Heart concerns and high expectation of life change. You need to choose group studies that really hit key heart/life issues your group members face. Don't get sidetracked. When the woman at the well tried to sidetrack Jesus into a fascinating debate (what mountain should we worship at), He returned to her own **heart** condition instead. And like Jesus, expect God to change lives. Look for studies that support personal application and discussion of their progress (or struggles).

Picture a chart with two poles, one measuring how crucial a topic is to our heart condition and our relationship with God, and the other measuring the expectations of the leader that the learners will actually live differently.

Heart Concerns:

- Jesus focused on the most important heart issues people face, that affect our being and our relationship with God
- He never taught on anything trivial, merely "interesting," or theoretical
- He knew what was "in man" and hit vital spots every time

High Expectations:

- Jesus expected his hearers to change their lives, their values, and their beliefs and follow Him
- He did not have a "take it or leave it" attitude, or information for information's sake

Choose studies that are prophetic (upper right). Prayerfully consider your group's needs. What are they most wrestling with in life? Where do they need to grow? *The more on target you are, the more powerful the study!* But this doesn't mean you have to be heavy handed. A gentle person can be prophetic.

Find studies that let people share and express how God is changing their lives, or struggles they are having along the way. That enables the group to encourage one another and become fervently devoted to one another in love. And that creates an environment for life change.

Always move things to the upper right quadrant. Like Jesus asked Peter, "What about *you*?" Don't settle for less, things that are just "ain't it awful" out there topics (gripes) or interesting but not life-changing.

At the same time encourage people to read their Bible on their own, maybe a chapter a day starting with the New Testament, in order to build systematic knowledge outside of group time. They learn to feed themselves.

