

# Bible Class Work

by W.H. Griffith Thomas

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*Bible Classes are essential for positive teaching, free discussion, and spiritual growth, and can be effective in various forms, including Men's, Women's, and Children's Classes.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 16:3, Proverbs 22:6, Proverbs 27:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 2 Timothy 2:15

**Topics:** "Bible Study", "Discipleship Methods"

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## Description

In this sermon, W.H. Griffith Thomas emphasizes the importance of Bible Classes in parochial work, highlighting the positive teaching and discussion opportunities they provide. He stresses the significance of Men's Classes, noting that winning men can influence their families positively. Organizing Men's Bible Classes involves regular meetings, thorough preparation, varied subjects, and fostering discussion. Similarly, Women's Classes require clear, personal teaching and a cheerful teaching atmosphere to brighten the often monotonous lives of working women. For Children's Classes, the focus should be on causing learning rather than mere telling, with a recommendation for doctrinal work using Lessons for Juniors by Dr. Eugene and Miss S. G. Stock.

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## Transcript

### Section 1. The Importance.

Among the many departments of parochial work that of Bible Classes stands preeminent. Such classes provide a fine opportunity for positive teaching, as well as for free, frank discussion among those who often wish to know more about points raised in sermons which obviously cannot be discussed in church. Bible Classes also have a real importance in connection with the clergyman's reading; for if he is responsible for such a class, he is compelled to study in preparation for it. Then again, Bible Classes in the parish will do much to keep the methods of work on spiritual lines, for with strong Bible work there will be scarcely any room for mere ephemeral work.

Section 2. Men's Classes. My good friend Mr. Watts-Ditchfield, of Bethnal Green, is never tired of emphasizing the special importance of work among men as likely to be more fruitful than anything else; because when the men are won, the wives and children will almost naturally be influenced. There is a great deal of force in this contention, more particularly as the results of Day School and Sunday School work during the last twenty years are not too encouraging, to put it mildly, in regard to church attendance and membership.

But whether this be true or not, a Men's Bible Class will prove of great value and spiritual blessing. 1. How then should the clergyman set about organizing this work? A preliminary step is that of advertising the opening meeting by means of slips circulated through the parish, and in the schools, and then perhaps the following suggestions will be found serviceable. 2. The meeting must be regular and punctual, not longer than one hour. The men ought to know that it will commence and close at the proper time. 3.

The meeting should be made as hearty as possible, the men being welcomed, and greeted at the close. There is a great truth in the simple incident recorded of a poor woman in connection with a Mission Church. "What do you do?" she was asked. "I smiles ■em in, and then I smiles ■em out." 4. The clergyman in charge should make a point of preparing with the utmost thoroughness for this work, putting his very best into it, and sparing no time or trouble to make himself efficient and proficient. 5.

The subjects of the Class should be varied as much as possible. Sometimes a course may be given on some book, or part of a book of the Bible. Genesis, Joshua, the Fourth Gospel, and Acts, lend themselves particularly to this method. At any time a series of biographical studies will be interesting. The characters of the Old Testament are of perennial fascination. Yet again, a series of topics dealing with current difficulties and problems: Why we believe in God, in Christ, in the Bible, in the Church. 6.

Opportunity should be given for discussion at these Classes, care being taken to keep it as pertinent as possible, but the fact that discussion is invited will prove of great service in letting it be known that difficulties are not shirked. 7. The visitation of the men in their homes during the evenings of the week will prove of material assistance and support to the Class. 8. The clergyman should let it be known that he is "At Home" to them at some suitable time of an evening, weekly or fortnightly. 9.

It is very important to work through a Committee of the men themselves. This Committee, consisting of some of the earnest members, will undertake a great deal of the work of organization. 10. A Sick and Benefit Club will also be found a useful adjunct to a Bible Class. If, however, a Slate Club should be attached, it should be carefully formed on a proper basis with the necessary checks and safeguards. 11. A social gathering, occasionally, on a week evening, especially at the opening of an autumn season, or the commencement of a New Year will be useful, care being taken that the items given are in strict harmony with the character and purpose of the Bible Class. 12. If possible, a summer outing might be arranged, the men paying for themselves by weekly instalments for a few weeks prior to the date.

### Section 3. Women's Classes.

A great deal that has been said about method for organizing Men's Classes applies equally well here. A Committee of women will be found valuable, if not essential. Of course the topics and treatment will differ from those used at Men's Bible Classes, but two points may be specially emphasized: (a) The need of clear definite personal teaching; (b) the absolute necessity of "good cheer" as the predominant note of the teaching. As we have already pointed out, the life of working women is often monotonous and joyless; and the more brightness we can put into our messages for them, the better for all concerned.

### Section 4. Children's Classes.

This work will naturally be associated with our general efforts on behalf of children, and will often take the form of a weekly meeting of the Children's Scripture Union. Care should be taken to avoid anything like mere "talks" or "addresses". As Dr. Trumbull well says, Telling is not teaching, for teaching is "causing another to learn".

This thought should be borne in mind in all Bible Class effort. For thorough doctrinal work among children special attention is called to that valuable series of Lessons for Juniors, by Dr. Eugene and Miss S. G. Stock, Steps to Truth. But whatever be the subject of the class, we must never forget that it is intended for downright instruction.

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