

“Back To School”

by Wayne Goff

A quick Google search for “**Back to School**” tips will find dozens of sites with tips and advice on how to prepare for school this fall. Several would apply equally well to getting back in gear for Bible School. So allow me at this appropriate time to borrow a few tips and apply them to Bible study.

Before we get into the actual “tips,” let me say that **the number one ingredient** for successful Bible class is the “**want to**” mentality. If you don’t want to study the Bible, then nobody and nothing can make you! Only you can decide to make a change for the better. And if you don’t want to study the Bible at home or at church, then ask yourself why. There may need to be a resolution of a problem in your situation.

1. **Establish a routine.** In homes with children, getting to bed regularly and eating meals regularly is the way to set daily habits. The same applies to Bible study. It’s difficult to study God’s Word if you are tired or hungry.
2. **Turn off the TV.** Children are encouraged to play quiet games, do puzzles, flash cards, color, or read as early morning activities instead of watching TV. These things help the child ease into the learning process. Likewise, turn off the TV and open your Bible, pick up the bulletin, or your Bible class book and just begin reading. This will ease you into the study mentality.
3. **Designate a place to do homework.** Older children may be able to study in their own room, but smaller children need an area set aside in the family room or kitchen to facilitate adult monitoring, supervision and encouragement. The same is true for Bible study. A small desk with a laptop computer, or Bible study books, a comfortable chair, and some quiet provides a wonderful environment to study. You will eventually associate the mental comfort and joy which comes from Bible study with that spot as soon as you sit down.
4. **Mark your calendar.** Just as it’s important to remember the necessary school dates on your calendar, you can do the same for Sunday and Wednesday Bible classes. Having that calendar *visibly* before you with the Bible subject marked can spur you on to actual study. It also helps to get rid of the problem of Bible class popping up suddenly into your conscious thinking with no time to prepare.
5. **Review all the information.** The school sends home packets of material with your children the first few days of school. It’s exciting to get those manila envelopes with information about your child’s teacher, room number, school supply requirements, sports activity sign ups, bus transportation, health and emergency forms, and school dates. It can also be a bit overwhelming, so prepare *mentally* for a day or two of review, and resolve these issues quickly. In Bible class, each quarter begins with the *excitement* of a new subject and a new teacher. Pick up a workbook, glance through the lessons, find the Bible text and read through it quickly, and make a mental note to prepare now for class. If you show up for the first couple of classes without studying, then you probably will give up on your class participation right then. Make up your mind to study, prepare for the mental task before you, and be ready! There are four quarters of study each year, so none of them should surprise you!
6. **Clear your own schedule.** To the extent possible, prioritize your life today. Sit down and briefly write a list of what is most important in your life. God and His kingdom *should* be first (Matt. 6:33), and if it is you will make some tough decisions about what needs to be eliminated to give you time for Bible study and attendance. You may have to postpone a business trip, drop out of a volunteer meeting, or stop extra projects. You want to be free to help your child acclimate to the school routine, and yourself to take time to be holy!

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