

Introduction: *Use the “Think-Pair-Share” technique.*

We regularly read about someone who has been arrested, convicted, and later found out to be innocent of the charges. Show your group members the video “Wrongfully Accused” (2 minutes, 21 seconds) from *Identity Theft*. It’s available on WingClips at <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/identity-thief/wrongfully-accused>.

Think-Pair-Share: Say something like the following: “Put yourself in the place of Sandy at the beginning of the clip. How would you feel if you were being accused of this crime knowing you were innocent?”

Then give the following instructions: “**Think** for 30 seconds about this. Now I want you to discuss this in **pairs** with a person on your left or right who is not your spouse. (Pause for 60 seconds.) Call on 3-4 pairs to **share** one idea.

Point 1: *Help your group members grasp Jesus’ motivation for suffering.*

Instruct your group members to turn to Hebrews 12:1-3: “Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you won’t grow weary and give up.”

Have them read the passage and answer this question: “Why did Jesus willingly suffer on the cross?” They should be able to glean that He suffered for the greater good and that it ultimately brought joy. Ask a few people to share their thoughts.

Point 2: *Help your group members connect with the major theme.*

Ask a group member to read the following article:

Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. –2 Peter 1:21

At the beginning of a new year and a new millennium, we hear many predictions. But then, making predictions is nothing new. In 1983, *US News & World Report* magazine had a section titled “What The Next 50 Years Will Bring.” It had the usual suggestions about the growing importance of computers, about new medical breakthroughs, and about the sleeker, faster ways of getting around. The introduction said, “Prediction is at best a risky business.” Then it quoted Sir Francis Bacon, who said, “Dreams and predictions ought to serve but for winter talk by the fireside.”

That may be true of man’s predictions, but not of God’s prophecies. Man may speculate about what will happen next week, but God showed us in the Bible that He knows the future. This truth is one reason we can have absolute confidence in the Book of books. The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies about people, events, and nations that have already been fulfilled. The chance of that many predictions coming true is astronomical.

Do you lack confidence in the Bible? Spend some time examining its many fulfilled prophecies [see Isa. 7:14/Luke 1:26-35; Micah 5:2/Matt. 2:1; Isa. 53:9,12/Matt. 27:38,57-61]. I predict you’ll be convinced that it truly is God’s Word, and that you can rely on it for everything in your future.

Ask the following questions: “How does fulfilled prophecy help your confidence in the authenticity of the Scripture? Do you have any examples of prophecies that were made and fulfilled in the Bible?” Allow 1-2 people to share their insights.

[Source: David Branon, “Perfect Predictions,” *Our Daily Bread*, January 1, 2001, <https://odb.org/2001/01/01/perfect-predictions>.]

Point 3: *Introduce the topic of truth with a definition.*

Ask your students to define what the word *truth* means. They will likely give you many words and/or definitions. Ensure that you talk about the fact that truth is that which conforms to reality—things as they actually are, not merely how they are perceived. This is important in a society that embraces moral relativism where truth is subjective, not objective.

Conclusion: *Challenge for application.*

Jesus was willing to suffer shame, arrest, rejection, and death so that we could live. He endured these things out of obedience to the Father and His love for us. Have your students spend some time thanking God for His sacrifice. Then encourage them each to have God put on their hearts one person whom they know needs to hear the message of the gospel. Then challenge them to talk to these people this week.

Teaching Tip of the Week

It is easier for the participant to learn if they are actively engaged rather than listening passively. One of the most helpful ways to start this dynamic process is to motivate the participants to probe into the subject matter on their own without prior explanation from the teacher. The use of diagrams, pictures, or video clips can start the process. This simple strategy stimulates people in asking questions, which is the key to learning. Consider trying this the next time you teach.