# TEACHING TO TRANSFORM NOT INFORM



vol. 1

Foundational Principles for Making an Informational Sunday School Lesson...
TRANSFORMATIONAL

W. BRADLEY SIMON, PH.D.

## TEACHING TO TRANSFORM NOT INFORM

VOLUME 1

#### Resources by Dr. W. Bradley Simon

- 1. TEACHING TO TRANSFORM NOT INFORM 1:
  Foundational Principles for Making an Informational
  Sunday School Lesson...TRANSFORMATIONAL
- 2. DVD Video Companion for TEACHING TO
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- 3. TEACHING TO TRANSFORM NOT INFORM 2: How to Teach a Transformational Sunday School Lesson... Step-By-Step
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TRANSFORMATIONAL

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TEACHING TO TRANSFORM

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To Kelly, my godly wife, who has loved, encouraged, and supported me for more than half my life. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

— Matthew 28:18-20

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#### Introduction

In Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus gives teachers a clear and concise teaching goal: "Therefore go and make disciples... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." He does not say to teach people what to obey or even how to obey; rather, Jesus says, "make disciples... teaching them to obey." As a result, Jesus makes life-altering transformation (not simply information or explanation) our primary teaching goal.

Consequently, the *Teaching to Transform* Not Inform series focuses on showing you how to turn informationally or educationally oriented Bible lessons into life-altering transformational ones. You will learn how to teach not only the head but also the heart, which results in changed lives. You will learn how to integrate transformational principles throughout your teaching, so you can fulfill the Great Commission as a Bible teacher.

This first book lays the biblical foundation for teaching the attitudes, priorities, and goals that help you maximize your impact as a teacher. As you work through additional books and seminars within this series, they build upon previous ones giving you a linear path for developing more and more advanced teaching skills. For example, the next book in the series, *Teaching to Transform 12: How to Teach a Transformational Sunday School Lesson...* 

STEP-BY-STEP, builds upon the foundation presented in this book by giving you a simple, practical, step-by-step process for how to develop and teach a Bible lesson that changes hearts and transforms lives. It outlines the seven teaching elements that need to be in every lesson that has transformation as its main objective.

## 1

## It's about Transformation, Not Simply Information and Explanation

Jesus calls you to fulfill the Great Commission by teaching them to obey

Therefore go and make disciples... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

- Matthew 28:19-20

#### **Chapter Outline / Notes**

I.	What	is	the	goal	of	M28:20	teachir	ıg?
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A. For "Teaching Tom," it's all about explanation

B. For Jesus, it's all about transformation

#### II. Transformation is the goal of M28:20 teaching

A. "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19)

1. Jesus doesn't say, "Force people to become disciples"

2. Jesus doesn't say, "Teach people how to become disciples"

3. Jesus says, "Go and make disciples"

- B. "Teaching them to obey"
  - 1. Jesus doesn't say, "Force them to obey"
  - 2. Jesus doesn't say, "Teach them what I have commanded"
  - 3. Jesus doesn't say, "Teach them how to obey"
  - 4. Jesus says, "Teach them to obey"

of an impact you are having on others until they become a little vulnerable and tell you something like this: "You know, I was going to get a divorce, but what you said made a lot of sense, and I've decided to work through it." Individuals rarely admit such near misses, but when they do, it gives you a glimpse of how your teaching is changing their lives.

We all know people change because God is at work in them. We realize the truths we share are not our own, but God's. Nevertheless, God has chosen to work through us as we teach his Word, but what happens when it doesn't feel like our teaching is making a difference in people's lives?

I remember one teacher had spent several months teaching through a particular study. Then, a few months after the series concluded, several who had attended the Bible study chose to do the exact opposite of what the teacher had just spent several months teaching.

You talk about discouraging; that was really discouraging for him. Upon reflection, he said,

I feel like they understood what I said, and I tried to be as clear, thorough, biblically oriented, and practical as possible. Why, then, did they choose to do the opposite? I guess the saying is true: you can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make it drink. Or, from a teacher's perspective, you can tell listeners what the Bible says, but you can't make them obey.

#### I. What is the goal of M28:20 teaching?

After a few experiences like this, it is easy to develop a teaching philosophy that says, "My goal as a teacher is to explain the text and show how we can apply it to our lives. However, it is my listeners' responsibility to listen, ask any clarifying questions, and obey."

#### A. For "Teaching Tom," it's all about explanation

Actually, I had a teacher tell me something similar to this. I'll refer to him as "Teaching Tom." Teaching Tom said to me, "My responsibility as a teacher is to explain the text and show how we can apply it to our lives; however, what my listeners do with that information is their responsibility." He concluded his responsibility began and ended with the lesson. What took place outside of that hour had little impact or bearing on his own teaching style or methodology. In short, his goal focuses on information, explanation, and presentation.

#### B. For Jesus, it's all about transformation

Teaching Tom's philosophy may initially sound right, but is it biblically accurate, especially in light of verses such as Matthew 28:18–20?

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching

them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Let's look a little closer at these verses and answer a few related questions.

- 1. To whom is Matthew 28:18-20 directed?
  - A. Jesus' disciples.
  - B. Jesus' disciples, plus people such as pastors and missionaries.
  - C. All believers, including you and me.
- 2. Circle the words in Matthew 28:18–20 that indicate what Jesus is instructing us to do.
- 3. In verse 20, underline all the words that refer to our goal in teaching.
- 4. What is the goal of Teaching Tom's philosophy? Which parts are correct and which parts may be biblically inaccurate? Does it accurately reflect the goal of teaching as given in Matthew 28:18–20?

Again, Teaching Tom said, "My goal as a teacher is to explain the text and show how we can apply it to our lives. However, it is my listeners' responsibility to listen, ask any clarifying questions, and obey." 5. How should we respond if our teaching does not change lives?

Let's next answer the above questions by taking a closer look at Matthew 28:19–20.

## II. Transformation is the goal of M28:20 teaching A. "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19)

Let's think through a few different responses we may have when our teaching doesn't seem to bring change in listeners' lives. Obviously, God doesn't call us to force listeners to obey. It is clear that listeners are responsible for their actions, and they must choose to obey. However, God has called us to focus on more than information, explanation, and presentation.

Let's begin by looking at Matthew 28:19:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1. Jesus doesn't say, "Force people to become disciples" Notice the first few words in verse 19: "Go and make disciples." Jesus is clearly not telling us to "Go and force people to become disciples;" however, when speakers use guilt and manipulation to bring about change, it appears they are trying to force people to become disciples. Even though this form of teaching may bring about

some type of change in listeners, it is an unhealthy, shortterm change that fails to produce the lifestyle God desires.

## 2. Jesus doesn't say, "Teach people **how** to become disciples"

Similarly, Matthew 28:19 does not say, "Go and teach people *how* to become disciples." Even though this is included in what Jesus says, it still lacks all he says. If you think about it, this was Teaching Tom's position. He told the class how to become a disciple, but what they did with that information was up to them. His focus was on the classroom time. It was on what he said and how he said it. His responsibility began when listeners arrived and ended when they left. If his teaching didn't change lives, hey, that wasn't his responsibility. Teaching Tom's goal was teaching what the Bible said and how one can apply it.

#### 3. Jesus says, "Go and make disciples"

What, then, is Jesus calling us to do? It's only four words, so let's look at it again. Jesus says, "go and *make* disciples" (Matthew 28:19).

This is a fair and balanced command. Jesus isn't telling us to *force* people to become disciples or simply to give information on *how* to become a disciple; rather, his focus and command is in the center: "Go and *make* disciples."

- You're not forcing people, but you're also not just giving information.
- You're not demanding, intimidating, or manipulating,

but you're also not just suggesting.

- Your focus is on the classroom, but it also extends beyond the classroom.
- Your focus is on what you say,
   but it is also on how it impacts and changes people's lives.
- It is a call to "make disciples."

#### B. "Teaching them to obey"

Let's next look at Matthew 28:20 where Jesus continues to define our teaching goal.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

#### 1. Jesus doesn't say, "Force them to obey"

As in verse 19, Jesus does not tell us to "force people to obey" by using guilt, peer pressure, or some other form of manipulation; rather, he says, "teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

2. Jesus doesn't say, "Teach them what I have commanded" Similarly, the command is not simply to "Teach them what I have commanded you." When teachers assume this is their goal, their teaching often sounds something like this:

"In our passage today, Paul was telling the Corinthians to do this and that in order to bring unity in the church. The reason Paul had to say this was because the Corinthians were involved in a first-century practice where ..." and the teacher would supply the relevant background information. Then, the teacher continues, "In this next verse, Paul said this because of that and the Greek word he used here was ..." and again, some more information. By the end of the lesson, listeners may have a lot of information and explanation, but often lack transformation.

It actually makes a lot of sense why so many Bible study teachers follow this format. After all, this is the teaching goal and methodology the public school system has modeled for us throughout most of our school years. By default, we learn that teachers provide information, such as dates, facts, theories, principles, and more. Consequently, unless someone has taught us otherwise, when we become a Bible study teacher, we likewise provide information pertaining to biblical events, dates, background material, Old Testament history, New Testament customs, theology, and more. All good stuff, but Jesus calls us not to give information, but to make disciples.

#### 3. Jesus doesn't say, "Teach them how to obey"

Last, in Matthew 28:20, Jesus does not say, "Teach them *how* to obey." Like Teaching Tom, teachers within this category agree that we should teach what the Bible says as well as *how* to apply it. Of course, they are correct and application should be a part of every lesson, but it

still falls short of what Jesus calls us to do. There is still a difference between "teaching them *how* to obey" and "teaching them *to* obey."

When our goal is to teach people either "what the Bible says" or "how they can obey," our focus tends to be on the presentation as opposed to whether or not anyone's life changed. After the lesson, we ask presentation-oriented questions, such as "Was I clear? Was the lesson interesting? Did you understand what I was saying?" Of course, a clear, interesting, understandable lesson is important and necessary, but, as we all know, a clear, interesting, understandable lesson does not always lead to "teaching them to obey."

#### **4. Jesus says,** "Teach them **to obey**"

Clearly, our goal needs to be on "teaching them *to obey*." When this is our focus, our teaching shifts from information to transformation. All teachers agree we should clearly teach biblical truths and principles, but the most effective teachers are always aiming for transformation. Their goal is interpretation, contemplation, explanation, application, and finally, transformation. Matthew 28:20 calls us to be Transformational Teachers, not simply Informational Teachers. It is a calling to transform the heart, not simply inform the mind.

Information and Explanation are foundational to our teaching, but transformation is the goal.

Understanding this distinction and personally accepting the balanced responsibility is the first step in becoming an M28:20 Transformational Teacher, because it drives us to ask ourselves growth-oriented questions:

- What is the difference between a teacher who teaches people *what* or *how* to obey and a teacher who teaches them *to* obey?
- Even though most teachers teach *what* the Bible says and *how* we can apply it, are transformational teachers doing more?
- What kind of impact do these small variations have on listeners?

The answers to these questions are what this series is all about. In the next chapter, we're going to look at one of the biggest obstacles to transformational teaching: the Scratchpad. If you are unaware of how it works, then your teaching will make it from the Bible to the listener's Scratchpad, but it may get stuck right there, never making it into their heart. Listeners may learn *what* Jesus commanded and *how* they can obey, but they may never actually obey. They believe your lesson is applicable for

others, but for one reason or another, it won't work in their own life. Your listeners want to live a godly life, and by taking just a couple of minutes in your teaching time, you can help them do so by helping them transfer the truth from their Scratchpad to their heart.

#### Leading a teacher training seminar?

If you believe the teachers within your church would benefit from the *Teaching to Transform* Not Inform series, consider leading them in a study using the companion DVD for this book that leads your teachers through this material. Also, see the store at M2820.com for bulk book pricing.

Another possibility includes hosting a live *Teaching to Transform* Not Inform conference at your church. Our goal is to train teachers to fulfill the Great Commission through their teaching ministry at no cost to your church or organization. This is possible when a few different churches participate in the training. To see how this works, see the "Conferences" page on our website.

### 2

## How to Transform Both the Head and Heart

Build a bridge from the Bible to the head, around roadblocks, then to their heart

Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.

— Proverbs 23:12

#### **Appendix: Quotations**

Information and Explanation are foundational to our teaching, but transformation is the goal.

Even though listeners may comprehend your lesson, roadblocks hinder them from personally accepting it.

Listeners believe some principles are universally true, but not personally applicable.

••••••

Unaddressed pink elephants can't help but block the path that leads from the head to the heart.

•••••

Without a clear lesson goal, a wide variety of semi-related topics and points all appear to be viable options for inclusion within the lesson.

•••••

Lesson bloating is the result of knowing about the lesson without knowing what the lesson is about.

.....

Too often,

the information related to the passage displaces the information needed to prove the single, unifying point of the passage.

Covering less material allows time to articulate the central truth, substantiate its roots in the text, illustrate how it can be applied, and eliminate reasons why it won't be applied.

......

You can never present what is right without exposing what is wrong, and some who do the wrong would rather fight the right than change.

Teaching is far more than reading the text and explaining what occurred; it's changing lives through the Word.

Most great teachers don't start as great teachers but develop over time.

•••••

Looking back only empowers the past to change the present and influence your future.

......

Your teaching ministry
is at the very center of how
your church fulfills the Great Commission.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Time is Life... wasted time is a wasted life.

.....

Time ... you can't save it, store it, or ration it.

You can't control how quickly it passes, only what happens as it passes.

......

Your teaching ministry is God's gift to you; committing to it is your gift to God.

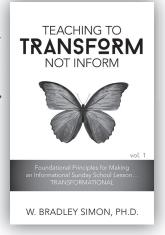
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#### **Develop Transformational Teachers**

Teaching to TRANSFORM Not Inform 1: Foundational Principles for Making an Informational Sunday School Lesson... TRANSFORMATIONAL

People visit Bible studies they are invited to, but they join the ones that center around life-altering teaching. They join classes whose teachers are committed to making disciples, not by "teaching them the Bible," but by "teaching them to obey the Bible" (Matthew 28:20).

The series, *Teaching to Transform*Not Inform, equips teachers to change informationally or educationally oriented lessons into life-altering transformational lessons. It reveals how to teach not only the head but also the heart, which results in changed lives.



**Satisfaction Guaranteed:** We give a full, hassle-free, money-back guarantee for all our products. If you aren't completely satisfied, by all means, please return the item within 60 days for a prompt, courteous, and full refund. Absolutely no risks for you! Call now and get started.

#### **Additional Resources:**

• DVD Video Companion for Teaching To Transform Not Inform Vol.1: In this companion DVD, Dr. Simon leads your teachers through this series helping them become transformational teachers.

• Extra Books (ISBN: 978-1-939257-11-6)

#### Get Started Today ...

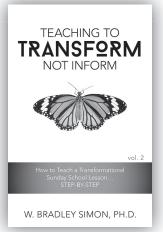
To order books & DVDs for a group, see www.M2820.com for bulk pricing.

#### **Grow Your Sunday School Classes**

#### Teaching to Transform Not Inform 2: How to Teach a Transformational Sunday School Lesson... STEP-BY-STEP

In Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus gives teachers a clear and concise teaching goal: "Therefore go and make disciples ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." He did not say, teach people what to obey or even how to obey; rather, Jesus said, "make disciples ... teaching them TO OBEY." As a result, he made life-altering transformation (not simply information or education) our primary teaching goal.

If you desire to fulfill the Great Commission through your teaching



ministry, this book will place at your fingertips a simple, practical, step-by-step process for how you can teach life-altering lessons that use information and explanation to bring about transformation in your listeners' lives.

#### **Additional Resources:**

- DVD Video Companion for Teaching to TRANSFERM Not Inform Vol.2: In this companion DVD, Dr. Simon leads your teachers through this series helping them become transformational teachers.
- Extra Books (ISBN: 978-1-939257-21-5)

#### **Get Started Today...**

To order books & DVDs for a group, see www.M2820.com for bulk pricing.



#### Host a Live Training Event

If you are interested in hosting a live *Teaching to Transform* Not *Inform* training seminar for teachers in your church and/or area, visit www.M2820.com and request additional information.

Each seminar can be tailored to fit the specific needs of your church or group.

