

## Life Lessons from the Word

### Q. E. Hammonds

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*Comprehensive lesson plans for Bible educators are deftly organized and their importance thoroughly explored.*

Q. E. Hammonds's book of Bible study outlines, *Life Lessons from the Word*, helps educators organize important lessons about Jesus, forgiveness, and salvation, for children and adults alike. As a pastor of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Pratt City in Birmingham, Alabama, Hammonds has used his more than three decades of experience in ministry work to create valuable outlines for Christian educators.

Prewritten lesson plans ensure all educators are on the same page. As Hammonds writes in the first outline, "Disagreement in teaching causes confusion." The lesson plans also help educators save time before preaching or teaching. The book is divided into five sections: "Doctrine" (biblical, not denominational, doctrine), "The Mind of Christ" (teaching "straight from the lips of Jesus"), "Youth and Children," "Overcoming" (dealing with life's obstacles), and "Church" (how to conduct yourself within the body of the church). Educators can read this book straight through or choose the lessons appropriate for their audience.

Hammonds begins each lesson with a general overview of topics such as worship, overcoming grief, and making a difference through love. Main ideas are broken down into their sub-points, and sample scriptures close many of the outlines. Important terms from each lesson are defined, everything from the "kingdom" to "righteousness." Hammonds also sheds light on certain Greek words for terms like "grown": *stephanos*, which means badge of honor. Hammonds also lists questions that pastors or educators could pose in their classrooms. For example, he asks, "Do you want to be in Jesus's true family?"; "Who is his true family?"; and "Can anyone be a part of his true family?"

Not all of the lesson plans are outlined in the same way. Some include long passages about the power of God's Word and a list of questions at the end of the discussion, while others use traditional-style outlines (using Roman numerals and so forth) to indicate main ideas and sub-points. For less experienced educators, this could be confusing, especially if outlines are not spelled out in the introduction or conclusion. There are some typos in the book as well, and the capitalization error on the front cover is slightly disheartening.

Hammonds's outlines give educators a great launching point for their religion courses, sermons, and more. As he writes, the only way to "grow and mature" is if "we are unified in what we teach." His lesson plans can help readers understand the power of forgiveness and the conditions of unanswered prayer. He reminds readers that life may be full of storms, but there is always a life lesson to be learned from the Word.

LISA BOWER (September 23, 2013)

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