

**† By
Grace
Alone**

Using *Holy Bible: English Version for the Deaf*

AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL FOR DEAF ADULTS

Pastor Rolfe F. Westendorf

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WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing receives requests for materials for a Bible Information Class/Adult Instructions for adults who are Deaf.

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The Holy Bible, English Version for the Deaf, Baker Book House/Bible League International 2003, available used from [Amazon](#) and download-able at www.bibleleague.org/bible-downloads/, scroll to find *English Version for the Deaf*. One can download all the books or use from the website. Deaf Bible websites tend to signed, not captioned, no voice. Some Deaf people use the NIV (New International Readers Version, easy to read, more accessible for children and people who have difficulty reading English, such as non-native English speakers)—inexpensive copies available.

Because most Deaf people think in pictures and concepts, sentences in the paraphrase and Deaf Bible are short, simple, and to the point.

When using this course, please remember this is a paraphrase. Compare it to the original *By Grace Alone* (available from NPH) and to your favorite Bible translation.

God's blessings on your work,

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other Deaf materials available at
www.wels.net/mdhh

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TO THE INSTRUCTOR

If you are thinking about using this course of instruction for adult confirmation, you should know something about my reasons for writing the course. I am very much indebted to Pastor Oswald Riess for his adult instruction manual entitled *What Does the Bible Say?* If you are familiar with that book, you will note a definite similarity between that one and this. It had been, with one exception, the only course of instruction I had used for adults.

But when our congregation began to do more intensive evangelism work, I was amazed to learn that many, including some I had instructed, did not even think of Jesus Christ as they gave their reasons for going to heaven. It made me feel I had to place a stronger emphasis upon the gospel, especially in the instruction of adults. For a time I tried to emphasize how the gospel related to each of the Riess lessons. Finally I became convinced that a new course was needed, one that would cover most of the Riess lessons, but with dominant and repeated emphasis given to the fact that we have eternal life because God's Son, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for our sins.

Thus the first lesson covers the whole plan of salvation. Obviously there is no opportunity to go into any kind of detail. But I wanted to present the plan of salvation as a complete unit in the first lesson, to enable the student to see at once the relationship of the individual parts and to give the whole story to those who may never finish the course. Lessons 2 through 5 cover the same ground, but in greater detail, so that those who stay with you for just five lessons may know exactly how God gave them eternal life through Christ.

Lessons 6 through 8 discuss the meaning of grace, and show how the Christian receives the assurance of salvation. Lesson 9 tells what the Bible reveals about heaven and hell, while Lesson 10 emphasizes the gospel once more, this time from a negative point of view, showing why the Christian cannot be saved by his good works.

This concludes the first part of the course, all of which aims at demonstrating the certainty of our salvation, because it is the complete and perfect work of God, and his work alone. In order to keep this thought before the class, I begin every lecture by referring to a question written in bold letters on the chalkboard: "DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?" Then I try to explain how this lesson relates to the question.

The next nine lessons cover the area of the Christian's sanctification. Here, too, I tried to keep the gospel in focus. The question for this part is this: "HOW DO YOU LIVE WITH ETERNAL LIFE?" It constantly reminds the class that the Christian life is the result, not the cause, of our salvation.

In these nine lessons I tried to cover everything else that is included in *What Does the Bible Say?*, with special emphasis on stewardship and evangelism. At the same time, I tried to avoid points of doctrine that might be over the heads of the class. Furthermore, I made no special effort to refute false teachings of other denominations. That explanation the pastor will have to produce on his own. The manuscript does not oblige him to explain these matters to everyone.

The Ten Commandments are handled topically rather than numerically. I felt that most would soon forget which was the Sixth and which was the Eighth anyhow. In the three lessons on the home, neighborhood and church, I tried to cover everything that would be included in a more traditional study of the commandments.

The "Quiz" is an experiment that has worked out very well for me. It is intended not for testing, but for discussion. Many of the questions have been stated so that they can be answered "true" or "false," depending upon the individual's understanding of the sentence. Thus the instructor should always find out if the student knows why the statement is true or false, and he should show in what way the opposite answer could be acceptable.

This means that the student need not be embarrassed by a wrong answer; but more important, the discussion usually provokes some comment from other members of the class. This is beneficial in stimulating interest, and in exposing false ideas that might otherwise have remained hidden. Answers to the "Quiz" begin on page 131.

Most lessons are designed to be presented in one hour. If the one-hour time limit cannot be met, I believe it is better to interrupt the lesson and finish it next time. The class will be more comfortable and ready to learn if they know that they can count on getting home on time.

There is one important part of instruction for new Lutherans that is not covered in these lessons and that is the business of getting acquainted with the congregation. Although this is touched upon in Lesson 20, the pastor should seriously consider a "get acquainted" meeting to give the new member personal contact with other members and especially the leaders of the congregation.

This course of adult instruction is offered with the prayer that God would bless its use to the salvation of souls who have been redeemed BY GRACE ALONE.

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