

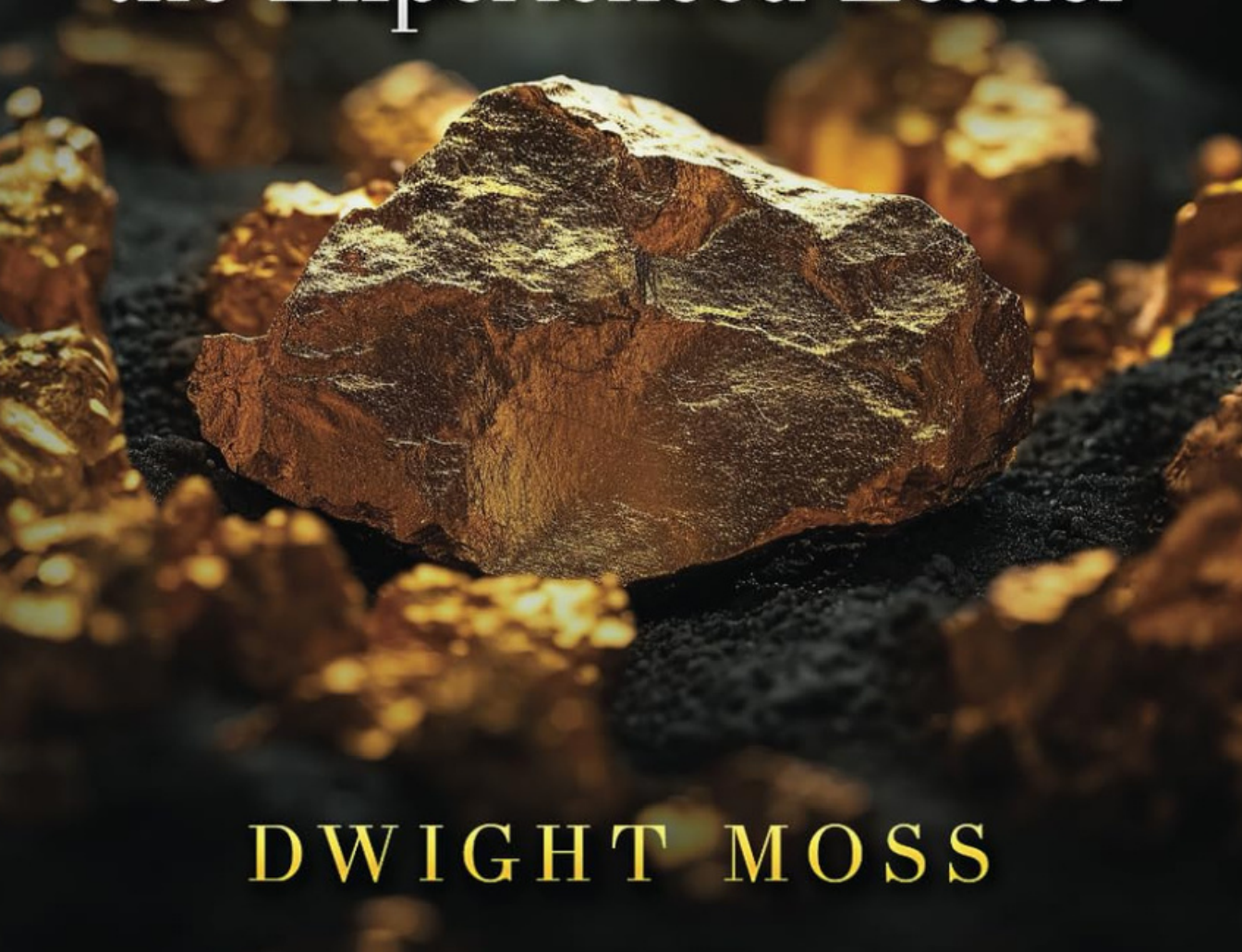
Foreword by ALLAN TAYLOR

SUNDAY SCHOOL

(AND SMALL GROUP LIFE)

NUGGETS AND TIDBITS

for the Novice or
the Experienced Leader



DWIGHT MOSS

Sunday School

(and Small Group Life)

Nuggets and Tidbits

for the Novice or the Experienced Leader

By Dwight Moss

Endorsements

Sunday School Nuggets and Tidbits should be on the desk of every Bible Study/Sunday School group leader and used as a reference resource for every church leader who desires to train their Bible study group leaders to become the very best!

Building from the foundation of teaching God's Word to the practical ways to help a Bible Study/Sunday School group leader successfully lead a group, Dwight gives you a treasure trove of nuggets that are proven and practical. He serves you the choicest tidbits of wisdom he has discovered, gleaned, and practiced throughout his years of successful ministry in the local church.

John McClendon

Executive Director, Disciple Leaders Network

I recently had a pastor to ask me for a recommendation for a book on the basics of Sunday School. Sunday School Nuggets and Tidbits is that book! It deals with the fundamentals, the foundation, the nitty-gritty, the nuts and bolts. This material should not only be read but mastered by anyone

in Sunday School leadership. It is practical and foundational to leading an effective Sunday School.

Josh Hunt

Author of Good Questions Have Groups Talking

Often in leading conferences, I hear, "You did not tell me anything I did not know, but you reminded me of what I need to do and how to do it." That is an accurate depiction of this work by Dwight Moss. He will remind you of what is important and prompt you to get back to work using these timeless tips. Do you need instruction, ideas, and inspiration for leading a group? Sunday School Nuggets and Tidbits will be a blessing for you.

Daniel E. Edmonds

State Missionary, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

The modern church in North America has evolved into a worship driven entity over the past couple of decades. No one would argue about the importance and the value of God-inspired worship. However, people can attend a worship service and never actually interact with other attendees. People can attend worship and observe while missing the opportunity to interact with leaders and other attendees. People can miss worship and not even be missed. A small group, like Sunday School, can address these gaps and so much more. The leadership and appropriate implementation of a healthy small group strategy appears to be a dying art. It is actually an issue of leadership. How can small group strategies like Sunday School be applied effectively? Let Dwight Moss provide that instruction in his book Sunday School Nuggets and Tidbits. Get ready to be inspired, instructed, and encouraged by a leader who knows what makes small groups work!

Dr. Steve Parr

Author of Sunday School That Really Works

ENDORSEMENTS

Sunday School (and Small Group Life) Nuggets and Tidbits is a treasure trove of practical and invaluable insights for educators and group facilitators. Dwight Moss's wealth of experience and expertise in guiding small groups and Sunday School within the local church shines brightly on every page. This book serves as a reliable reference manual, providing effective solutions and strategies to enhance your abilities as a teacher, minister, and leader. It is a valuable asset in your toolkit, readily available whenever you need it.

Mark Miller

Sunday School Specialist, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board.

Flowing out of years of learning and experience, my friend, Dwight Moss has written a practical resource chocked full of wisdom and ideas for taking your Sunday School ministry to the next level. Want to grow your class or ministry? Want to reach and keep guests? Want your teaching to have even greater impact? I recommend this book for every Bible study group leader, ministry director, and pastor.

Darryl Wilson

*Sunday School & Discipleship Consultant, Kentucky Baptist Convention
Author of Disciple-Making Encounters*

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Dedication

To Becky Martin who patiently and gently “held my hand” through my first national conference and the many other ministry mentors, conference leaders, ministers of education, and those who have sat through conferences and training I have led. The patience, wisdom, shared experience, opportunities given, and encouragement made available to me over the years has certainly been noticed by me, albeit not always acknowledged, to make this book possible.

And to Mrs. Ann Moore, my high school English teacher. You will see her influence on every page.

Foreword

No church leader does that which intentionally hampers his groups ministry, and that is good. The problem is, however, not enough church leaders do that which intentionally helps his groups ministry. Your groups ministry is like love. Love can withstand mistreatment, mishandling, manipulation, and even abuse, but it cannot withstand neglect. A neglected love eventually becomes no love! Love can forgive, exercise patience, and endure differences, but a love ignored will eventually vanish. So it is with your groups ministry. It will wilt if not given proper attention. It needs supervision, oversight, and leadership. Any garden left to itself will be consumed with weeds and animals. It must be tended to! Like a garden, a well-attended groups ministry will produce fruit!

There are two words that describe what every church leader has in mind for their groups ministry. The first word is strategy. Many churches are visionary, but most are not strategic. You ask a church leader what their vision is, and they rattle off a well-articulated statement. You ask them what their strategy is to accomplish that vision and they look like a deer staring into the headlights. So, often the breakdown in accomplishing our vision is a lack of strategy. Groups are the strategy to achieve the purpose. Vision is

the desired future; strategy is the executable action plan to get you to that desired future.

In his book, *Atomic Habits*, James Clear said, “You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.” To play off that, I would say churches do not elevate to the level of their vision, but to the level of their strategy.

The church’s groups ministry is the most potent organization in the church for mission accomplishment! Let me say that again, the church’s groups ministry is the most potent organization in the church for mission accomplishment!! It rallies and employs born again believers endowed with spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit into action! Groups is the venue that affords ministry opportunities for God’s people. You see, all ministries are not created equal. Groups hold the greatest opportunity for mission accomplishment.

Without a strategy, a church is like an octopus on roller skates — you’re all over the place; there is much activity, but you’re not going anywhere! A strategy tells you what to do, what not to do, and where to apply people, budget, and resources. When a well-oiled strategy is being carried out, the results are astounding!

The second word is shepherding. People need to be loved, cared for, and have needs met. What is the best way to do this? Groups. Shepherding best takes place in the context of relationships and relationships best take place in the context of small groups. Therefore, ministry best takes place in groups. Proverbs 27:23 instructs us, “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.” God is in the people business. He cares for His sheep. So, He expects His church to care for people. And what is the best way to do this? In small groups where we can know each other and relate to one another.

FOREWORD

Breaking the congregation down into small groups makes the strategy easy to execute. Everyone can get involved. Everyone can roll up their sleeves and put their hand to the work. Understand that blessings are the result of blisters! You see, nothing becomes dynamic until it first becomes specific! Strategy coupled with caring people who can execute it makes the mission very specific turning each group into a cadre of missionaries! Did I say that the groups ministry is the most potent ministry in your church?

This book is invaluable in helping church leaders to use their groups ministry to be strategic in pursuing the mission of the church and in shepherding God's people. I have known Dwight Moss for decades. He is a faithful disciple of Jesus and a competent church leader, trainer, and consultant. Each chapter in this book is packed with helpful information. Read it, use it, teach it, and pass it along to others! If you have a heart for the church, her mission, and her people, you will glean much knowledge, ideas, and practical applications from this man who has been intimately involved in the trenches of groups ministry. Simply put, you cannot afford to not sit at the feet of this man. If you do, you will be glad you did!

Allan Taylor

Executive Pastor of Ministries

First Baptist Concord

Knoxville, TN

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Introduction

Nugget – (noun); a small compact portion or unit; or something of value, usually found among other less valuable things¹.

Tidbit – (noun); a choice morsel²

That's what I believe you'll find between the covers of this book, a lot of "small compact portions" of what I believe is "something of value" that you, as a small group practitioner, can use as you lead and minister through your church's small group ministry. My desire is that as you have issues pop up in your leadership, you will go to this book as a resource and in searching, you'll find, what I think and what I hope you will determine, are "choice morsels" to help you navigate through your ministry regardless of whether you are a paid staff member or a lay volunteer.

For many years, almost 40 at this writing, I have been blessed by learning about small group ministry, in particular Sunday School. It started out with finding books and manuals written by some of the best technicians this ministry

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1 The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language

2 Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, (Springfield, MA, G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, 1952)

area has ever had. From reading, it moved into attending conferences which opened a whole new dimension of learning but also by personally meeting and ultimately building long-lasting personal relationships with many of these heroes of mine.

The door then was opened by some brave state convention and denominational leaders who invited me to lead conferences. Nobody learns as much as the teacher and that, most certainly, proved true for me.

The information between these covers is a partial compilation of what I have been taught by other leaders as well as things I have learned through personal experience throughout my ministry career. I could never adequately express gratitude for the opportunities given me by these men and women nor the calling Almighty God has issued on my life. I am eternally grateful and unspeakably blessed.

As I share in this format, I pray that the many, many tidbits of decades of experience be shared with another generation of Sunday School and small groups leaders that meet to study and share the Word of God and function in, both, a traditional and not so traditional form.

Occasionally in this book you will find information that is repeated from another section; this is intentional. Some of these written thoughts cover multiple topics and since this serves as a reference piece and not a beginning-to-end read, it better provides information by occasionally repeating.

You also might find an idea or two that might cause you to say to yourself, "I heard that same thing at a conference a few years ago" or "I read that in a book recently." I don't claim to have originated every single one of these ideas. I attend conferences, too; I have for decades. Books? I've read a lot of

INTRODUCTION

them and sometimes we hear and read things enough that we forget their origin. In fact, early in my ministry, I was told that the first time you repeat something, you say, "So and so said ..." The second time, you say, "I've heard ..." The third time, "It's said." And the fourth time, "I've always said." I'm not going that far so if you happen to see that in this book, it's not intentional. But a good idea does bear repeating.

CHAPTER 1

God's Word

I did not place this chapter as the first one by accident. The longer I live the more convinced I am that the Bible, God's holy Word, must be loved, revered, studied, and taught to all of those in our small groups. The Apostle Paul wrote to young Timothy, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness and the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). If that is true, and it is, God's Word should be the core, the peeling, and everything in between of what we do and who we are.

It makes no matter how young or how old our audience; how interested or disinterested – the Bible must be central to our small group ministries. There is a lot of good and interesting material available that we can study and discuss but if it is not centered on God's Word, I question whether it's something on which we need to be spending a lot of time.

God's Word

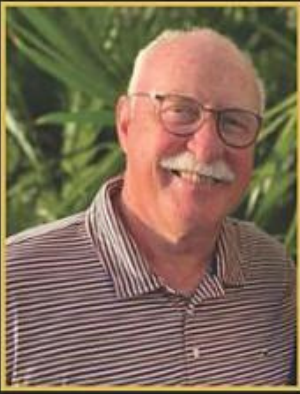
As I, along with many other members of a previous church where I served on staff, read through the Bible live-streaming on our church's website starting at noon on New Year's Eve, I was reminded of the critical importance of God's holy, infallible, inerrant Word in our small groups.

Fellowship is so important to small group life! Ministry to others cannot be overlooked. Outreach must not be ignored but giving great attention to all these aspects of small group life and failing to give preeminence to the reading, studying, expounding, and applying the truths of the word of God misses the reason for our meeting together as small groups. I was told in a conference many years ago that J. N. Barnette from years past said, for small groups, "The Bible is our textbook, our ONLY textbook!" We need to remember that important fact.

People of the Book

With so much teaching material available today from so many different sources, it's very easy to lose focus. As Christian educators, one of the issues I guess we will always be faced with is which curriculum to use. So many people want to use this book or that study and, in most cases, there is nothing wrong with much of what is available, however...

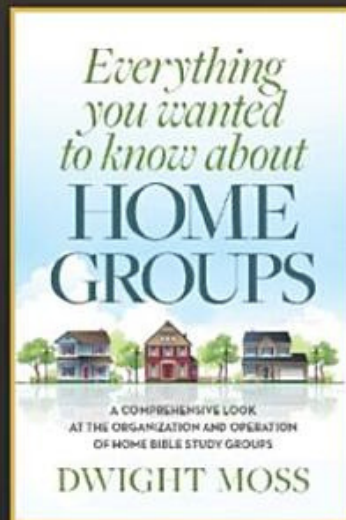
While a curriculum path is, indeed, very important for a variety of reasons, one of the things we need to keep in the forefront of our minds is that we, as New Testament Christians, are people of the Book; that is, the inerrant, inspired, infallible Word of the Living God.



Dwight Moss has seen and dealt with most every small group situation you can think of in the local church. In *Sunday School Nuggets and Tidbits*, Dwight brings a practitioner's perspective to each scenario. The "nuggets and tidbits" in this work give a practical insider's view of how to deal with many situations of small group life that you, as a teacher, Sunday School director, or small groups pastor, at some point, will face.

Dwight has been involved in Christian education/discipleship focusing on small group ministry since 1984 and has served in numerous leadership positions in the local church, denominational work, and international leader training. He and his wife, Zannie, have been happily married since 1974 and now live in Middle Tennessee where they are actively involved in their local church and their family.

You can scan the QR code below to go directly to www.dwightmoss.com to buy a copy of his first book, "Everything You Wanted to Know About Home Groups." You'll also find many free training videos and articles, DVD resources, as well as descriptions of other services he provides such as consultation, coaching, and training for your small group team.



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