

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. -Joshua 1:8

Approach each of these steps with prayer! God wants to meet with us as we seek Him in His Word. We recommend using a Bible that is not considered a paraphrase when doing study. ESV, NASB, or NKJV are good options. Finding one that breaks into paragraphs helps to follow the logical train of thought when reading. Bibles without a lot of extra information in them also help when you want to just focus on the Bible passage and not get distracted by the interpretations of others.

SCRIPTURE: Ways to decide which scriptures to read

1. Study a verse, chapter, or book. When looking at a verse, it will still be important to use the observations for the surrounding context.
2. Study a characteristic of God.
3. Study a Bible character.
4. Do a topical study.

OBSERVATION: Ask the question, “What does the text say?” Ask as many questions as possible. Look and look and look! Try not to draw any conclusions at this point. The key to good Bible study is to ask good questions. Gathering facts is important before making conclusions. Try to come at it with an “innocent eye” and get rid of your preconceived ideas.

Some ways to observe:

1. Look for repeated words, phrases, ideas, or themes.
 - a. Write down any words you do not understand to look up later.
 - b. When you look up a word in its original Greek or Hebrew, it can shed light on the meaning of a passage.
2. Ask who are the people mentioned, who is the message to, who is writing it?
 - a. Are those people mentioned anywhere else in the Bible?
 - b. Look at the pronouns: he, me, they, who, us, etc.
 - c. How are people addressed? Examples: brother, friend, servant, my people
3. Ask what. What is happening? What topics are being discussed?

4. Ask when. Can you figure out when the passage is taking place?
 - a. Does the book reference any time words such as before, during, after, then, etc?
 - b. What happened before and after the passage or book?
 - c. First try to just make notes regarding when it takes place based on what the Bible says.
5. Ask where. Can you tell where the passage takes place geographically? Some books will tell you. Look at a map. Can you find the places?
6. Other things you can observe:
 - a. Contrasts or comparisons (example: darkness and light, forgiveness and unforgiveness)
 - b. Illustrations: does the author use any other scriptures, everyday life situations, personal experiences?
 - c. Progression: does the author go from general to specific? From a question to an illustration? Need to remedy?
 - d. Are there any lists?
 - e. Is the author asking any questions?
7. Are there any commands to obey, warnings to heed, or promises to note?
8. Note if there are any words like “therefore.” When you see this kind of word, it’s good to ask the question, “What is it there for?”

INTERPRETATION: It is tempting at this point to interpret what we just read according to our own experiences and understandings. Interpretation is actually asking what did the passage mean to the original hearers or readers. All of the details you take the time to access in observation will help identify what it meant to the original audience.

1. Take time to look at the context.
 - a. What history surrounds it? If it is an Old Testament book, consider the Israelite story. If it is in the New Testament, where is it in light of the church story?
 - b. Can you find any more information in other Bible books or in a Bible dictionary?
 - c. What is the BIG PICTURE of the passage?
 - i. Look at the immediate surrounding verses
 - ii. Look at the whole passage
 - iii. Consider the entire book
 - iv. Put it in to the context of the whole counsel of God’s Word
2. What type of literature is the passage? The types of literature: Historical narratives, Old Testament law, Hebrew poetry, prophecy, gospels, parables, letters, apocalyptic literature.
 - a. This will greatly affect whether something is taken literally, figuratively, etc.
 - b. Keep it simple. As you consider the the type of literature, it will help to look at the passage in a correct way.
3. Does the author tell why the passage was written? See if you can figure out why!
 - a. Use the observations you made to help figure out why.
 - b. If you make it a habit to ask WHY, you will get so much more out of what you observe!
4. Scripture will always interpret scripture. If what you interpret is contradictory to what is said in other passages of scripture, it would be wise to rethink your conclusions.

APPLICATION: It is time to ask how the things we observed and interpreted can be applied to our lives in this century! This is the goal of all Bible study. When we read the Bible we want to apply it and see transformation in our lives. Do not assume that because you interpreted a passage that you have applied it. Take time to write it all down and personalize it!

1. What are the timeless truths that are in this book or passage? Consider the following:
 - a. What do I need to believe based on what I have discovered?
 - b. What attitudes or actions need to change?
 - c. What have I learned about my relationship with God and others?
2. How does each one of these truths apply to my life?
3. Are there any changes I need to make in my life in light of these truths?
4. How do I carry out the change?

PRAYER: For everything the Lord showed you in application of the truth, take time to pray!

1. Thank Him for what He showed you.
2. Praise him for the things the passage mentions.
3. Confess any sin areas revealed.
4. Commit these things to the Lord!

MEMORIZATION: Committing key scriptures to memory will give you an arsenal against the enemy and a tool belt of truth to pull up anytime you need it.

OTHER USEFUL TOOLS:

YouVersion Bible App

blueletterbible.org or Blue Letter Bible App

biblegateway.com

biblehub.com

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old and New testament) - Keener, Walton & Matthews

Theological Word Book of the Old Testament- Harris, Archer & Waltke