

Welcome

to
Inductive Bible Study

Welcome to an Inductive Bible Study, a powerful method by which you feed your soul with God's Word. The goal of the inductive method is for you to sit at the feet of Jesus and "draw out" the meaning of God's Word without injecting personal experience, background, or culture into your conclusions. The inductive study method helps you to discover the original intention and meaning the author of the book had when he wrote to his particular audience before you apply the biblical truths to your own life. This is done through three components: Observation, Interpretation, and Application. Inductive Bible studies are different than deductive Bible studies which allow conclusions to be drawn from the Bible based on personal experiences, background, and present-day culture, even if it does not fit the author's original meaning to his original audience.

Learning to feed your soul is like learning to cook for yourself rather than depending on others to feed you. Therefore, you must be patient in the process of learning and be diligent in the process of studying, always depending on the Spirit of God to teach you and give you understanding. Remind yourself of these truths below:

1 *God wants you to understand his word and has sent the Holy Spirit as your Helper in the process.*

*"But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him." **1 John 2:27***

2 *The Spirit of God teaches us what the scriptures mean through hard work. You must exert time and energy in order to gain the knowledge of God.*

*"If you seek [God's commandments] as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God" **Proverbs 2:4-5***

Studying an Epistle

In the Bible, God used different literary forms to communicate to those who would listen. Some of these include poetry, narrative, parables, prophecy and letters. An epistle is a letter written to a group of people regarding a specific subject. It is of the utmost importance to understand information about the original author and the original audience to whom the author was writing. The reason he wrote the letter helps us understand the letter as a whole as well as its smaller component parts.

There are three templates included in this inductive study:

I BOOK OVERVIEW

The goals of the book overview:

- Become familiar with the letter: Make sure to read the letter many times to become familiar with it. You may also want to listen to it for free on an audio version. You may want to read it in different translations.
- Discover the author: Who is speaking? Read through the letter and write what is said about him and note the tone he uses toward his audience. After you have taken time to engage the text before you, then write what you learn about the author from other places in the Bible.
- Discover the recipients: Who is receiving the letter? What is being said to them in the letter you are studying? Where are they? What are their circumstances in which the author is writing to them?
- Search for the occasion in which the author wrote to the recipients: Why is the author writing to this particular group of people? Is there a reason stated or clues that are given throughout the book?

II CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapter overview is intended for more interaction and observation with the individual chapter in order for the student to see the author's flow of thought in the letter. Marking up the chapter helps some students to note more observations and make connections.

The goals of the chapter overview:

- Become familiar with the chapter.
- Note the connecting words in the chapter to help see connections between the author's thoughts from one paragraph to the next.
- Notice themes by marking repeated words/ideas.
- Succinctly state what each paragraph is about in order to write a chapter summary.

III PARAGRAPH STUDY

The goals of the paragraph study are threefold:

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| ① | ② | ③ |
| OBSERVATION | INTERPRETATION | APPLICATION |

The paragraph study is meant to help with the process of the inductive Bible study components. The first three steps are written to help you with additional observation. Many students like to make a legend for interacting with their Bible text. Some like to purchase colored pencils, pens and highlighters in order to make this a visual help to you. (For example, place a triangle over the word God, a cross symbol over Jesus and dove over the word Spirit. Repeated words can be underlined in a particular color that you will continue to use throughout the entire study.

Numbers four through eleven are crafted to help you grasp the meaning of the text. You will notice that each step is numbered to help give structure to the process. The text is also provided for easy interaction. Below is an explanation of each step of the process.

Application is a huge part of interacting with God's Word. Every Christian should desire to hear from God and then walk in the ways of the Lord in the context of our daily lives. Therefore, numbers 12 and 13 help the believer to live out what has been learned with practical steps of implementation.

Observation What Do I See?

1 Mark up the Passage and Annotate

Ideas for mark-up

- God
- Jesus Christ
- Holy Spirit
- Repeated Words/Ideas/Subjects
- Commands (*e.g., put aside, pray without ceasing, etc.*)
- Lists (*e.g., characteristics, sins, promises, etc.*)
- Connecting words (*e.g., for, yet, therefore, nor/or, but, so, and*)
- Actions/Verbs
- Comparisons (*e.g., like or as*)
- Contrasts (*e.g., light vs. dark*)
- Warnings or Promises

2 Write down anything you learned about God, Jesus and/or the Holy Spirit.

3 Write down all that you learned from your mark ups and or any questions you have.

Interpretation What Does it Mean?

4 Read and Compare different translations. Suggested translations are NASB, ESV and NIV. Use a highlighter to mark any differences in choices of action words or nouns. Write down anything you learned as a result of comparing the three translations. You don't need to mark differences in sentence or phrase order. You may want to note if any words are missing or added from one translation to the next. If all three translations use different words, this alerts you, as a Bible student, to the different decisions made by the translators and gives the Bible student reason to define these words themselves. One free website is biblehub.com/lexicons.

- 5 Write how your understanding grew after reading the different translations. Are there words you want to investigate?
- 6 Define any words that need clarification. You may use a dictionary or a website.
- 7 Write a summary: What's the author's point of the paragraph? With a highlighter, mark the independent ideas in the paragraph. A sentence has a subject and verb which is a complete thought. If there are two sentences in a paragraph there are two main ideas in that particular paragraph. If there is only one sentence with a whole bunch of prepositional phrases following, then there is only one main thought. You will use the highlighted main ideas to form a summary of the paragraph. I usually think, "Who did what to whom?" to get my main sentence. After I add details of "how" and "why" if they are given.

For those who have learned structural diagrams, there is a place provided in this section. For those who haven't, students are encouraged to visually represent the meaning of the phrases.

- 8 In this section, also note things such as:
 - Why did the author write this? What specific point is being made in this paragraph? (What is/are the main command/s?)
 - What did it mean to the original audience?
 - Why did the author write this paragraph in its particular place in the book? How does it relate to the previous paragraph?

- 9** Are there any principles you learned from the passage that were true for the original audience and are still true today?

You have already written down some timeless truths when you wrote down what you learned about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In this section you will write down any other principles you learned.

Here are some examples:

- Believers are born again (1 Peter 1:3)
- The world is corrupted by lust (2 Peter 1:4)
- The earth will be destroyed with fire (2 Peter 3:10)

- 10** Note any Old Testament references in this passage. What did the reference mean to its original audience? What point does the author make by using that reference?

- 11** Are there any themes/topics in this passage that you would like to cross reference or develop? For example, you may have seen the commandment to love in the passage you studied so you want to list as many love commands given in the New Testament that you can find.

Application What Does it mean for Me?

12 What does it mean for me as I seek to love God and love my neighbor?

The application can be whatever the Holy Spirit has taught you in your study. The Acronym, EPICS, is meant to be a helpful prompt so the student might think through specifics as to how to glorify God in thought, word and action.

If your application is not included on this list, feel free to write it down. Not all of these prompts apply to all the paragraphs, but are meant as a helpful guide. Please don't skip the application. God intended for his children to obey His Word. If you are a part of a small group study, please share application and implementation with others in the study. This will contribute to spiritual growth and stability.



Examples to follow?

If there are positive examples to follow, then note how you can emulate their obedience to God. If there are negative examples to reject, then note how to avoid stumbling into similar mindsets and sins.



Promises to claim?

Is there something that is promised to believers in this passage? If so, write it down and meditate on this truth!



Identity reminders?

So often, we listen to ourselves or to the world about who we are. However, the scriptures teach us and renew our minds of wrong thinking about our view of "self" as a born again believer and as a child of God. Write down any truths in this passage that speak about who we are in Christ and our new identity in Him.



Commands to follow?

How I should live as a disciple of Christ as I depend on the Spirit?



Sins to forsake?

How I should NOT live in the flesh as a new creature in Christ?

Implementation What Steps Do I Need to Take?

- 13 How will I specifically implement the commands I need to follow or sins I need to forsake? What steps will I take in order to obey the area in which I was convicted during this lesson?

Consultation What Truths Did Others Find in This Passage?

- 14 After you have done the hard work of Bible study, go ahead and consult a commentary that was recommended to you by one of your pastors. After this step, you can choose one or more sermons to engage your heart. Use the space to write down anything you gleaned.

• Resources •

The elements in this study are not new. Several books have been written about how to study the Bible. Here are some that are consistent with our hermeneutics and with our philosophy of ministry.

Grasping God's Word by Duvall and Hays

Living by the Book by Howard Hendricks
(<http://www.cmcp.com.au/content/articles/22270499-Living-by-the-Book.pdf>)

Toward an Exegetical Theology by Walt Kaiser

Women of the Word by Jen Wilken

Fundamentals of the Faith, Grace Community Church
(<https://www.gty.org/library/fundamentals>)

Partners, One on One Discipleship, Mike Fabaraz
(<https://focalpointministries.org/product/partners/>)