

Studying God's Word



When it comes to studying a book of the Bible, you need to ask the right questions of the text. Below are tips to help you understand the background and context of any particular passage.

UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND

Read for the big picture

- Read the entire book in one sitting, if possible. If it's a longer book, consider breaking it up over a few days.

Read repetitively

- As you study smaller sections within the book, read the passage multiple times. The more familiar it is, the easier it will be to understand and retain the content.

Ask the right questions

- Focus on questions that will help you understand the author's original intent and what the text ultimately says about God.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AS YOU READ

Setting

- Who wrote the book? Who is the audience? Where does it take place?
- Does the author introduce any people, places, and/or events as you read?

Context

- How does this book fit within the timeline of the Bible?
- How is this connected to what was written before and/or after this passage?

Theme(s)

- What repeated words or ideas do you see throughout the text?
- What's the point of what you just read? How does it point to the main theme of the book?

Purpose

- Why was this book (or passage) written? What was the author's original intent in writing this text?

GOING DEEPER

These questions will help you as you study verse by verse. After getting an overview of the text, use the following exercises to help you interpret what you are reading.

- Read the text thinking about how the original audience would have understood this text.
- Define words using a Bible dictionary.
- Look up cross-references, especially related to key words or themes.
- Read the same verse in 1 or 2 other translations to understand the meaning of a verse.
- Summarize or paraphrase what you just read in 1-2 sentences.



Use a Bible study website, such as blueletterbible.org, to access study helps like cross-references, translations and definitions.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

The aim is to let the truths of God's Word transform your heart. Answer these questions and pray that the Holy Spirit would convict and guide you.

What do we learn about God?

What do we learn about relating to God?

What do we learn about people?

What do we learn about relating to people?

What will these truths look like in action?

Are there practical steps to take?

What questions do I still have?

How will I investigate this further?

Recommended resources

- *Women of the Word* by Jen Wilkin
- *Dig Deeper* by Nigel Beynon & Andrew Sachs
- *Asking the Right Questions* by Matthew Harmon