

studentGROUPS

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

There are many great ways to study your Bible, but we will focus on an inductive way of studying. “**Inductive**” basically means an approach of studying scripture that is done by collecting information and then drawing conclusions based on that info. It has been an approach used by many people in various church traditions and is a great way to dig deeper into the text. Through the inductive approach, you will use the Bible as a means to interpret itself. In other words, you will consider the book you are studying in the context of the *entire Bible* to help you understand its meaning and through collecting information, you will seek to see clearly what the text has to offer. We believe that scripture is full of not just wisdom or helpful advice, but it is the very source of our life.

As you do inductive studies, you will focus on three words: **observation, interpretation, and application.**

OBSERVATION FOCUSES ON DISCOVERING WHAT THE PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE IS ACTUALLY SAYING.

What does the passage say?

Observation is the foundation for interpretation and application. To thoroughly observe the text, focus on several different aspects of it. First, ask **the five W questions**—the who, what, where, when and why of the text, plus the all-important how.

WHO

*Who is the author?
To whom is the author speaking?
Who is involved?*

WHEN

*When does or when will the event take place?
Past, present, or future?*

WHY

*Why is the author writing this?
Why this event/person?
Why this time frame?*

WHAT

*What is discussed?
What do you learn from the text?
What instructions are given?*

WHERE

Where does the event take place?

HOW

How did the events in the book or chapter take place?

Once you have read the text answering the five W questions (and how), read the text again **highlighting** the key repeated words, comparisons/contrasts, commands, and questions.

KEY WORDS

Key words are often repeated throughout the text to give the text meaning

COMPARISONS

Comparisons highlight similarities by using the words “like” and “as”

CONTRASTS

Contrasts compare opposite things, such as good and bad.

COMMANDS

Commands help us understand what God is calling us to do.

QUESTIONS

Questions help us dig deeper into the text.

Making a list is another effective tool when observing the text. First, write out the key word and then write out what it says about that key word underneath it. Lists stem from what is said about a key word. Lists help us discover the truths of the text, as well as the main ideas. Writing them out can help you reflect and take notice of parts of the text you may not otherwise see.

The observation stage allows us to really study the text by reading the passage over and over again. This stage might seem boring, but we don’t want to miss the richness of observation. By observing the text over and over again, we see things we’ve never seen before!

GOD USES OBSERVATION TO OPEN OUR EYES TO THE MESSAGE AND DETAILS OF THE TEXT!

INTERPRETATION FOCUSES ON THE MEANING OF THE PASSAGE.

What does the passage mean?

While observation helps us understand what the text is saying, **interpretation is discovering the meaning of a passage**, the author's main thought or idea. Answering the questions that arise during observation will help you in the process of interpretation. Five clues (called "the five C's") can help you determine the author's main point(s):

CONTEXT. You can answer 75 percent of your questions about a passage when you read the text. Reading the text involves looking at the near context (the verse immediately before and after) as well as the far context (the paragraph or the chapter that precedes and/or follows the passage you're studying).

CROSS-REFERENCES. Let Scripture interpret Scripture. That is, let other passages in the Bible shed light on the passage you are looking at. At the same time, be careful not to assume that the same word or phrase in two different passages means the same thing.

CULTURE. The Bible was written long ago, so when we interpret it, we need to understand it from the writers' cultural context.

CONCLUSION. Having answered your questions for understanding by means of context, cross-reference, and culture, you can make a preliminary statement of the passage's meaning. Remember that if your passage consists of more than one paragraph, the author may be presenting more than one thought or idea.

CONSULTATION. Consult other books or apps about your passage. Reading books known as commentaries, which are written by Bible scholars, can help you interpret Scripture more clearly. Other helpful resources that you can use are Study Bibles, the Faithlife Study App, Biblegateway.com, and more.

Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance, observe carefully, and use the Bible as a whole to help you interpret a specific passage.

THE BEST RESOURCE FOR THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF GOD'S WORD IS GOD'S WORD - BECAUSE HE HAS INSPIRED IT ALL.

APPLICATION FOCUSES ON THE PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURES TO YOUR LIFE.

How does the passage change the way I live?

Application is *why* we study the Bible. We want our lives to change; we want to be obedient to God and to grow more like Jesus Christ. After we have observed a passage and interpreted or understood it to the best of our ability, we must then apply its truth to our own life.

You'll want to ask the following questions of every passage of Scripture you study:

- How does the truth revealed here affect my relationship with God?
- How does this truth affect my relationship with others?
- How does this truth affect me?
- How does this truth affect my response to the enemy, Satan?

The application step is not completed by simply answering these questions;

THE KEY IS PUTTING INTO PRACTICE WHAT GOD HAS TAUGHT YOU IN YOUR STUDY!

Studying inductively is a learning process that does not happen overnight. It happens by doing—doing over and over again, until the doing becomes almost a habit, and a wonderful one at that. As you go through the inductive process, you'll sometimes find observation, interpretation, and application happening simultaneously. God can give you insight at any point in your study, so be sensitive to His leading.

WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT GOD SAYS, WHAT HE MEANS, AND HOW TO PUT HIS TRUTHS INTO PRACTICE, YOU WILL BE EQUIPPED FOR EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE OF LIFE!