

Inductive Bible Study

The Simple Steps

1. PRAY
2. Observation: What does the passage say?
3. Interpretation: What does the passage mean?
4. Application: What does the passage mean for me?
5. PRAY

Digging Deeper

Inductive Bible Study is an approach to studying God's Word using a "scientific" method of exploration.

Any time we turn to God's Word, we must do so inviting the Holy Spirit to be our teacher.

1. **PRAY:** Without the Holy Spirit as our guide, we cannot fully engage with God's Word. As you begin to explore the passage, ask the Holy Spirit to keep distractions at bay, to speak to you clearly, and to open your heart for transformation.
2. **Observation: What does the passage say?** To understand the passage, we must first gather the facts. Ask Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? of the passage.
 - a. Read through the passage making note of the main themes, the context/background and note chapter headings or divisions.
 - b. *Who* are the main characters in the passage?
 - i. What does it say about God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit?
 - ii. How are the different characters related to one another?
 - iii. Who else is mentioned in the passage?
 - c. *What* is happening in the passage?
 - i. Make note of the verbs used.
 - ii. Are any words repeated?
 - d. *Where* do the events occur?
 - i. Make note of the geographic location.
 - e. *When* do the events occur?
 - i. What is the relationship of events that occur?
 - ii. Can you note the sequence of events?
 - iii. Is there mention about historical background or seasons?
 - f. *Why* do the events of the passage occur?
 - g. *How* do the events of the passage happen?

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- h. Conclusion: How would you summarize the passage? What questions arise from your exploration of the facts?
3. **Interpretation: What does the passage mean?** The next step invites us to explore what the passage means for the original audience and for us today. What are the *universal truths* that the passage reveals about God and His kingdom work?
- a. *Consider the context:* How does this particular passage fit within the larger context of the verses surrounding it and within the book it is found along with the overall Bible? Also consider the historical and cultural context in which the passage is placed. What is the literary style of the passage – historical narrative, poetic, prophetic, biographical (Gospel), epistle (letter), etc.
 - b. *Define terms:* Compare and contrast how different terms are used in different areas of Scripture. www.blueletterbible.org is a great resource to help with this. Make note of any surprising terms or uses of words – similes, metaphors, puns, play on words, hyperbole
 - c. *Explore the implications:* What is the clear teaching of the passage? Or, consider what it is simply trying to communicate. What do you think the author had in mind in writing what was written?
4. **Application: What does the passage mean for me?** The next step is to explore what the passage means for your life – this is time to get personal! Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. What is God saying to you and teaching you for transformation in your life?
- a. In what ways does the passage challenge, comfort, or convict you?
 - b. Are there truths from God’s Word that have brought to light a sin in your life and need for repentance and confession?
 - c. What will be different in your life by living the truth discovered in this passage? In what ways is the Spirit inviting you to change thoughts, behaviors or actions in your life?
 - d. How has this passage changed the way you view your relationships – family: spouse and children; friends; neighbors; co-workers; community; nation; world? Is the Spirit inviting you to take any action with regard to a relationship?
5. **PRAY:** Close your time praying with joy, hope and thanksgiving that the Spirit’s guidance has strengthened, renewed, transformed and drawn you closer to Jesus!