

Inductive Bible Study Method

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

Pray

Remember that any insight we gain from the Bible comes from God.

- Ask God to open your eyes to see wonderful things in His Word
- Pray before you start reading and throughout your study.
- Pray in light of what you've read, and ask God to give you understanding and direction on how to apply what you've learned.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Observation

Observe what the passage is saying and describing. Read through once then go back and make some initial observations about it. Read each portion several times. Ask yourself these observations questions:

- WHO is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters?
- WHAT is the subject or event covered in the chapter? What do you learn about the people, event, or teaching? What is the central theme or thought expressed in this passage?
- WHEN do/will the events occur or did/will something happen to someone?
- WHERE did or will this happen? Where was it said?
- WHY is something being said or mentioned? Why would/will this happen? Why at that time / to this person/people?
- HOW will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

It's also helpful to look out for key words and phrases, repeated words, contrasts and comparisons, and terms of summary and conclusions ("so that," "for this reason," "therefore," etc.)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Interpretation

From what you've learned in your observation of the text, you are trying to discern a primary meaning of the passage—what the author was seeking to communicate & what God was seeking to communicate through that author.

- What aspects of our fallen condition does this passage address or correct?
- What redemptive solution(s) does God reveal in this passage?
- What does this passage teach us about Jesus and God's nature?
- What is noticeable, special, or unusual about how the words, phrases, and sentences are arranged?
- What words are not clear as to their meaning?
- What eternal truths are expressed in this passage?
- Are there any other passages that say something similar?

Another good exercise is to summarize the passage in one sentence. Reading the passage in more than one translation may also give you new insight into its meaning.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

Application

How does the passage apply to us today? God enlightens us from the Word, we apply what we've learned with our wills, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to carry out those choices. It is usually best to concentrate on applying one principle at a time. The goal of the application is to glorify God by becoming more like Christ. 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for..."

Teaching. What did I learn?

Reproof. Where do I fall short? Why do I fall short?

Correction. What will I do about it (by the power of the Spirit)?

Training in righteousness. How can I make this principle a consistent part of my life?

In light of this, pray through these questions help you apply what you've been reading to your walk with God.

- God, what are you trying to say to me through this passage?
- In what ways am I looking to find life in things besides you, God?
- In what ways am I seeking to earn your favour rather than living by grace?
- What do my actions suggest that I wrongly believe about your character, our relationship, and what you've said in the Bible?
- In what ways do we need to be more intimate in our relationship?
- In what way is Jesus the hero?

NOTE: It's important to write things down as you study! Record any questions you had about the passage as you were reading, answers you found as you studied and prayed, and any outstanding questions you may still have!