

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

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Inductive Bible Study Method is **using the Bible as your main source of information** and putting God first. It's where you go first hand to find out what God wants to teach you about the books and topics of the bible. Our observation of God's Word need to be correct, as this has an implication on our interpretation and application.

Prayer is absolutely critical when you are studying the Word of God. When you are studying the Bible it is important to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in your understanding of the Word of God and stop to allow God to speak to you.

Using the Inductive Bible Study Method is a slow process and you have to give yourself enough grace to know and understand that **this is a long term deliberate study of the Word of God.**

Inductive Bible Study is a method that involves three skills :

Observation - teaches you to see precisely what the passage is saying. It is the basis for accurate interpretation and correct application. Observation answers the question - What does the passage say?

Interpretation - answers the question - What does the passage mean?

Application - answers the question - What does it mean to me personally? How do I put the truths in practice? What changes should I make in my life?

The most important questions to ask in Inductive Bible Study is:

Who -

- Who did it?
- Who are the audience?
- Who is the author talking about?
- Who is speaking?
- Who are the main characters?
- What do you know about them?
- What kind of people are they?

What -

- What is happening?
- What is the author saying?
- What did they do?
- What is the main idea?
- What words are confusing/unfamiliar?
- What is the context?
- What is the genre?
- What kind of sentence is this (command or declaration)?
- What tense are the verbs?
- What verbs are used?
- What images are used?

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- What object lessons?
- What else happened here?

When -

- When did it happen?
- When will it happen?
- When can it happen?
- What was happening before this?
- What happens next?
- What were they talking about?

Where -

- Where are they going?
- Where did it happen?
- Where will it take place?
- Where are the audience / people in relation to one another?
- Where else in the Bible do they talk about this?
- Where else are these words used?

Why -

- Why did the author say that?
- Why did he do that?
- Why did they go there?
- Why are we talking about this?
- Why does he need to say this?
- Why does he say it like this?
- Why are we in this situation?

How -

- How did it happen?
- How can it happen?
- How was something done?
- How did he say it?
- How did he respond to people?
- How did this come about?

What you would need for your quiet time:

Scripture - When you use the Inductive Bible Study Method it is all about you finding your own rhythm in the words. It is you marking themes, topics, writing down your own headings, researching words, pouring over maps and researching what God wants to teach you from His Word. A good way to start is where you copy and paste the book or passage you are studying into a word document to print. Use a large font and double space your sentences, this makes for easy marking and referencing. When choosing to download, you can choose not to have the headings and only copy text.

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Reference Material - In the Inductive Bible Study Method - Remember it is all about using the Bible as your source material. You can use a concordance to find the meaning of words, read about the history of a person, audience, historical references and research maps. When using the inductive study method it's about finding your own application to the study you are doing and only afterwards when you have a good understanding of the content read commentaries and other resource material.

Inductive Bible Study Worksheets - here is free worksheets for you to use. You can print out as many as you need. You can use a notebook or even loose paper that you can put into a binder.

Stationery - To make things interesting, use color pens, pencils, markers, washi tape, cut outs, anything that pops out for you and makes you smile when journaling in your quiet time.

How to get started - Inductive Bible Study Method guideline

The Inductive Bible Study is a method that you can tweak and change according to your flow and the time you have available to do your quiet time.

- A good way to start is to **read the entire book from beginning to end** and get a good understanding of the flow of the Word, who the author was, who he wrote it for, what the historical setting was. Start asking yourself questions and writing them down.
- Use tools such as **word studies, cross references, leave the commentaries for last.**
- **Create a simple chart of the book's structure.** When you have a good outline of the book you can start with your observation of the scripture you have chosen to study.
- **Look for lists.** The best way to discover lists in your scripture is to see how a keyword is described, note what is said about someone or look at instructions. Keywords can be covenant, death, life, sin, repent, love, law, grace, believe, faith, righteousness, holiness, Jesus first coming etc.
- **Watch for contrasts and comparisons.** When descriptive language is used this highlights significant truths. A contrast is a comparison of things that are different or opposite (dark/light). Contrast words are usually, but, however, yet, nevertheless, on the other hand, instead, whereas. A comparison points out to similarities and is usually indicated by words such as like, as, also, as it were, consider, more than, less than, best, worst most important, least, greatest, first last.
- **Investigate the historical background of the book.**
- **Research when the book is written.** A good indication is when referrals are made to feasts or months - write it down.
- **Mark your time words** then, after this, until, then, immediately, the next day, finally, earlier, when, now, soon, as soon as.
- **Mark your keywords and phrases.** A keyword is essential to your scripture study and when you remove the keyword it leaves the passage devoid of any meaning. Mark your keyword consistently the same throughout your study. This visual mark will help you identify certain key subjects quickly throughout your Bible.
- **Mark your warnings,** beware, heed
- **Mark your instructions** do, do not, shall, shall not.
- **Mark your transition words,** therefore, now concerning, in conclusion, finally, but then, thus, so because, next
- **Develop your chapter themes.** This will center on a main person, event, teaching or subject of that section of Scripture. Themes are often revealed when you highlight your keywords and

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phrases. Chapter divisions only came later after the Bible was originally written. If you have more than one theme in a chapter, write it down.

- **Segment your chapters under themes.** Segment divisions help you see the framework of a book. Book segments can vary and might be divided according to dates, reigns of kings, geographical locations, events, topics, doctrines.
- **Write down the purpose of the book.** This will help you to understand God's Word and help you grow in your relationship with God.
- Write down the main theme of the book after you have observed all your chapters. **Write down your description of the book as a whole.**
- **Conclusion** - when you see terms of conclusion it is usually followed by an important sequence of thought and include words such as wherefore, therefore, for this reason, and finally. When you see therefore, so, for, finally, for this reason, note, what is there for all of these words are conclusion words.
- **Discover your lessons for your life.** What does God want to tell you and how does God want you to apply these truths in your life.

Observation is the important step of the process as this is where you will grow to understand the Word of God and what the Bible actually says and through this process grow within your relationship with God.

Further questions you can ask in the Inductive Bible Study Method in the different sections of Observation, Interpretation and Application

Observation - What do you observe about the scripture?

You can learn so many things from the Bible by asking the right questions. When you work through your observations write down your answers, you will be surprised how much you learn.

Read the entire scripture you are studying at least once all the way through. After reading the scripture through, read again and this time -

- Pray, ask God to teach you
- Find out about the context of the scripture, book, topic. Words have different meanings. Make sure you understand the Word in context within the topic you are studying.
- Mark your keywords - highlight important words and phrases. Keywords are essential to your text, when you remove your keyword the passage is then devoid of meaning.
- Look at repeated words and phrases - what do they tell you?
- What phrases is used
- Mark your phrases
- Verb tense - note the verb tenses for important changes
- Look at where the following words - once, then, now, will be, therefore, but, since, so, thus, because, for, likewise, if, then, lead to and from.
- Read different Bible translations.
- Make Lists
- Who wrote the book?
- When was the book written?
- What is the mood of the passage?

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- Who was the audience?
- What is the audience like?
- Check facts about people, places and events.
- Why did they write the book?
- Who is the main characters of the book?
- What is the main event of the book?
- What is the setting of the book?
- What is the main theme of the book?
- What led up to the passage?
- What follows the passage?
- What is the geographic location?
- Identify chapter themes?
- Are there any commands?
- Are there any contrasts? - note words and phrases that are opposites.
- Contrasts and comparisons?
- Is there cause and effect? Draw arrows from the cause of the action to the effect or result
- Climax - determine the high point in the passage
- Are there things being repeated?
- Where have you fallen short, and how can you improve?
- Are there problems and then solutions?
- Gods promises?
- Are there any connections to other parts of the Bible?
- How are you encouraged and strengthened?
- What do you do with the information given to you?
- What did God say to you today?
- Is there a sin in your life that you need to confess and repent?
- Are you a changed person as a result of receiving God's Word.
- What must I do to make God's Word real in me?
- How should I carry out these changes?
- What is God's purpose in telling me this? Mark phrases that reveal purpose (so that, in order that)
- Always ask questions?
- What is the meaning of the message? What is God telling you?

When you work through the text, make notes of all the questions you have of certain phrases and words (a good Biblical dictionary comes in handy).

Look at **different Bible Translations**, what does each one say if you are not sure of a specific translation.

Interpretation - What do you understand when reading the scripture?

When you are at the interpretation stage **it is important for you to know who the book was written for and why**. When you understand the reason why the author wrote the book and what he wanted to say to his audience this enables you to interpret the scripture and for your to apply the biblical principles you have learned to your life. When you read a specific verse, **always remember to consider each verse in relation to the surrounding verses**, in the book in which the verse is found and in the entire Word of

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God. **Remember that context rules.** When you do your Bible study, remember that scripture will never contradict scripture.

When interpreting what you have learned ask yourself these questions?

- What did the author of the book want his audience to understand?
- What is the teaching he wanted to give his audience?
- What is the author's train of thought when delivering the message?
- What is the doctrinal and/or moral problem being addressed by the author?
- What is the actions the author wants his audience to take?
- How does this make you feel?
- What doesn't the Bible say?
- What does this teach me about God?
- What does this teach me about God's nature?
- What does this teach me about God's character?
- What does this teach me about God's dreams?
- What does this teach me about God's will?
- What does this teach me about God's plan?
- Paraphrase what you have learned and what you understand.
- Summarize your passage. Create a diagram to record your main ideas, subject and purposes.
- What is supported in the scripture you are studying?
- What does the passage teach you today?
- What is your conclusion?
- Does this passage unfold into a bigger theme in the bible and not only the book you are currently studying?

If you are not clear about a certain topic, don't be afraid to ask you leaders and elders in your community of believers for guidance.

Application - How does what I have learned change me?

When you study the Word of God it is all about what you learn and how you put what you have learned through the Word of God into practice -

- Make God's Word personal
- Rely on the Holy Spirit
- What can I do to make God's Word real for me?
- What in this scripture speaks to you who God is?
- Ask the question how can I model His character?
- What is God's character?
- How does this scripture change how you look at yourself? Imagine the difference in your life.
- What is my personal prayer to make these changes.
- What can I make the changes in my life?

Take care - Debbera