

How to Study the Bible

Lesson Three

The Inductive Bible Study Method

Three MAIN steps:

- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application

Observation...What it says.

Interpretation...What does it mean?

Application...What does it mean to me or how can I apply it to my life?

1. Observation

- Teaches us precisely what the passage says.
- It is the basis for accurate interpretation and application.
- It answers the question: What does the passage say?

2. Interpretation

- Answers the question: What does the passage mean?

3. Application

- Answers the question: What does it mean to me personally?
- How can I apply this to my own life?
- What changes should I make in light of this truth?
- What truths can I put to practice in my life?

Observation

Always comes FIRST

Questions to ask: WHO?

- Who was writing or speaking?

- To whom are they writing/speaking?
- Who are the people involved?

Questions to ask: WHAT?

- What is said?
- What is happening?
- Is it a command?
- Is it an exhortation?
- Is it a rebuke?
- Is it a question?
- Is it an answer?
- Is it a prayer?
- Is it a quotation of other scripture?
- What is the main point?
- What are the key words or phrases?
- What is the context ?

Questions to ask: What is the literary style?

- Is it a narrative?
- Is it a conversation?
- Is it a parable?
- Is it poetry?
- Is it a letter (epistle)?
- Is it a sermon?
- Is it a prophecy?

Questions to ask: WHEN?

Time Reference:

When was the event taking place?

When will it take place?

Note words like:

- After Therefore
- Until Wherefore
- Then When
- Is it past? Present? Future?

Questions to ask: WHERE?

- Where does or where will it take place?

Take note of Locations:

- Town or cities, or streets
- In the country, or the wilderness
- In a house, home or temple
- Roads.....Rivers.....Mountain.....Region
- Nation.....Heaven.....Hell.....Earth

Questions to ask: WHY?

- Are there clues as to why the events will take place?
- Why is this being said?

Questions to ask: HOW?

- Is there an explanation about how things are done or how they are to be done?

As you read and reread the text:

- Mark the key words and phrases.
- Highlight - use different colors.
- Make notes - “The weakest ink is better than the best memory.” – Adrian Rogers
- Annotate your own Bible, your own references.
- Make a list of the topics in the text.

REMEMBER: The Bible uses figures of speech.

- Similes
- Metaphors – analogy
- Personification

- Hyperbole
- Symbols

Observation

WATCH for contrasts and comparisons in the text.

Words such as:

- Like
- As
- As it were

DEVELOP Chapter themes.

DISCOVER Lessons for life.

INTERPRETATION

Rules of Context

Context means: That which goes with the text.

- The surrounding verses
- The book in which it is found
- The other verses in the Bible related to the topic

Don't base your interpretation on a single verse.

***Remember!** One scripture NEVER contradicts another scripture.

Interpret scripture literally unless the context clearly implies otherwise.

Look for the literal meaning in the passage or verse.

ONE interpretation...MANY applications.

APPLICATION

“How do I apply this to my life?”

- Is there a promise to keep?
- Is there a lesson to learn?
- Is there a blessing to enjoy?
- Is there a command to keep?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a new thought to carry with me?

What changes should I make in light of this truth?

Bible education is VITAL!

It is MOST important.