

Old Testament Book Study

How to Apply Lessons From the Old Testament to Your Life

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The Old Testament book study allows you to glean applicable lessons from the experiences of the Israelites, ordinary people like us, as they encountered God. In the study you will trace two aspects: God's character, and principles to live by. If your time is limited, however, you can study one of these aspects and leave the other for another time.

Steps to Follow

Step 1: Pick a book to study. One of the more action-packed books filled with events would be the best place to start. Plan to read the book through in segments, taking one to three chapters at a time.

Step 2: Make a chart with divisions for chapter and verse, events, God's character, principles to live by, and application. (Example at the end of the article)

Step 3: List references and the events as you read. You may not want to write down every little situation, but rather the more detailed ones. For example, from Josh. 1:1-9 you might include the following: God commissioned Joshua to go in place of Moses to take possession of the Promised Land. With the commission was the promise of His presence and that He would give them the land. God told Joshua to keep the law and meditate on it always, as a means of success.

Step 4: List the character traits of God, qualities He displayed about Himself in each encounter with people. What can you see about the nature of God, His heart, mind, and will? For example, again from Josh. 1:1-9: God makes promises, He gives specific instruction, He expects obedience, and He understands our fears and addresses them.

Step 5: Trace the principles or truths that can be learned from transactions between God and His people. A principle, according to Webster's dictionary is "a fundamental truth, or motivating force upon which others are based; a rule of right conduct." A principle to live by can be supported as God's truth throughout the Scriptures. Here we are tracing principles or truths upon which God wants us to pattern our lives. For example, when God speaks to us we must listen and act upon what He says as truth. God always means what He says. God's Word is our road map; we are to follow it and cling to it for success in life. As we act on His Word, God's promises will go with us and be our confidence.

Step 6: Write applications. As you relate what you are reading to your personal life, the Holy Spirit may speak to you about some very specific circumstances in your own life where this Scripture applies. Jot it down with the intent to do something in response to God's leading. Another time you may just see general ways of relating the passage to your life. List these, too. The purpose of this step is to take note of what God is trying to tell you.



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Step 7: Summarize. When you have completed the entire book in this manner, review your findings. Reread your comments on the character of God and summarize them. Write down the most prevalent attributes of God that you traced throughout the book. Then review the principles you discovered. Which ones were reinforced most often through the book? Which ones seem most important? Finally, see if there are any patterns in your applications. One point may stand out above all the others, or they may be leading to one specific need in your life.

I use this Old Testament study method in my devotions and in extended times with the Lord. It has helped me get a better handle on the content of the Old Testament. The Old Testament has become relevant to my own experiences as I have seen God’s character throughout its pages and been able to relate the principles to my everyday life.

Survey of Joshua

Chapter and Verse	Event	God’s Character	Principles to Live By	Applications
Joshua 1:1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God commissioned Joshua to take possession of the land • Told him to keep law and meditate for success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God makes promises • Gives specific instructions • Expects obedience • Understands fears and addresses them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When God speaks we listen and act • God always means what He says • God’s Word is a road map • Cling to the law for success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I’m going to be successful I must know God’s instructions to me and cling to His Word • Quiet time is a must
Joshua 1:10-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joshua commanded people to prepare to pass over the Jordan and take possession • Reminded people of Moses’ command to take possession • Commanded men of valor to help brothers take their land before settling themselves • People pledged obedience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desires brethren to stay together, support, and care for each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate obedience • Step out on promises of God • A leader must take charge • God leads through His godly leaders • One must trust God to trust leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I act on what God says during my quiet time? • I must trust God so much that I trust His being able to speak to my leaders

