

Inductive Bible Study Method

1. Select a Passage (*Usually 3-10 verses, dealing with the same topic.*)

Why do you want to study this passage?

2. Observe the passage by asking questions

Who is writing or speaking and to whom?

What is the passage about?

When does this take place?

Where does this take place?

Why does the author write what he does? What problems were the recipients facing?

How does this passage fit in with the context? (What goes before and after?)

Additional Questions to Ask:

What are the commands?

What are the promises?

What are the cause/effect relationships?

What are the repeated words and ideas?

What do I learn about God?

What do I learn about Jesus?

What do I learn about the Holy Spirit?

What do I learn about myself (or mankind)?

Write out any additional observations including contrasts, lists, comparisons, etc.

3. What is the “big idea” of the passage—your theme?

This can most readily be identified from the commands and the repeated words and ideas. Often there will be one command in the passage with several motivations. In one phrase, sum up the main thought of the passage.



4. Ask the natural question that arises from the “big idea.” This will usually be “how,” “why,” or “what.”
5. Answer the question you have raised from the passage.

Put your answers in the form of an outline. These answers form principles of life and ministry. A principle is defined as a timeless lesson in the way God works, how you should live or in thinking God’s way. To develop each principle (each point in your outline), you will want to *explain* it (interpretation), *illustrate* it (from the Bible or personal examples of how this principle is worked out), and *apply* it.

Steps to interpreting the passage. Use as many of the following questions as you need, progressing downward.

1. What are the meanings of the words?
2. What does the immediate context suggest?
3. What does the broader context suggest?
4. What do cross-references suggest?
5. What is the cultural meaning? (That is, What did it mean to those to whom it was originally addressed?)
6. What do commentaries suggest?

6. Application

This is where you purpose to *do* what God has taught you in your time with Him. (Ref: James 1:21-25, Matthew 7:24-27) It is through applying the Word that God changes our lives. Application does not happen by osmosis but by intent. God enlightens us from the Word, we apply what we’ve learned with our wills, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to carry out these choices. It is usually best to concentrate on applying one principle at a time. The goal of all application is to glorify God by becoming more like Jesus.

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?

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

