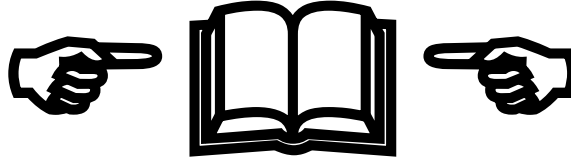




# Basic Bible Study Methods



A course for people who are committed to understanding and applying the Bible to daily living.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course designed by  
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# The Three Steps in Bible Study

STEP 1 -  **Observation: What does it say?**  
What?

STEP 2 -  **Interpretation: What does it mean?** **So**  
What?

STEP 3 -  **Application: What does it mean to me?** **Now**  
What?

## OBSERVATION: What does it say?

1. **Use a good study bible** if you have one. Some excellent study bibles are the MacArthur, Open, Swindoll, Nelson, Thompson Chain, etc
2. When studying a book of the Bible (i.e. Romans, Ephesians, Psalms) it will help if you **read the introduction** to the book to get an idea what it's about before you begin.
3. **Use a notebook** and **take notes** as you begin. The more you write down, the more you'll retain and remember.
4. **Just begin:** start **jotting down important thoughts** in your own words. and ask the Lord to give you understanding. **Look** for key words, choices & consequences, contrasts, events, examples: good or bad, truths about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, life, sins committed, warnings, promises, etc. **Look carefully at what is there!**
5. The **key** to bible study is learning to **ask the right questions!**
6. **Good tools can help:** MacArthur Study Bible, NASB, NLT, Bible Knowledge Commentary, Warren Wiersbe Be Series, Online Free Helps include BibleHub and Bible Gateway

**Observation: What does it say?**

John 3:16 - write down as many observations as you find - no matter how simple or obvious!

(For example - God - probably refers to the Father

Loved - had compassion for and interest in, deep concern

So loved - great love, huge love, more than ordinary.....

God so loved the World - the earth? mankind? sinful man?

Now, you try it!

John 1:1-3 - Write down everything you see in these verses. Use your own words to define and list any questions that come to mind

**Observation of various kinds of Bible passages.....**

**DOCTRINE:** Romans 6:23 (read it!)

**POETRY:** Psalm 23:1-6 (read it!)

**N.T. NARRATIVE:** Mark 2:1-12 (Look carefully!)

**O.T. NARRATIVE:** II Chronicles 20:1-30 (Look for turning points!)

(We are looking for the **big picture** first, and the **details** later!)

**INTERPRETATION: What does it mean? So What?**

After making a careful study of what is being stated, it is time to move ahead to the next step.....what does it mean?

**There is always one major meaning to any Bible text.**

We may get **many applications** from a Bible passage, but there is really only **one primary interpretation**. This flows from the context and must be consistent with the rest of scripture. This is what we mean when we say we **compare scripture with scripture**. The Bible never contradicts itself, if truly understood.

Therefore, we must **always come back to the scripture and the context** to determine the meaning of a given passage.

What does the following passage mean: **(use your own words....paraphrase)**

**John 3:16**

**John 1:1**

**John 1:14**

**PARAPHRASING: Putting it in your own Words!**

This exercise is very important in poetical & doctrinal books because it forces you to wrestle with the meaning

**I John 1:9 - Read the verse**

**STEP 1 - List Important Words**

**STEP 2 - Select Synonyms**

(similar meanings)

\_\_\_\_\_.....  
\_\_\_\_\_.....  
\_\_\_\_\_.....  
\_\_\_\_\_.....  
\_\_\_\_\_.....

**STEP 3 - Paraphrase It!**

Now, using the synonyms, re-write the whole verse in your own words.

Now paraphrase the next verse (1:10) on the fly **out loud as you read it**

**Now try Psalm 46 (the whole thing!)**

**SUMMARIZING:** Summing up the main lesson, points or principles you see in a passage of scripture. This is especially important in the narrative sections of the Bible.

The **main thing** to remember in summarizing is the **KISS principle**.....

Keep it **simple & short**

Try your hand at summarizing the following passages.....what's the main point!

**Psalm 23**

**Mark 2:1-12**

**II Chron. 20:1-30**

Moving into lessons, principles and main points has taken you from observation .... through interpretation....into the first stage of application. It should become a rather easy task to move from one step into the next. **But observation is the key. Unless you see it, you can't interpret or apply it.**

**APPLICATION: NOW WHAT?!?**

Application is the spiritual art of letting God touch your heart with His truth. It is examining what we should know, feel or do, or...what we should stop believing, feeling or doing. It is the practical application of God's truth.

Application is **taking the medicine** the Spirit prescribed as you read, thought about, and understood the Bible passage you were reading.

Using two familiar (by now) passages of scripture, make some personal & practical applications from them.....using the following starters....

**MARK 2:1-12**

Lesson from the paralyzed man: I need to remember.....

Lesson from the stretcher carriers: I need to learn to .....

Lesson from the Lord Jesus: I should .....

Lesson from the scribes: I should.....

Within the next 48 hours I am going to.....

**I CHRON. 20:1-30**

Lessons from the King: I should.....know....feel.....do.....

Lessons from the Lord: I need to remember that.....

Within the next 48 hours I am going to.....



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### **LOCATION.....LOCATION.....LOCATION.....**

Becoming familiar with Bible lands is important as you learn and grow -  
For example: **What did Jonah do in 1:1-3**

**Where is Israel?**

**Where is Nineveh?**

**Where is Joppa?**

**Where is Tarshish?**

How does this bit of geography help you understand what's happening in the rest of the book of Jonah?

Using the maps in the back of your Bible, locate the following areas.....

**The ancient world at the time of Abraham.....**

**Israel's Journey with Moses from Egypt to Sinai to Kadesh to Israel**

**The 12 Tribes in Canaan**

**The Kingdoms of David & beyond - locate Philistia, Assyria, Syria,  
Babylon, Greece & Rome**

**The Life of Jesus in Israel - Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea**

**The 3 Missionary Trips of the Apostle Paul**

## MAP OF BIBLE LANDS

### Locate the following Countries:

Babylon  
Assyria  
Moab  
Ammon  
Philistia  
Canaan (Israel, Palestine)  
Edom  
Egypt  
Syria  
Goshen  
Ararat

### Locate the following Cities:

Jerusalem  
Nazareth  
Dan (2)  
Bethel  
Bethlehem  
Nineveh  
Babylon (Chaldea)  
Ur  
Gaza  
Kadesh Barnea  
Haran

### Locate the following bodies of water:

Sea of Galilee  
Persian Gulf  
Red Sea  
Euphrates River  
Tigris River  
Jordan River  
Dead Sea  
Mediterranean Sea  
Nile River

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**BIOGRAPHICAL: JONAH** (Putting it all together....)

**BACKGROUND:** What was going on in Jonah's day?

**Time Period:**

**Political Situation:**

**Religious Situation:**

**Jonah's Own Situation:**

**His Job:**

**His Attitude:**

**His Spiritual Condition:**

**THE PROBLEM / NEED**

**GOD'S WORD / WORK**

**HUMAN RESPONSES**

1:1-3

1:4-16

1:17-2:10

3:1-3

3:4-10

4:1-10

Personal Application: What lessons have you learned from this study? What personal applications can you make? Within the next 48 hours, I am going to.....

**BIOGRAPHICAL: Barnabas - a character study**

**STEP 1** - Look up **all references** of the person being studied so you have a complete list to study from. 📖 ✍️

**STEP 2** - Read all the passages & jot down your **first impressions**.  
(**Whatever stands out to you.**) 🌀

**STEP 3** - Read again, and make a list of the **critical events** involved. 📄

**STEP 4** - Read again, and list what **character qualities** are evident .....  
both good and bad..... positive & negative. 😊😞

**STEP 5** - Read a final time, and make an **advice list** for yourself that you learned from this character. ⌚

## REMINDERS TO MAKING YOUR BIBLE STUDY PRACTICAL:

### Ask Yourself as You Read & Review.....

**Are there...** Attributes of God revealed  
Realities about mankind revealed  
Sins to confess (am I personally convicted of a sin)  
Promises to claim (are they Universal; Unconditional; Conditional)  
Choices & Consequences  
Commands to obey or principles to follow  
Attitudes to change (either described or implied)  
Examples to follow or avoid  
Prayers to pray (that should be my heart's cry?)  
Errors to reject (false teaching)  
Something to Praise God for (Praise Him as you see it!

Big Truths - don't miss the forest for the trees!  
Truths about God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Me, Church, Future, Daily Life

Little Details – major truths often appear in small details

Personalize - try to put yourself mentally in the bible-characters shoes.  
What were they probably thinking, feeling, experiencing.....why?

Be Patient - don't rush the process/ Truth often becomes clear as you learn to  
"be still and know" ... begin with a prayer of surrender & seeking.....  
"not my will, but Yours be done"...or..."speak Lord, for your  
servant is listening"

Take Notes: forcing yourself to take notes forces you to think, to  
analyze, to pay attention, to get involved with what you're  
reading. Even if you throw the notes away, you'll retain  
the truth far longer than if you don't write it down!!!