



Training Outline

OVERVIEW

This study will help you gain a big picture understanding of a book of the Bible. You will only need to do this study once, as you begin a new study in a book. Once you have done this study, you will only need to refer to your notes to refresh your memory regarding the context of your passage within that book.

PRAY

Confess any sin that may hinder your study of God's Word and pray for God to open your eyes to see him and his truth — Psalm 119:18 / Psalm 86:11

READ

You will want to read the book multiple times, and if possible in one sitting. As you read, look for Who, Where, When, What and Why. God will open your eyes and bring understanding. Many have said that the more times they read through the book, the more they see.

As you read you will want to take notes. It may be good to just write in your notebook the words Who, Where, When, What, and Why. As you see from the text something about the Author, Audience, Location, Time Period, Historical Background, or the Purpose just write it down and if possible include the Scripture reference as well. This will help you when you share with the class and refer to your notes later as you study other passages.

WHO

Refers to the original author and the original audience. Sometimes the author and audience are directly identified in the text, at other times they may not be. A Study Bible (we recommend the ESV Study Bible) is a great help, as it will provide additional information regarding your author and audience. First start with your text, and then move to your Study Bible.

WHERE

The original author and audience were located in a particular location. Again, sometimes the location is provided in the text, and sometimes it is not. As before your Study Bible will be a great help in gaining information regarding the location of your author and audience. The maps included in your Study Bible will also be a great help; not only locate the particular location within the original time period, but also to give a frame of reference for today. Don't forget to start with the text and then move to your Study Bible. Gather as much information as you can from the text first.

WHEN

It is helpful to locate the particular time period in history in which your author is writing and your audience would be reading. Your Study Bible will be of great help with this one, rarely is a time period mentioned in the text.

What

The historical background—events, culture, and political situation—may be listed in your text, but many times this information will again be provided in your study Bible. Understanding the historical background is one of the most helpful tools in understanding why the author was writing these things to his audience at this time. Gather as much information as you can from the text and then turn to your Study Bible to gain more information.

Why

This is where you will answer the question, Why was this author writing these words to this audience at this time? Sometimes the author includes his purpose in his writing, or you can identify particular themes which lead you to understanding the purpose of the author. But again, your Study Bible is helpful.

Teaching Tips

If you are new to Studying the Bible in this manner, it will be best to begin with a shorter New Testament book such as Philippians or Colossians. As you gain in your proficiency, you can then study longer books of the Bible and those that may be more difficult to understand.

If this is the first time for your group to do an Overview Study, you will want to introduce them to the process and use the training tool above to help them understand exactly what is expected of them.

Your whole class/group will do the Overview Study at home. The Overview study takes about 30-55 minutes. They can spread this over six days, or do it all in one sitting.



Passage Study

The following process will help you study a passage of Scripture. The goal, is understanding what the original author wanted the original audience to know, be, and/or do, so that you can then apply God's Word accurately to your own life. Doing so, will lead you to worship and enjoy God for who He is, grow in godliness and likeness to Christ Jesus, and unite your heart to God's people and God's mission.

PREPARE

As you begin your study:

Pray...for God to open your eyes to see Him and His truth

- Psalm 119:18

Confess

...any sin that may hinder your study of God's Word and pray

- Psalm 86:11

Read the Passage

...multiple times. You may also want to read your passage in multiple translations, and read the chapter before and after your passage as well.

Review

...your notes from the overview to help set your passage in the context of the book.

- Who
- Where
- When
- What
- Why

SEE

Every author uses literary tools in which to communicate their message to a group of people. Identifying these tools brings clarity in understanding the author's original meaning but not every literary tool is in every passage

As you identify the following literary tools for your passage, have in your mind the following question:

What was the author saying to the original readers?

Repeated Word or Phrases

When an author repeats certain words and/or phrases, this alerts the audience that this word/phrase is significant to the author's purpose or key theme within a passage.

Comparisons and Contrasts (but, however, like, as, etc.)

Many times an author will compare or contrast words or phrases in order to bring clarity his main point within a passage. "The primary difference between contrast and comparison is that contrast focuses on differences while comparison tends to highlight some aspect of similarity." (Inductive Bible Study, 127)

Commands and Promises (will...)

Commands have been dealt with in detail under "Respond" within the E3 Training Outline Promises are declaring that a specific thing will happen in the future. Usually, the word "will" is included in a statement of promise. Promises can give great hope or provide a needed warning.

Truth Claims (timeless)

Statement from the text, which is true for all times and in all circumstances.

Significant Words and Phrases

- "Words and phrases that in a particular context convey the primary argument or meaning of a passage." (Inductive Bible Study, 102) "If one were to summarize the passage, these are the words and phrases that would be indispensable to that summation." (Inductive Bible Study, 102).

- You may want to ask, “What terms are critical to the central idea in this passage?” (Inductive Bible Study, 103)
- One way to determine if a word is significant or critical to the meaning of the passage is whether or not you have the “ability to state why a term is crucial in a given context.” (Inductive Bible Study)
- A commentary is very helpful in identifying and defining significant words. Which words does your commentary take time to highlight and define? Many times those are the words that hold significant meaning.

Literary Features (Inductive Bible Study, 122 and 124)

Question and Answer — When Questions are used to frame an argument

Illustration — An example of some kind which serves to clarify a point.

Quotation — Echoes, allusions, and quotations of previous material, most notably, the Old Testament in the New.

Irony — Words express the opposite meaning from what is intended, or where plot outcomes are the opposite of what is expected.

Anthropomorphism — Ascribing human characteristics to God.

Hyperbole — A deliberate exaggeration used to communicate a point.

Sarcasm — An indirect form of a ridicule expressed as a compliment.

Rhetorical Questions — The use of a question to make a statement (where a response is never intended).

Action Words — Who is doing the action and who is receiving the action.

Symbols — Are either literal or figurative terms that convey a normally expected and frequently repeated pattern of meaning in specific contexts.

At this point it would be helpful to look at the notes within your Study Bible, read a commentary, and/or refer to a concordance or Bible dictionary to gain clarity on a particular word.

Concordance or Cross Reference

Scripture is the best tool to interpret Scripture. If there is a word or phrase which is hard to understand, these tools can help you locate other locations where the same word has been used, which may bring clarity to how the author is using the word in your passage. It is best, if the location is within the same book, or used by the same author.

Commentary or Study Bible Notes

Reading what others have seen can bring greater clarity to what you have already seen, or bring to light those things that are more difficult to see without further training. We are thankful for men who have given their lives to the Study of God’s Word and the Biblical languages who can help us see with greater clarity the Word of God.

UNDERSTAND

Once you have done your Scripture work under SEE, the fun begins. We will now begin to enjoy the fruit of our labor as God reveals who He is, who we are, and what He desires for mankind.

What did this author say about... Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Answering the above three questions are the most important questions you will answer in your study! They are also the most rewarding! I love the following two quotes from Matt Rogers and Donny Mathis.

The Trinitarian God of the Bible is the main character of every passage. (Seven Arrows, P.21)

Folks struggle to understand the Bible because they are trying to unlock what the Bible is teaching with the wrong key. They believe the key to the story is me, when the key is realizing that every story is about God. (Seven Arrows, P.95)

What did this author say about... Mankind

You may want to break this down into believers and non-believers to help identify who the author is speaking to or about.

How does this passage point to Christ and fit within the grand narrative of the Bible?

Sometimes your passage will define who Christ is and what He has done, as we have seen above. At other times, Christ may not be mentioned, but the passage may still point to Christ as the fulfillment of God's promises. This is where a commentary may be helpful, and/or a good understanding of the Grand Narrative of Scripture.

The Grand Narrative is the story of God's plan of redemption through the whole story of Scripture. Vaughn Roberts' book *God's Big Picture* is a great reference guide to gaining more understanding of the grand narrative.

What did the author want the original audience to... Know

In your notes, Truth Claims and Promises as well as what the author says about the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and Mankind will be helpful in identifying what the author desires for his audience to know.

What did the author want the original audience to... Be

Many times this will refer to your identity in Christ or your identity without Christ. Again, in your notes, Truth Claims and Mankind will be helpful.

What did the author want the original audience to... Do

Commands are helpful in identifying what God desires for you to do.

Write a summary of what the author was saying to the audience.

All of the work you have done should help you write a short summary of your text in your own words. As you do, remember to keep in mind the following question: What is the simple reading of the text?

RESPOND

This is where you will apply to your own life what the author is saying to the original audience. Remember, "That which is meaningful for our day must have its foundation in correct interpretation, the meaning of the text in its original context." (Inductive Bible Study, p.291)

What does God specifically desire me to: Know, Be, Do

"God gives the eyes. God gives the mind. And when all our work of careful, expectant study is done, it was God who gave the work and the riches." (John Piper, *The Legacy I want to Leave*, April 29, 2014)

God has opened your eyes to see and your mind to understand, now pray for God to reveal to you how He desires to apply these truths, and promises, and commands to your life. Meditate on His Word and pray for God to personally work in you.

The following questions may help you to respond personally to what you have learned.

Now that you understand what the author wanted the original reader to know, ask yourself:

Do I live like... this is true?

Does my life reveal this truth in the way I am living right now in... (situation, relationship, etc.)?

If so, rejoice and give thanks!

If not, what needs to change?

Now that you know what the author wanted the original reader to understand about who they are, or who they are suppose to be, you may want to ask:

Do I live like I am...?

If so, rejoice and give thanks!

If not, what needs to change?

Now that you know what the author wanted the original reader to do, you may want to ask:

Am I living in obedience to this command?

If so, rejoice and give thanks!

If not, what needs to change?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says in his little book *Life Together*, "In our meditation we ponder the chosen text on the strength of the promise that it has something utterly personal to say to us for this day and for our Christian Life, that it is not only God's Word for the Church, but also God's Word for us individually. We expose ourselves to the specific word until it addresses us personally."

Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15-16 "...the sacred writings are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

A few helpful guidelines: (*40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*, p.172)

- "Are there details in the text that would cause one to conclude that the instructions are only for a specific place or time?"
- "Are there details in the text that would cause one to conclude that the instructions have a supra-cultural application (that is, the command applies unchanged in different cultures)?"
- "Do your conclusions about the debated passage cohere with the author's other statements and the broader canonical context?"

How will this affect my relationship with others if I believe and obey or if I don't?

It may be helpful to think and pray through the relationships in your life; work, home, church, school, etc.

Is there a specific relationship to which you are to apply the truth of this passage?

Write a prayer

Prayer, is simply "Communicating with God." He goes on to say that prayer is an "expression of our relationship with God and a confession of our dependence on him." (Potential and Power of Prayer, Chuck Lawless)

As we listen to him in his Word we then have the opportunity to speak to him in prayer!

This is a critical piece of your response. Please take this time to praise him, thank him, and respond in obedience to the truth he has revealed to you.



Resource List

Scripture Versions

Literal Translations or "word for word": Attempt to translate any given. Passage by staying as close as possible to the words and phrasing of the original language. (Inductive Bible Study, 55-56)

Dynamic Equivalent or "thought for thought": Translate words, phrases, and idioms from the original language into their proper English equivalents. (Inductive Bible Study, 56)

"Word for Word"

NASB – New American Standard Bible

ESV – English Standard Version

NKJV – New King James Version

CSB – Christian Standard Bible

"Thought for Thought"

NIV – New International Version

NLT – New Living Translation

Building a Theological Library; Revised Edition 2019; by Danny Akin.

This resource can be downloaded free at: <https://www.danielakin.com/pdf-download-building-a-theological-revised-edition-2019/>

This resource provides Dr. Danny Akin's recommendations for Bible study tools, such as Bible Dictionaries and Commentaries. This is an excellent resource to refer to when determining which resource to purchase or to use for your study of the Scriptures.

One of the most helpful tools within this resource is his thorough commentary list and the tagging system in which he has developed to help guide people in choosing the right commentary for them, for each book of the Bible.