

# How to Study Your Bible

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The inductive Bible study method involves answering three questions:

- What does it say? (Observation)
- What does it mean? (Interpretation)
- What should I do? (Application)

## Observation

### Summarize

After reading a passage, try to come up with a title. Look for a key verse that captures the heart of the passage. Write a brief summary overview of the passage, including the major points.

### Paraphrase

Try to write the passage in your own words.

### Ask questions.

- *Who* wrote it? Said it? About whom? Speaking to whom?
- *What* happened? What are the main events? The major ideas? The major themes?
- *When* was it written? Did the events take place? Will it yet happen?
- *Where* did this happen?
- *Why* was it written?
- *How* did it happen? Is it done?

### Look for patterns.

Patterns such as repeated words or phrases to help you understand what the author intends to emphasize.

### Look for cross-references.

As you become more familiar with the Bible, you'll find that as you read a passage, the Holy Spirit will bring to mind other verses that relate to, confirm, or shed further light on what you're reading.

Use other tools to help you discover what a passage is saying.

- An English dictionary helps you understand the basic meaning of words.
- Various translations shed fresh light on passages.
- A concordance helps you discover what words meant in their original language.
- Commentaries and study Bibles are helpful in understanding passages, gaining background on the authors, locations, characters, and customs.

## Interpretation

Ask these kinds of questions to help you understand the implications of the text:

- What does this passage teach me about God?
- What does this passage teach me about Jesus?
- What does this passage teach me about man?
- Are there any promises to claim?
- Are there any commands to obey?
- Are there any examples to follow?
- Are there any sins to avoid?

## Application

After we've learned the "what," now we ask the question, "So what?" Ask such questions as:

- How does this truth apply to my life? To my situation?
- In view of this truth, what changes need to be made in my life?
- What practical steps can I take to apply this truth to my life?
  - Exercise faith in God's promises or character.
  - Humble myself and acknowledge my need.
  - Confess my sins.
  - Turn from my old ways of thinking.
  - Obey some command I have been neglecting.
  - Worship and adore the God who has revealed Himself.
  - Forgive one who has wronged me.
  - Seek forgiveness from someone I have wronged.
  - Seek to reconcile a broken relationship.
  - Give to meet the need of another.
  - Share the good news of Jesus Christ with a non-Christian.
  - Cry out to God on behalf of a needy friend.