
How to study the Bible?

Method 1 – Inductive Bible Study

Pray. Write. Observe. Interpret. Apply. Pray.

Step 1. Pray for God's help, and lay down distractions.

Practically: I write a list of the things distracting me.

Step 2. Write out the Scripture (or most captivating sentence).

Step 3. Observation. What does the Bible say? What do they need to know?

Questions to Ask – 5Ws and 1H

1. Who?
 - a. Who's talking?
 - b. Talking to whom?
 - c. Talking about?
 - d. Who are the main characters?
 - e. What do we know about them?
 - f. What kind of people are they?
2. What?
 - a. What's happening?
 - b. What are they talking about?
 - c. What are the KEY WORDS/REPEATED WORDS?
 - d. What is the MAIN IDEA?
 - e. What words are confusing/unfamiliar?
 - f. What's the context?
 - g. What genre is this (Poem, Story, History, Letter)?
 - h. What kind of sentence is this (Command or Declaration)?
 - i. What tense are the verbs?
 - j. What verbs are used?
 - k. What images are used? What object lessons? What do I know about those objects or images?
3. When?
 - a. When did this happen?
 - b. When is this happening in the big story of the Bible?
 - c. When did he say this (in his life, in the story, or in the letter)?
 - d. What was happening before this? What happens next?
 - e. What were they talking about?
4. Where?
 - a. Where did this happen?
 - b. What does the scene look like?
 - c. Where are the people in relation to one another?
 - d. Where was he when he said this?
 - e. Where else does the Bible talk about this?
 - f. Where else are these words used?
 - g. What else happened there?
 - h. CROSS-REFERENCES

5. Why?
 - a. Why did he say this?
 - b. Why did this happen?
 - c. Why are they here?
 - d. Why are we talking about this?
 - e. Why does he need to say this?
 - f. Why does he say it like this?
 - g. Why are we in this situation?
6. How?
 - a. How did he do it?
 - b. How did this come about?
 - c. How did he say it?
 - d. How did he respond to the people?
7. SPECIAL WORDS
 - a. Purpose words – So that, in order that, to
 - b. Contrast words – on the other hand, rather, but, instead, whereas
 - c. Comparison words – consider, more than, less than, best, worst, most important, least, greatest, first, last
 - d. Time words – After a few days, then, immediately, the next day, finally, earlier, when, now
 - e. Transition words – therefore, now concerning, in conclusion, finally, but then, thus, so, because, next
8. FIGURES OF SPEECH
 - a. Similes and metaphors – Like, As, Is
 - i. What do I know about the objects used?
 - ii. How is God like this thing?
 - iii. How is God unlike this thing?
 - iv. How far is the metaphor useful? Where are it's limits?
 - b. Hyperbole – exaggeration
 - c. Jokes
 - d. Parables
 - i. Why is Jesus using this image?
 - ii. What do I know about pearls, sheep, farmers, seed, vines, etc?
 - iii. How is God like this? How is God unlike this?
 - iv. What do the images in the parable correspond with?

Step 4. Interpretation. What does the Bible mean? Why do they need to know it?

Questions to Ask

1. Definition Questions – What do the words mean?
2. Then and Now Questions
 - a. What did it mean then? What does it mean now?
 - b. What did the idioms/euphemisms/measurements mean then?
 - c. What are similar phrases/sayings/euphemisms/measurements now?
 - d. What did this mean in their time and place?
 - e. How is our time and place like theirs?
3. Imagination Questions?
 - a. Picture the story.
 - b. What does the scene look like?
 - c. Where are the people?
 - d. What does Jesus look like when he says that or does that?

- e. What are the characters feeling?
- f. What are the characters thinking?
- 4. Feeling Questions?
 - a. How does this make you feel?
 - b. How would you feel if you were there?
 - c. Why do you feel this way?
 - d. Why do you think Jesus is willing to make you feel this way?
- 5. Omission Questions?
 - a. What doesn't the Bible say?
 - b. What doesn't happen?
 - c. What could have happened but didn't?
- 6. Grammar Questions?
 - a. Who does the grammar affect the meaning?
 - b. Active vs. Passive?
 - c. Cause and effect?
 - d. Subject and object?
- 7. GOD QUESTIONS
 - a. What does this teach me about God?
 - b. What does this teach about God's nature?
 - c. God's character?
 - d. God's goals?
 - e. God's dreams?
 - f. God's will?
 - g. God's design?
 - h. God's plan?
- 8. HUMAN QUESTIONS?
 - a. What does this teach me about humans?
 - b. What does this teach about human nature, character, needs, history, goals, desires, temptations, faith, failure, sin, hope, relationships, etc.?
- 9. WORLD QUESTIONS?
 - a. What does this teach me about the world?
 - b. What does this teach about the world's nature, characteristics, need, hope, destiny, etc.?
- 10. WHY QUESTIONS?
 - a. Why do I need to know this?
 - b. Why out of all the things that could be in the Bible, did God choose to put these words in it?

Step 5. Application. What does the Bible mean to me? What would happen if they believed it?

Questions to Ask

- 1. Commands and Warnings
 - a. Is there a command to follow? – What do I need to do to obey?
 - b. Is there a warning to heed? – What do I need to do to protect myself?
- 2. Examples
 - a. Is there a good example to imitate? – How am i like this character, and what do i need to do to be like so and so?
 - b. Is there a bad example to avoid? – How am i like this character, and what do i need to change to not be like this?
- 3. Where's Waldo?
 - a. Which character am I in the story?

- b. How would I respond?
- c. What would I do?
- 4. Relativity and Reflection Questions
 - a. How is my life like this?
 - b. Have I ever felt like this?
 - c. What situations can I apply this teaching to?
 - d. Expanding concentric circles – me, my personality, my habits, my speech, my stressors, my family, my friends, my work, my school, my past, my future?
- 5. BELIEF = BEHAVIOR
 - a. Does my life look like someone who believes this about God/myself/the world?
 - b. What if it did?

Write down one practical “to do” thing. Even if it is just memorization.

Step 6. Pray.

Turn the Scripture into a prayer to say back to God.

Then pray for God’s help to understand it, believe it, live it, and share it.