

WHAT IS INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY?

- it is a METHOD of studying God's Word
- it is PERSONALLY examining Scripture to discover God's wonderful life-changing truths
- it is a first-hand ENCOUNTER with God's Word instead of just second-hand knowledge
- it is looking at the whole text in CONTEXT, pulling out facts, interpreting them, then applying them
- it is starting with the WORD of God; not books, commentaries, or opinions about the Word of God
- it is based on principles of HERMENEUTICS: the science of Biblical interpretation that establishes guidelines and rules for interpretation:
 - 1 - Interpret Scripture by Scripture; the Bible does not contradict itself.
 - 2 - Interpret a passage in light of its context; the paragraph, chapter, book and whole Bible.
 - 3 - Interpret unclear passages in light of clear teaching; what does Bible teach elsewhere?
 - 4 - Interpret according to the author's intention; what is his purpose for writing?
 - 5 - Interpret in light of the historical and cultural background.
 - 6 - Interpret according to the correct meaning of the words at the time of writing.
 - 7 - Interpret according to the common literal usage of words and grammar of the sentence.
 - 8 - Interpret according to figurative language if applicable – (metaphors; similes, etc)

4 BASIC STEPS

- PRAY for understanding.
"I am your servant; give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies." Psalm 119:125
- OBSERVE what it actually says.
Carefully look for and record facts, just the facts, and nothing but the facts please ☑
- INTERPRET what it objectively means.
Evaluate what you observe in light of the context, historical background and cross reference studies.
- APPLY its truths personally to your life.
"How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the Lord." Psalm 119:1

3 SIMPLE REQUIREMENTS

- DESIRE = an eagerness to learn how to handle the Word of God accurately (2 Timothy 2:15) and to be able to understand for yourself.
- PATIENCE = a willingness to slow down and really look at and think about what Scripture is saying.
- PERSEVERANCE = a determination to press on and not lose heart.

4 ETERNAL GOALS

- To gain a deeper knowledge of the ways, heart and character of God. (*Jeremiah 9:24*)
- To learn how to handle God's Word accurately and be able to study the Bible on your own. (*2 Timothy 2:15*)
- To know how to correctly interpret Scripture so as not to be swayed by every wind of doctrine. (*Ephesians 4:14*)
- To be able to make practical applications of God's Word and grow up into maturity in Christ. (*Ephesians 4:13*)

HOW TO DO CAREFUL OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Taking time to thoroughly examine the text of each chapter as a whole before studying in more detail verse by verse is one of the most critical and beneficial elements of inductive Bible study. “The purpose of observation is to saturate yourself thoroughly with the content of a passage. Like a sponge you should observe everything that is before you.”¹ Careful observation helps you see what the text really actually says which is often surprisingly different than what you may have thought or heard. Then you will be prepared to accurately interpret and apply what you have seen without error.

To thoroughly “observe” the chapter read through it carefully several times and look for the following kinds of things and underline, color, or use a symbol to “mark” them in separate ways. But don’t get too caught up in the process or “markings” Remember the purpose of “marking” your observations is to help you slow down, observe carefully, and remember what you have read to enable you to easily go back and evaluate what you have seen.

Repeated Key Words or Phrases

Key words or phrases are those that are most important in the passage. They help you figure out the main point or themes. Words or phrases repeated throughout the whole book help discover the overall purpose and main message of the book, while one that is just repeated in a chapter or paragraph is key for that particular portion.

You can “mark” each word or phrase in a special way by underlining, coloring, or drawing a diagram above or around it:
next to him **city** rejoice^o

Mark most references to God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit: God[△] Jesus⁺

Mark personal pronouns that refer to any words you marked: I, you, they, she, he, it, etc

Look for Lists

For example, in 1 Peter 1:3-4 you can create a list that describes our inheritance by numbering it in the passage: “to obtain an inheritance which is ¹imperishable and ²undefiled and ³will not fade away, ⁴reserved in heaven for you.” Or you can write the list in the margin.

Contrasting Words, Phrases and Comparisons

light/dark, the one who eats/ the one who does not eat, like a lion, as a bear

Important Connecting Words, Phrases, Terms of Conclusion

therefore, finally, but, if, for, because, in order that, for this reason, finally

Expressions of Time

in one year, at the feast of, then, after this, until, while, when, on the third day, at that time

Cause And Effects, Warnings, Admonitions, Promises, Exhortations

When/then, do not, blessed are the meek, keep on, hold fast

Observation Tips

1. Start with the most obvious things.
2. Try to stick to what the text actually says.
3. Ask the questions: what, where, when, why, how and who.

I keep six honest serving men
 (they taught me all I knew)
 Their names are What, and Where, and When,
 and How, and Why and Who.

Rudyard Kipling

¹ Oletta Wald, *The Joy of Discovery*, p.16

Additional resources: [How to Study Your Bible](#) by Kay Arthur; [Understanding and Applying the Bible](#) by McQuilkin

HELPFUL WORD STUDY TOOLS

Exhaustive Concordance

- STRONG'S NASB or KJV with Hebrew-Aramaic & Greek Dictionaries

Expository Dictionary

NEW TESTAMENT

- THE COMPLETE WORD STUDY DICTIONARY NEW TESTAMENT by Spiros Zodhiates – AMG
- Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words- Thomas Nelson

OLD TESTAMENT

- THE COMPLETE WORD STUDY DICTIONARY OLD TESTAMENT by Baker and Carpenter – AMG
- THEOLOGICAL WORDBOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT by Harris, Archer and Waltke – Moody

Also recommended:

- THE COMPLETE WORD STUDY NEW TESTAMENT and OLD TESTAMENT by Spiros Zodhiates – AMG
- THE NEW UNGER'S BIBLE DICTIONARY by Merrill F. Unger – Moody
- THE NEW INDUCTIVE STUDY BIBLE –Harvest House

Free online resources:

- www.blueletterbible.org
- www.biblegateway.com
- www.biblemap.org

"When a man is simply told the truth, it remains external to him and he can quite easily forget it. When he is led to discover the truth himself it becomes an integral part of him and he never forgets." (William Barclay, Daily Celebrations)

Important Points to Remember:

- Context always rules in interpretation! Words in any language can have more than one meaning. Example: "pot" = something you grow in, cook in, or go in ☺. The context will show you which it is.
- Old Testament = Hebrew & Aramaic
- New Testament = Greek
- Older or original versions of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance use KJV words.

HOW TO DO WORD STUDIES

Step 1: Use the Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

Check the table of contents first to locate the pages that contain the concordance and dictionaries. Read through the section on how to use the concordance for detailed instructions.

1. Look up the English word that you are studying in the concordance section. Words are listed in alphabetical order. (Remember: older Strong's use the King James words.)
2. Find the Scripture verse reference that you are studying, and write down the **reference number** located to the right of that word.
3. If you are studying a New Testament word turn to the Greek Dictionary in the back and find that **reference number**. If you are studying an Old Testament word turn to the Hebrew Dictionary in the back and find that **reference number**. (Be careful not to look in the Hebrew dictionary for a New Testament word.)
4. Next to the number you will see the Greek or Hebrew-Aramaic word, then the transliteration (which is the word written in English), then the simple meaning. You will also see the different ways the same Greek or Hebrew word is translated and how many times it is translated that way in parenthesis next to the word. [For example: Hebrew word #1241 *beqar* which means *to inquire, seek* – is translated one time as *inquire* and one time as *search* as is noted by the (1) next to the words.]

Or use **The Complete Word Study New or Old Testaments**: the **reference number** will be listed above the words in the text you are studying. It also will give you the verb tense, voice, and mood. Check the sections on how to use the Complete Word Study New Testament or Complete Word Study Old Testament for more information.