

INDUCTIVE STUDY METHOD



AN ARISE MINISTRIES COLLECTIVE RESOURCE

INTRODUCTION //

The purpose of an Inductive Bible Study Method is to understand the Word of God by observing the text (discovering what the passage says), interpreting it (figuring out what it means), and applying the message of Bible passages to our lives (determining how it can change us, and obediently walking in light of the Truth we've learned). It seeks to help us understand the Word for ourselves, instead of solely relying on another's ideas and interpretation.

Begin in prayer and ask God to open your eyes and heart to the Truth of His Word. May the Lord bless you richly as you persevere and commit to studying the Bible. It's not easy, but always profitable (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*).

OBSERVE // WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Ask yourself the five W's while reading through the text. It may seem redundant, but will help you remember what you've learned and keep the content in context.

- Who was the author writing to?
- Why was this particular passage/book/letter written?
- What is happening in the passage?
- When and where did this take place?

In addition to answering the questions above and reflecting on them each time you read from or study a passage, book, or chapter in the Bible, consider doing the following:

- Mark key words. Pay special attention to repeated phrases.
- If you see a list, make a note of it, and write it in a notebook or in the margins of the Bible. If you were studying 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, for example, you could write "Love is" as a heading, and make a list below (patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast...).
- Look for comparisons and contrasts. These usually begin with *but*, *like*, and *or*.
- Mark terms and phrases of finality or cause. These often include *therefore*, *thus*, or *so*, in order to summarize previous verses and give deep meaning to the author's purpose.
- Pay particular attention to "if-then" statements.

INTERPRET // WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Interpretation of the text flows naturally from your direct observations. This is where you get to think more deeply about the things you noted and figure out what they mean. The following strategies will guide you to deeper understanding:

- Look up the cross-references in the margins of your Bible. This will help you use scripture to interpret scripture, and supplement what you already observed by putting it in a more detailed historical or cultural setting.
- Utilize word studies to discover what words meant in the original Greek or Hebrew. Sometimes this changes what we originally assumed a passage meant and/or provides greater depth to our understanding.
- Ask: What would the original hearers, audience, or readers have thought? How does this passage fit within the greater story of the Bible? Within the Gospel?
- Paraphrase (rewrite the text in your own words) based on your observations and understanding from the previous steps.

APPLY // HOW CAN IT CHANGE ME?

We are all works in progress - Praise God! While it's essential to both observe and interpret the Truth to understand it fully, studying is futile if we are not changed as a result. God did not give us His Word just so we would KNOW it - He gave it to us so we would LIVE it. It's here where we mull over everything we've learned, reflect on what the scripture tells us about who God is, and ask Him how these truths apply to our own lives. Consider the following questions (and more as they come to mind):

- What does this passage reveal about God and His character?
- What is God leading you to do differently in response to these observations?
- What might these truths look like in action today? In your day-to-day life? In your goals and dreams? In your family? In your ministry?
- Is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind any specific people, circumstances, conversations, or sins for your prayer, repentance, and reconciliation? If so, take time to lay them before Him.
- Is there a belief you need to re-examine, or thinking that needs to change in light of this text?
- What is the first action you can take in response to what you've learned - Forgive? Serve? Go? Stop?
- Use a journal or the margin of your Bible to write out prayers, notes, confessions, or other thoughts on how you can apply God's Word to your life.

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