



NextStep 101: Bible Study Basics



Week #1 – Introduction: What is the Bible?

Preface:

The Inspired word of God

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, (21) for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

- 2 Peter 1:20-21

Psalm 119 also describes the Scriptures.

This is not just any other book – In fact, it is the *only* document in history that communicates with full accuracy the heart and mind of God! Thus the Bible is without error (inerrant).

Overview:

2 Testaments (Old and New)

66 Books

Over 40 Authors, writing over 1,500 years with one consistent message: God loves His creation and desires to redeem it completely.

Several Genres/Types:

Narrative (i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, 1 & 2 Samuel, Gospels, Acts)

Poetry (Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, etc.)

Prophecy (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Jonah, Zechariah, Malachi, etc.)

Epistolary: Pauline & Other (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews, James, etc.)

Apocalyptic (Daniel, Revelation)

Q: Why might understanding the differences between these genres help?

3 Reasons Why We Misunderstand the Bible:

1. Our Bible Study is **fragmented**.

Context is King! "A text without a context is pretext."

2. We are too dependent upon other **aids**.

The most important tool that you have in studying the Bible is found right between your own eyes.

3. Our basic **point of view** is wrong.

What we do to the Bible is not the issue. Rather the issue is what the Bible does to us. How are we internalizing the truth in order to live it out!

Observation, Interpretation, Application (An Overview)

“The Inductive Bible Study” Approach

Step #1 – Observation – What do I See?

We often **look**, but we do not often **observe**. Observation is more than physical sight; it involves perception, awareness, and getting “saturated” with the passage.

Things we must look for/observe:

1. **Terms** – Words and the meaning behind them.
2. **Structure** – How terms relate to other terms within a passage; Look at why terms are arranged in a particular order/structure.

Two types of Structure:

- a. **Grammatical Structure**
 - b. **Literary Structures** (Cause & Effect, Contrast, Comparison, etc.)
3. **Literary Forms** – Genres of biblical literature (see above)
 4. **Atmosphere** – Put yourself in the character’s shoes. What do they feel? What is the setting like?

Step #2 – Interpretation – What Does it Mean?

Three issues to keep in mind:

Questions – Asking critical questions about the culture, history, theology of a passage.

Answers – What does the passage answer and what does it not answer?

Integration – Bringing these together to have a sound biblical interpretation.

Every text has an **original** (or exegetical) meaning. That is the author wrote to the original **audience** with an original **purpose** within history.

Step #3 – Application – How Does it Work?

Remember, the Bible is always **relevant**, no matter what people say.

We must first figure out how what we read applies to **us**, then think about how it applies to **others**. Don't get this backwards.

Q: *Why might this order of steps be important to keep?*

Key Verses:

Psalm 1:1-2

Psalm 119

Joshua 1:8

2 Timothy 3:16

2 Peter 1:20-21

Home Work Assignments – Week 1:

#1 – Dots and Squares Exercise (See attached page)

#2 – Observations of Acts 1:8

Read Acts 1:8 very carefully and write down as many observations as you can about the verse. What seem to be the most important terms? After reading closely, you will have some new discoveries about this little verse! Be prepared to share some of your observations next week. Believe it or not, some students who do this exercise are able to find over 100 observations!

#3 – Repeated Reading of 3 John

Read the short book of 3 *John* four different times in four separate sittings. Record observations that you have for each time you read. Are terms repeated? Do you recognize any new connections between the terms? Repeated and intentional reading always helps your observation skills.

Next Week: Observation – What Do I See?

Methods for Reading the Bible
Four Failures of Observation