



What is an Inductive Bible Study?

The goal of inductive bible study is to understand the meaning of God's word in order to become more like Christ, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. An inductive Bible Study determines the author's (God) intended meaning by studying the bible on its own terms; first by examining the evidence in and around a passage and concluding with the personal application of its meaning. This stands against a deductive approach which begins with certain assumptions and reads them into the passage.

It involves four skills: **Seeing, Interpreting, Personalizing, and Praying (S.I.P.P.)**

Begin with prayer: pray for God to illuminate your mind and heart through the work of the Holy Spirit as you study this passage, for the glory of Christ.

I. See (Observation) - *What do I see?*

- Make good observations by carefully reading a passage over and over, at least twice in different translations, so that the themes emerge.
- Mark key words and phrases that are intentionally repeated in order to emphasize the author's main point.
- Discern the outline of the passage and note when the author shifts from one theme to the next, changes tone, or addresses different audiences
- What comparisons and contrasts is the author making?

Author: Who is the author and what is his background? Who is the intended audience and what is their background?

Setting: Where and when do the events take place in the text? What are the cultural norms of the people represented in the passage?

Genre: To which genre of biblical literature does the book belong? (History, Law, Wisdom, Poetry, Gospel, Epistle, Apocalyptic)

Purpose: What was the author's purpose for writing this passage? For narratives - what happened in the passage and what were the results?

II. Interpret - *What does it mean?*

Your goal is to discover the author's intended meaning (AIM); the main idea of the passage that all the verses fit under. We never ask *"what does the passage mean to me?"* but rather, *"what did it mean to the original author?"* Interpretation involves understanding the context, the vocabulary, and the grammar. Never take a Scripture out of its context to make it say what you want it to say.

You should obtain a copy of a study bible (e.g. ESV Study Bible by Crossway) or consult a reputable bible dictionary for research and study purposes. You can also access theologically sound online resources such as bible.org, gotquestions.org, and carm.org; if you are in doubt ask your leader as there is a great deal of misinformation in print and online.

- Consider each verse in the light of the surrounding verses in the passage, in light of the book in which it is found, and in light of the entire Word of God.
- Cross-reference other passages as needed.
- As you consider the meaning, ask yourself: is my interpretation of this passage consistent with the themes of the book in which it is found? Is it consistent with other passage in Scripture about the same subject? Am I considering the historic and cultural context?
- **The Gospel:** How is faith in Jesus Christ central to the main idea? What is the main sin, or sins, that the Gospel is addressing in this passage?

Determine the main idea of the passage in a complete sentences (subject and predicate). Your passage may contain more than one main idea.

Main idea: _____ (list more as needed)

III. Personalize (Application) - *How does it apply to me?*

Application involves asking, *"Given the main idea of the passage what do I need to do to apply it in my life?"* Because we love God, we will obey His words by applying them into our present lives, no matter the cost. Based on this passage:

Is there a sin I need to avoid?

Is there a promise from God for me to claim?
Is there an example for me to follow?
Is there a command for me to obey?
How does this passage increase my knowledge about God?
How is the Gospel central to applying the main idea?

Personal Application: _____ (list more as needed). Application steps should be **S.M.A.R.T.** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely)

Memory Verse: Choose the one verse in the passage that most impacts your faith and memorize it.

Memory Verse: _____

IV. Prayer: The *most important* aspect of bible study; take time to pray through this passage according the pattern of prayer Jesus established in Matthew 6:9-13, which is worship-based prayer.

Disciples S.I.P.P. God's Word

- See: observation; what does it say?
- Interpret: what does it mean?
- Personalize: how must I apply it?
- Pray: how will I worship God and ask for His grace according to this passage?

