

It has been well said that "This book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book."

After spending many years trying to find answers to the Word of God and understand how to study it, I was THRILLED when I found the Inductive Bible Study method. If you are longing for a stronger relationship with God, this is definitely your method of study! Before Jesus Christ died on the cross, He prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." The Word of God is the truth that God left for us to learn about WHO He is. If you do not trust God, it is because you are not in **His Word**. I often tell the women I mentor, if you don't trust someone without knowing them, how do you **expect** to trust God without knowing Him?!

Remember as you start this journey, that the Bible is to be your **primary source** of study. I want to encourage you to read the Bible as if it is **God speaking to you**, because sister it is!

Introduction

We believe 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, remember 30% by watching a demonstration, retain 50 % by combining the second and third one, remember 70% by the last one by combining it with writing out what we learn, and retain 90% by practicing all of the aforementioned tactics! In the book of Acts, we encounter a group of saints often referred to as the "*Bereans*" who seem to approach the Scriptures with an inductive mindset. Just like the Bereans, we need to be open to the truth of God's Word.

I do feel that one more warning is necessary! Inductive Bible study can be habit-forming. Putting the principles into practice can cause loss of anxiety, decreased appetite for lying, cheating, stealing, hating and "symptoms" of growing sensations of love, peace, joy, compassion.

1. Understanding the Bible requires effort—we need to work at studying the Scriptures.
2. Understanding the Bible will take time—we won't get it all immediately.
3. Understanding the Bible requires that the Holy Spirit open our hearts and minds to the Scriptures.
4. Understanding the Bible will happen only if we are willing to obey it.

5. Understanding the Bible will never be complete—we can always learn more. (Michael A Rydelnik, Michael G Vanlaningham, editors, The Moody Bible Commentary)

There are three phases in the Inductive Bible Study Method:

1. Observation: What does the text say?
2. Interpretation: What does the text mean?
3. Application: How do I respond to the text?

Observation: What Does the Text Say?

Observation is a critical step in the Inductive Bible Study Method that should not be skipped. The goal is to establish as much context as possible in order to lay the foundation for an accurate interpretation. Understanding the context is critical for successful a successful Bible study!

According to [Online Etymology Dictionary](#), the English word "context" is derived from two words, **con** = with and **texo** = to weave ([context | Search Online Etymology Dictionary \(etymonline.com\)](#)). Thus even the derivation gives us a picture of the value of context in accurate interpretation -- it "weaves" the text together in an orderly, logical flow, a flow inspired by God intended to convey His message. Context is the setting in which a passage occurs or simply what precedes and what follows the **text** you are studying. Context includes those verses immediately before and after the passage, then the paragraph and book in which the passage appears, the other books by this author, as well as the overall message of the entire Bible.

Establishing the context forces the reader to examine the biblical writer's overall flow of thought. The meaning of any passage is nearly always determined, controlled, or limited by what appears immediately beforehand and afterward in the text. Simply reading and re-reading a text could become very boring and non-productive. So let's look at some basic principles that will help us achieve our goal of determining the context...

First, read the text with the goal of looking for the things that are OBVIOUS.

- **PEOPLE, PLACES, and EVENTS** are the most obvious facts. In the epistles observation of the facts about the author and the recipients is a good place to begin

to establish context.

- As you read through the text observe the facts that are obvious by virtue of being REPEATED.

Steps to aid in Observation: (Please note that a lot of this information was taken from [Austin Precept](#).)

1. Establish the Context by looking at people, places, and events.
2. Find Keywords and/or key phrases. Keywords or key phrases help the reader "unlock" the meaning of a passage, a paragraph, a chapter or a book.
 - usually identified by the fact that they are repeated
 - vital to the understanding of the text and cannot be removed without leaving the passage devoid of meaning.
 - may include pronouns, synonyms, closely related phrases
 - may be key only in a paragraph, in a chapter or throughout the entire book
 - should be marked in a unique way using symbols and/or colors
 - often form the basis for making a list
3. Marking keywords and/or key phrases allows one to quickly scan the page and see the key words that are emphasized in that section.
4. Interrogate with the questions of Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How:
 - **Who** is speaking? To **whom** and/or about **whom** is he speaking? **Who** are the main characters? **Who** is mentioned in the book (Why? What do we learn about them?) (In the epistles ask) **Who** is writing (author)? Who receiving?
 - **Where** did (or will) this happen (Why? When?)? **Where** was this said/written (where is the author) (Why?)?
 - **Why** was this written (What purpose?)? **Why** is this said? **Why** is he there?
 - **When** is this written (When in Biblical history - where on the timeline? When in the author's life)? **When** did/will this happen? **When** did he say/do it?
 - **What** is the author doing? **What** are the main events? **What** are the circumstances? What is the historical/cultural setting (as determined from the text)? **What** is the main subject of the chapter/book?
 - **How** will/did something happen? **How** is the truth illustrated?
5. Identifying terms
 - Conclusion:

- a. Identifies a logical consequence or conclusion
- b. Identifies a statement which summarizes what was previously stated
- c. Identifies a deduction from (usually previously stated) facts, propositions, experience, reasoning, etc.
- d. Sums up a preceding argument.
 - Explanation:
 - a. Give the reason for something, making it plain or understandable
 - b. Give reasons why it is true or why it occurred
 - c. Used to express cause, to explain (to give the reason for or cause of)
 - d. Simply adds additional information.
 - e. **HINT** -- A rule of thumb is that if you can substitute the word "**because**" in place of a "**for**," that is good support that the **for** is functioning as a **term of explanation**.
 - Purpose:
 - a. Indicates the intended goal of an idea or action.
 - b. Indicates the end; effect; aim; design; consequence, good or bad.
 - c. The reason for which something is done.

Interpretation: What Does the Text Mean?

There is nothing so dangerous as to come to the Bible with a theory, with preconceived ideas, with some pet idea of our own, because the moment we do so, we shall be tempted to over-emphasize one aspect and under-emphasize another.

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones

"All Scripture is profitable..." (2 Timothy 3:16) It has a purpose and meaning. Meaning is not a subjective thought but rather, God's objective truth in the text. God has a mind, and He has revealed parts of it to us in His Word. We need the process of interpretation for three reasons: language barriers, cultural barriers, literary barriers, and communication barriers.

1. Keep context at the forefront. There are several types of context. Literary context of a verse is the paragraph that it is a part of the section the paragraph is in, and the book the section is a part of. The biggest section is the Bible in its entirety. Next, is historical context asks when it is taking place, where it fits on the historical timeline, and what some of the social, political, and technological influences were at that time. The cultural context means learning what was going on within those ancient cultures at the time it was written. The theological context asks what the relationship of the author and audience with God was at that time. How much Scripture did they have access to? Finally, the geographical context looks at the type of terrain there

was at that time, the topographic features in that region, what the weather was like, etc.

2. Read literally unless the text has figurative language.
3. Compare Scripture with Scripture. The more we do this, the more the true meaning of the Bible becomes transparent because it was truly the message of God.
4. Consultation. This simply means adding some great secondary resources to the process. These are great at helping shed light on the text and details you may have missed while reading or doing your observation. If you would like a list of my recommended resources for interpretation, please [click here!](#)

There are six kinds of **genres** that appear in the Bible as far as literary form: exposition, narrative and biography, parables, poetry, the Proverbs and wisdom literature, and prophecy and apocalyptic.

Application: How Do I Respond to the Text?

What is application?

The best way to define application is to first determine what it is not.

- **Application** is not just accumulating knowledge. This helps us discover and understand facts and concepts, but it stops there. History is filled with philosophers who knew what the Bible said but failed to apply it to their lives, keeping them from believing and changing. Many think that understanding is the end goal of Bible study, but it is really only the beginning.
- **Application** is not just illustration. Illustration only tells us how someone else handled a similar situation. While we may empathize with that person, we still have little direction for our personal situation.
- **Application** is not just making a passage "relevant." Making the Bible relevant only helps us to see that the same lessons that were true in Bible times are true today; it does not show us how to apply them to the problems and pressures of our individual lives.
- What, then, is application? **Application** begins by knowing and understanding God's Word and its timeless truths. But you cannot stop there. If you do, God's Word may not change your life, and it may become dull, difficult, tedious, and tiring. A good application focuses the truth of God's Word, shows the reader what to do about what is being read, and motivates

the reader to respond to what God is teaching. All three are essential to application.

- **Application** is putting into practice what we already know (see Mark 4:24 and Hebrews 5:14) and answering the question, "So what?" by confronting us with the right questions and motivating us to take action (see 1 John 2:5, 6 and James 2:17). Application is deeply personal—unique for each individual. It is making a relevant truth a personal truth, and involves developing a strategy and action plan to live your life in harmony with the Bible. It is the Biblical "how to" of life. (Introduction to the Life Application Study Bible)

Some additional notes about application:

1. Once we know the truth of God's Word and ourselves, we must then be able to relate it to our experience in our lives-social, relational, business, church, etc.
2. Meditating on the Word is an essential step that cannot be skipped. In fact, meditation is directly linked to memorization which aids tremendously in our spiritual walks! We should be meditating on the Word of God day and night.
3. Practice the truth of Scripture!

Here are questions to ask to help apply the truth of God's Word:

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to claim?
4. Is there a prayer to repeat or pray?
5. Is there a command to obey?
6. Is there a verse to memorize?
7. Is there a theological error to correct in my thinking?

I pray this helps you in your walk and gets you excited to study the truth of God's Word! If you would like to see more in-depth content on this, please let me know!