

Inductive Bible Study Hints

(adapted from InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA)

To get the most from this study you need:

- A version of the Bible with paragraphs
- notebook for writing your findings

When you open God's Word, expect to meet with Him and to learn something about Him. Expect to find more of who He is and what He wants you to be like. In a wonderful way you'll grow to understand God and His ways if you approach the bible open to be changed by what you find there.

Each day as you begin, open your heart to the teaching of the Holy Spirit; ask Him to give you understanding and to help you think and act in God's way.

As you conclude a day's study, apply to your life one truth God has shown you as you relate to Him.

Do as much of a step as you are comfortable with each day.

Steps for Inductive Bible Study

Step One: Book Overview

1. Read it, if it's brief. If it's long, skim it. *If it's a narrative*, jot down a fact about one or two of the main characters; list a few major events. *If it's a letter*, note a few facts about the writer and those being addressed. *If it's another kind of literature*, list some facts that impress you.
2. Write down a few of your major impressions of the book.
3. What helps do you think you'll get for your life from this book? Write down one or two and ask the Lord to move in your life in these ways.

Step Two: The Book

1. Look through the book to find which chapters can be most naturally grouped together, either by main characters, events, or by geography. On a simple chart, write the 2 or 3 or 4 major divisions of the book, the natural groups of chapters. Give each division a short title.
2. What seems to be the main theme of the book? Write it in a short sentence over your chart.
3. How does that theme apply to you personally? In what part of your life do you need to act on that truth? Write down a specific way you can begin to do that and ask the Lord to strengthen you in it.

Step Three: Chapter or Part of a Chapter

If your version of the Bible has many short paragraphs, you can group them into thought-units and treat each unit as you would a paragraph.)

1. Make a list of *facts* that you observe in the chapter (or part). Note who, when, what, where, and how. Note also any interesting things about people, places, situations, atmosphere. Include things that are emphasized, like words that are repeated or contrasted. To cover a passage, make just a few observations on each paragraph.
2. Write down your major *impressions* of the passage. What "hits" you from this passage?
3. What does this passage teach about the *Lord*? What difference does it make to you that He is like this? Take sometime to praise Him.

Step Four: Chapter or Part

1. Choose a short *title* for each paragraph.
2. What *connections* can you find between paragraphs? Look for a few, such as repeated words, similarities, contrasts, cause and effect. What significance or *meaning* do you find in each of these connections? Jot down the meanings.
3. Then, look at the meanings, connections and facts and ask yourself: What is the main thing going on this passage? In other words, what is the *central truth* this passage is teaching? Write that truth in a sentence.
4. What is the main thing the Lord is saying to me through this passage? Here are some possibilities. Select just one.
 - Something to *obey* or an example to follow or avoid? What is it exactly? How can I soon practice it?
 - A *truth about the Lord* I can rejoice in? In what part of my life is this truth especially encouraging?
 - A *promise* I can take for a situation I'm in? Are there conditions in the promise which I need to fulfill? Is the promise to a specific individual or group, or is it generally applicable? What does the Lord say He'll do? (Memorizing the promise will help in the days ahead.)

Conclusion

THE NEXT STEP: **The Next Chapter or Part** Continue as in Step 3.

THE STEP AFTER THAT: Proceed as in Step 4, etc. *Move along at your own pace.*

RELATING THE MAIN PARTS TO EACH OTHER: When you finish studying the chapters, notice how their main truths connect with each other. As you connect these main truths, you are beginning to put together the **teaching** of the Bible. See if from these you can write the *theme of the book* in a sentence. How does it fit with the theme you saw at first? Share these with a Christian friend or group studying the same book. See how your theme compares with that in a Bible handbook.