

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

6 ways to dive into
the word of God



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BIBLE STUDY METHODS

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Who

For everyone who wants to grow in their personal relationship with God.

What

Studying the word of God, so that we might be built up by His Word.

Where

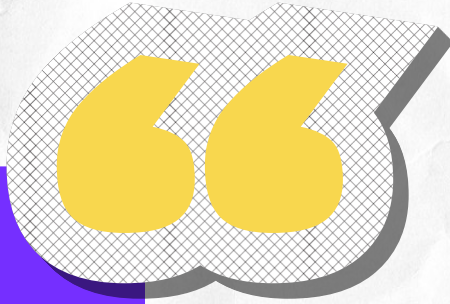
In a place where you have rest, focus and a clear mind to receive from the Lord.

Why

We ought to do our best to present ourselves to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15)

How

Using different methods to study the Bible. See which one fits you best.



**IT ALL BEGINS
WITH THINKING
ABOUT THE
TEXT**

Introduction

In front of you are several short introductions to different **Bible Study Methods**. By no means the only ones out there, but the ones offered will help you get started on the right track. You are encouraged to try them all and see which one fits you best. Discover truths that were previously hidden as you dive into the Bible and see how rich God's word is.

It all begins with **thinking about the text**, which is what Bible study is all about. Questioning what we read, followed by trying to find answers. As you will see, asking questions is integral to all Bible study methods. To help us find the answers, we are in need of additional resources. These resources will help us understand, interpret, and apply the Bible by providing additional information beyond the text itself.

Study Bible

One of the most valuable tools in basic Bible study is a Study Bible. This is a Bible with additional notes from scholars and theologians to help you understand the meaning of the text. We highly recommend the **Faithlife Study Bible** alongside your own favourite Bible translation. Besides this, you might look into purchasing a **Life Application Study Bible**. These are great study Bibles to start with. Besides this, we recommend you make use of the **BlueLetterBible**, a resource that gives you access to word information, commentaries, dictionaries, concordances and much more. All online resources are freely available by clicking on the link or by scanning the QR Code.

Translations

Secondly, we recommend you use different Bible translations. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, so most of us read it using a translation. We recommend that you at least use the following translations:

FAITHLIFE STUDY BIBLE



- **NASB**, New American Standard Bible
- **NKJV**, New King James Version
- **ESV**, English Standard Version
- **NLT**, New Living Translation

There are many more translations available online, but we think you will do fine with these four. The first two, NASB and NKJV, are so-called formal translations; the third, ESV, is a less formal translation, and the NLT is a dynamic translation. Using different translations helps us to understand the meaning of the text, as well as mitigate interpretive mistakes. Visit Biblegateway.com or Bible.com (YouVersion) for direct access to multiple Bible translations

Application

Our third resource would be YOU. You are the greatest resource out there by putting into practise what you learn. For in doing so, you will start to make disciples. Without practising what we learn, we are merely students and not disciples. For this reason, you will always find an application at the end of every Bible Study Method. Remember, application leads to transformation.

The question

Our final resource is not so much an asset but a question: **What is the original message to the original audience?** To answer this question, we must look at the context of the text, history and culture, see who the writer was and to whom it was written in the first place. Some have included this question in their method, while others might leave it out. However, to interpret the text appropriately, it is a question that will help us mitigate any mistakes. For this reason, we highly recommend that you at least think about the answer to this question whenever you do any form of Bible study.

If you want more helpful tips for bible interpretation, we recommend the book: **Let's Cook! Learn to interpret the Bible.**

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY



Inductive Bible Study

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word inductive means: *"using a particular set of facts or ideas to form a general principle"*. To come to general principles in an Inductive Bible Study, we will use three steps: **Observation, Interpretation, and Application**. Three steps, of which each comes with its own question(s), which will lead to answers or general principles that we can apply to our own lives. This form of Bible study works best if we focus on only a few Bible verses, preferably between 3 and 5. However, as we will later see, it can also be applied to full stories or even whole chapters.

Observation

In this first stage, we will merely read the text a couple of times. This is where we utilise those different translations to help us observe and answer the questions:

- What does the text say?

Don't look at the meaning yet. Just read the text two or three times. Association will often cause us to put a meaning into the text, which will muddle what the text actually means. For this reason, we begin with simply observing.

Interpretation

As we know what the text says, we can start our search for a meaning or a certain topic. To do this, we try to find an answer to the following, one might say obvious, questions:

- What does the text mean?
- What does the text say about a specific topic

Start with the original meaning of the text for the original audience first. Only then are we able to find a correct meaning for us today. If we were to start by looking for a meaning for us today, we are prone to end up with some strange interpretations.



Application

Yes, you guessed it right, it is time to put into practice the things we have learned in the previous steps. This part of Bible study is often neglected due to its confrontational nature. Most people like to align scripture with their lives. But our lives should align with scripture. To do this, we find an answer to the question:

- How does God want me to live in light of the truth of His Word?

Let the Holy Spirit speak into your life. Revealing those areas that need change or adjustment. Following Jesus means giving Him the highest priority in our lives, every single day. So, he can determine the way we should live our lives.



DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY



Discovery Bible Study

DBS, short for Discovery Bible Study, is another form of Inductive Bible Study. Since we have already gone over this, we won't go into too much detail. This form of Bible study is often used in **discipleship-focused** programmes or gatherings. The reason for this is its simplicity and focus on praxis.

If you use the **DBS**, you will find yourself being challenged, not only cognitively but even more so in applying the word of God on a daily basis. Besides that, it is a method that is beneficial for everyone. No matter where you are on your journey with Christ, you can use and learn from this Bible Study Method. Whether you are a seeker, a newly born Christian or a highly experienced disciple maker, the DBS will challenge everyone into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

The same principles of **Observation, Interpretation, and Application** apply, with the difference that we are now reading a **complete story** instead of just a few verses. Also, we will ask slightly different questions that will help us discover what the word of God actually has to offer. Now, don't be mistaken, most 'long-term Christians' will find themselves stuck in pre-learned theology and are often found struggling with the simplicity of the DBS.



Observation

In the first step of the DBS, we will, like in the inductive Bible study, merely observe the story. If possible, use multiple different Bible translations to read the story a couple of times. After this, we will ask ourselves the question:

- What does this story tell me about God?

This question will help us to see God's attributes, character and stance towards His creation in specific situations. Of course, God can also be exchanged for Jesus or the Holy Spirit. It is quite easy to enter into theological discussions when answering this question, which is exactly not the purpose of the question. Simply seek what the storyteller tells you about God.

Interpretation

The second part is used to interpret the story so that it becomes relatable to our lives. We do this by answering the following questions:

- What does this story tell me about people?
- What does this story tell me about myself?

By answering these questions, we not only see the humanity of the characters we read about, but we are also able to see the difference in their lives opposed to our own. In other words, it shows us where we possibly can grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Application

The third and final part of the DBS is all about making things practical. As we are now able to discern where our character needs to develop, our faith needs to get practical, or our personality must be polished into the image of Jesus Christ, we answer the following questions:

- How will I obey it?
- Whom am I going to tell?

Experience has taught that the final part of this Bible Study Method, when done in a group setting, is often neglected or even plainly disregarded. Mostly, this is due to poor timekeeping. We therefore recommend an equal timeframe for each of the three parts of the study. After all, as previously mentioned, it would be a waste of time if no application flows from the study, for application leads to transformation.



How did I obey



Who did I tell



**What does this
say about God**



**What does this say
about people**



How do I obey



Who do I tell



SOAPS



SOAPS

SOAPS is an acronym for **Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer,** and **Share**. Again, another form of inductive Bible study. The difference between this inductive Bible Study Method and the two previously mentioned is the amount of Bible text that we will read. Where the first one focuses on 3 to 5 verses, the second one (DBS) focuses on a full story, and the third and final inductive method focuses on a whole chapter.

Online, there are a lot of explanatory videos and instructions on the **SOAPS method**, most of which do not include the final S, **Share**. This shows us the painful truth of the apparent difficulty of sharing what we have learned and applied in our own lives. Often, working on ourselves seems already hard enough. Imagine having to share this process with others. This can't be what we must do, can it? Well, 1 Peter 3:14-15 shows us that this is, in fact, exactly what we should do. Let alone Matthew 28:19-20, for how else will we make disciples of all nations?

In this Bible Study Method, we follow the acronym **SOAPS** to come up with applicable principles for our own lives, according to the chapter that we will study. We start the study with:

Scripture

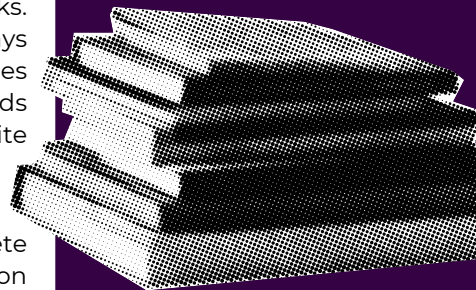
Read one chapter of the Bible, really soak it in. Read it 2 or 3 times and write down the parts of the chapter that speak to you.

Observation

In this part, we look at what the text means, what it says about God, and how he works. Simultaneously, we look at what the text says about people, and about us. The similarities between the three Bible Study Methods discussed so far are, most likely, quite obvious.

Application

We continue the study with a concrete application. Looking for the implementation of the observations that we have made so far.



Prayer

So far, we haven't really talked about the power of prayer. Be not mistaken, prayer should be a part of every Bible study or even Bible reading. James 5:16 shows us that the earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. (NLT) Prayer, therefore, should not only be a part of our Bible study but of everything we do. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your life. Let him reveal those areas that still need work or change. Finally, we pray over the scripture we read, that it may become truth in our lives.

Share

As mentioned above, this part of the Bible Study Method is equally important and, as such, should not be disregarded. Prayerfully consider with whom you will share the insights you have gained or the things you learned during your study. Put in the effort to continue to share this and do so with gentleness and respect.



THEMATIC BIBLE STUDY

The image shows a large, dark wood bookshelf filled with numerous books of various sizes and colors. The books are arranged in neat rows across several shelves. In the foreground, a desk is visible, cluttered with papers, a stack of books, and other study materials. The lighting is somewhat dim, creating a scholarly and focused atmosphere.

Thematic Bible Study

Compared to the previously mentioned Bible Study Methods, this one takes far more time. As the name suggests, this is a study method to dive into a specific theme. Are you looking for more information about healing, deliverance, creation, or whatever topic is on your mind? Then this is the Bible Study Method to go for.

This method, like every other, comes with its own advantages and disadvantages. We find it important to notify you of the biggest disadvantage of Thematic Bible Study: **eisegesis**.

Eisegesis is subjectively placing a meaning into the text. Since we are studying a theme, in other words, a subject, it becomes of absolute importance to understand that eisegesis will lead to flawed interpretation, which again will lead to wrongful application of said theme. To mitigate this, we highly recommend that you make use of the extra resources provided in the introduction of this book. Reference your study results with those of established scholars and theologians to avoid heresy of any kind.

After having determined our theme or subject, we can now begin with our Thematic Bible Study.

References

Now that we have our theme or subject, we start by making a list of biblical references. Bible verses that speak about our chosen theme or subject. Write down a good number of references, on average, this should be between 10 and 20. Although there might be many more, going for a higher number will make it difficult not to get overwhelmed and simultaneously keep a good quality of study. If you ever wondered why so many sermons are a mile wide but only an inch deep, you now know one of the reasons.



Questions

We continue with writing down a couple of questions that we want to answer. Again, a good balance between quantity and quality is important. For that reason, we recommend no more than 5 questions. Think of questions that start with who, what, where, why, when and how. Solid, open questions will help us to minimise eisegeses.

Conclude

Write a synopsis of your study progression and summarise your answers. Perhaps even try to give a definition of the subject or theme you studied, if possible. Conclude your answers in such a way that they will be applicable or lead to an application because, as you guessed, the final step is...

Application

We cannot emphasise this enough: a study without application is basically futile. There are too many so-called Christians who say 'Christ is Lord' but then lord their own lives. We must put into practise what we have learned. Pray over the conclusion and how it applies to our lives. Don't worry if the praxis doesn't work out the first time over, we have our entire life to keep on trying.



CHAPTER SUMMARY



One Chapter

Like the SOAPS method, this Bible study method focuses on a single chapter. To make a proper summary of a chapter, we can use a method that is called 'the 10C's. It was first developed by Rick Warren, an evangelical pastor and author. It is good to know that the Bible originally did not contain chapters and verses. These were only added after the 12th century to help with navigation, referencing and Bible study. Although there are major benefits to the standardisation of chapters and verses, there are also some drawbacks. One of them is that we sometimes misinterpret a text because we stop reading at the end of a chapter, whilst the previous or next chapter actually gives us much-needed literary context to understand the point that is being made. If you would like to know more about this, we recommend the book: Let's Cook! Learn to interpret the Bible.

If, for any reason, one would like to summarise a chapter for i.e. further study, preaching, teaching or pastoral care, we utilise this method. Choose a chapter that you want to summarise and read it at least 5 times. This will help you to get to know the text and become familiar with it. Different translations are, as mentioned earlier, a must. When you've read the text a couple of times, we can begin.

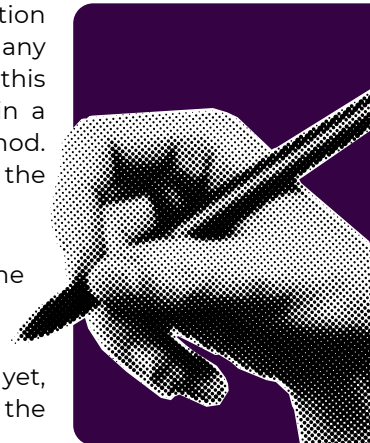
As you will notice, there is an overlap in information that will be asked within the 10 C's, compared to any previously mentioned Bible Study Methods. It is this overlap that shows us the important points within a Bible study and enables us to develop our own method. But before we start doing that, let's first check out the 10 C's as developed by Rick Warren.

Caption

Try to come up with a short title for the chapter, the shorter the better.

Content

What is the text talking about? Don't interpret it yet, simply write down the major and minor points that the text is speaking about.



Chief Person

Who is the chief person in the chapter, or who are the chief persons? Why are they important, and what makes them important? Write down the answers to these questions and continue with the next C.

Choice of Verse

Try to find the key verse. This can be a verse that summarises the chapter, or a verse that speaks to you personally.

Crucial Word(s)

We slowly zoomed in from the bigger picture to some details. In this step, we search for words that are crucial in the chapter. Pay attention to repeated words or ones that summarise previously found C's

Challenges

Which parts of the chapter don't you fully understand? Which verses or statements are unknown to you? Write them down so you may find new topics to study or look into.

Cross-References

As the Bible interprets itself, cross-references are helpful to give explanation or clarification of what we read. Look up the cross-references and place them next to the chapter.

Christ Seen

As the whole Bible is a revelation of Jesus, try to find Him in the text. Besides Jesus, you can of course also look for God and the Holy Spirit.

Central Lesson(s)

What are the major lessons we can learn from this chapter? Why are they there, and what does God want us to learn? Answer these questions before you continue to the final C, conclusion.

Conclusion

Yes, it's application time again. Write down a short conclusion of all the previous C's and how you can apply the things you've learned in your life. Make a single statement of the things learned that you could take with you throughout the day. See where it leads you as you ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in applying it.



TASTE & SEE



Taste & See

After having been over five different Bible Study Methods, one might ask how many more are there? To be honest, we don't know. As mentioned in the previous chapter, all methods have some overlap in their approach; finding this overlap and utilising it enables us to come up with our own preferred way of Bible study. This makes it impossible to know how many more ways of Bible study are out there. We have shown you some of the most well-known study methods out there. If, however, after all this, you have read nothing new, and you would like to take your Bible study to the next level, we have something for you. Taste and See.

An in-depth Bible study method that is based on an exegetical approach to the Bible. What we mean by this is that we take an objective approach to the Bible in which we utilise multiple tools and steps to extract the meaning from the text. We developed this method for those who are hungry for more, as well as those who would like to disciple others into a deeper understanding of the Bible.

Taste and See consists of four steps, with each step having its own sub-steps. Step one is by far the biggest and will probably take the most time to finish. It consists of seven sub-steps that will shed light on the direct context of the verse(s), as well as the broader context, the structure and even some of the words within the text that we are studying.

Step 1. Original message

- Historical context
- Limit the passage
- Get to know the text
- Study the structure
- Analyse the grammar
- Examine keywords
- Cross-reference the text

The main focus in step one will be discovering *'the original meaning for the original audience'*. As the text that we will study is not directly written to us, as well as in a different timeframe and a different culture, we need to consider these aspects. It's for this reason that scholars and theologians talk about reading the text in its own context.



The sub-steps mentioned above will help us to understand this context. Not only from a literary point of view, but also from a historical and cultural perspective. After determining which verse we will study, we will start to read and continue to read until we are well acquainted with the text itself as well as its literary context. From this 'birds eye view' we now zoom in a bit and look into the structure of the text, the grammar and finally some keywords. To close step one, we will check cross-references and consider those.

Step 2. To us

- Analyse tone & feel
- God's character
- Human conduct
- Extra resources

Having finished the first step, we have done the majority of the work. In the second step, we shift our focus from the 'original message to the original audience', to '*the original message for us!*' How should we understand the message in our timeframe? After looking at the tone and feel of the text, we search for possible revelation of God's character within the text. We continue with, perhaps a bit confrontational but much-needed, reflection on our own human conduct and finish this second step by utilising external resources to not only add to our own findings but also fact-check our study so far.

Step 3 In Christ

- Biblical Timeline
- Connection to Christ

In the third step, we shift our focus once again. Having started with the original message to the original audience, we then continued with the original message to us. In this third step, we will see if the text that we study is in any way, shape or form *connected to Jesus Christ*. We begin by placing our text on the Biblical timeline to see when it happened in connection to certain theological implications. We close this step by, when possible, making the connection to Christ. Looking into similarities or parallels between Christ and the text that we study.



Step 4. Applied

- Obedience
- Vocalise

Finally, we come to the fourth and final step of Taste & See. This is where scripture really comes alive, for the simple fact that we will start to apply what we have learned in our personal lives. Now, don't think you can skip this step, for it is James who writes, "*But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.*" James 1:22-24 We have to put into practice what the Lord has revealed during our study. If we do not do that, we will only partially taste & see.

Having an overview of what the Taste and See method looks like, you are invited to sit down at the dinner table and begin your four-course meal. Do not forget to enjoy all the beautiful flavours, colours and smells along the way. Interested? **Taste and See**



Spreading The Living Fire

We hope and pray that the study methods have blessed you and helped you fall in love with the riches of God's word. If you are hungry for more, make sure to check out **Let's Cook!** and **Taste and See**. You'll find more information on the following page. Our work in the Czech Republic is completed when we may present everyone mature in Christ. He is the only one worthy of our complete devotion. It must be Christ! No more, no less.



To become a partner or give a one-time gift, visit www.czalive.com or scan the QR code.

Other books by CZ Alive.



DMM Kick Start

A programme created to strengthen those who want to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and stand up as disciples, bringing the Gospel to those who haven't heard it yet.

Using several stories, we will take you through the Bible and the stories of Jesus to encourage you, so you can encourage others!

Let's Cook

This workbook will guide you through the basics of Bible interpretation. Along the way, you will learn different tools that you can apply in your everyday reading. As a result, not only will your Bible reading change, but your life will radically transform into the image of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Ready? *Let's Cook!*



Taste and See

Take an exegetical approach to Bible Study with this in-depth Bible study method. Written especially for those who want to dive deep into the Bible, this book will help you get there. The process will be life-giving and transformative towards the image of Jesus Christ. Get ready to *Taste & See*



Tired of reading the Bible but not knowing what it really means? These Bible-study methods will help you to get more out of the word of God. With multiple options to choose from, there will always be one that fits you just right. Be surprised by how these methods reveal the Bible in perhaps whole new ways.

