

HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

* As you work through the text, note any questions you have.

- Read the entire text for comprehension.
- Read again, this time marking:
 - Key words
 - Times, locations and people
 - Repeated words, ideas and phrases
 - Transition words (but, therefore, because, likewise, if/then ...)
 - Lists
 - Contrasts and comparisons
 - Commands
- Read again, marking major themes such as:
 - Gospel Truths
 - New Self / Identity (ex. 2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - The Great Commission (ex. Matthew 28:19-20)
 - The Great Commandment (ex. Mark 12:30-31)
 - The Church
 - Promises
 - Truths of Jesus
- Use the dictionary to look up key words, note appropriate meanings and related words.
- Consult different translations of scripture.
- Look up related cross-references.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

- What would the original hearers have thought?
- How does this passage fit within the greater story of the Bible? (Creation-Fall-Promise-Redemption-Mission-Restoration)
- Paraphrase: Rewrite the text in your own words.
- Consult reliable commentaries.

APPLICATION: HOW DOES THE TEXT CHANGE ME?

- What does this passage tell you about who God is?
- What does this passage tell you about your sin and need for a Savior?
- How can these truths transform your life today?
 - How will these truths change the way you respond to God and others? Be specific.
 - Are there practical things God is leading you to do differently as your heart changes?

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GOSPEL TRUTHS:

What does the text say (explicitly or implicitly) about the gospel message? Look for statements about God's holiness, man's sin, redemption through Christ, and our future hope in the full restoration of creation.

NEW SELF / IDENTITY:

What does the text say about who we are in Christ, after we are filled with his Holy Spirit and living free from the penalty of sin? Often, this is seen in context of our "old self," in passages that compare and contrast qualities of a believer versus an unbeliever. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

THE GREAT COMMISSION:

What does the text say about Jesus' command to go and make disciples of all nations? (Matthew 28:16-20) Where and how does this text encourage us to love our neighbor, witness to unbelievers, and help other believers mature in the faith? (Matthew 28:19-20)

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT:

What does the text say about loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength? (Matthew 22:37) What does this love look like and how do we obtain it? (Mark 12:30-31)

THE CHURCH:

What does the text say about God's establishment of, purpose for, and mission for the church (globally and locally)? It's sometimes helpful to note where a passage is speaking to the church (general), the church (specific), or a believer (as an individual).

PROMISES:

What does the text say about God's promises to us? What can we look forward to, be confident of, and have unchanging hope in?

TRUTHS OF JESUS:

How do the main characters or themes in the passage point back – or forward – to the person and work of Jesus?

NOTE:

Your passage may only have a few of these themes, so feel the freedom to only focus on one each night. You don't have to hit each of these themes every single week.