
Inductive Bible Study Basics

Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org

This is the “How”: The Method of Getting into God’s Word

“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.” (Proverbs 2:1-5)

Inductive Bible Study is a method for learning how to exegete the Bible for all its worth by our best efforts. We do this through learning the tools and skills to help us observe the text, dig out the meaning, and then apply it to our lives.

Some people view the Bible as an un-climbable mountain, a dark cave into which we fear to trespass. Be encouraged, and be comforted; you can indeed do it. Through the Inductive Method, you can climb that mountain and venture into the cave with confidence. In fact, you will be able to extract the truths as an expert *exegete* does just by posing some simple questions! The Bible is as a diamond mine, filled with precious nuggets that can be applied to your life to transform and renew it! As with any mine, you do have to start digging; we will show you how to do this. The Inductive Method has been proven to be the best way to find those diamonds, and the more you dig, the more you will find!

The Three, Basic, Essential, Inductive Bible Study Questions:

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. How does this apply to me?

“Inductive” means using logical induction and reasoning from the supported facts to ascertain a general principle that we can apply to our life. It extends deductive logic for greater understanding and application. The primary purpose of this method is to teach you how to study His Word in a logical, clear, and concise way. So we do not read into the text what we want it to say, rather we what take from God’s Word what God is actually telling us. In this way, we can be better disciplined to live worthy lives for His glory with Fruit, faith and character.

Over the years, we have developed more questions to assist you to more deeply dig out and learn His message.

The Basic “Into Thy Word” Inductive Bible Study Questions

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

In addition, our Inductive Bible Study Channel ([ADD LINK](#)) has more in-depth questions and techniques to assist seasoned Bible expositors, pastors, and Bible study leaders.

The Big Question: “What Does this Passage Say?”

These are the basics of how to study God’s Word. It is called the science of *exegesis* or *exegetical method*, but there is no need for big words here. These are the basic procedures a pastor or experienced teacher of the Word learns in Bible School and Seminary so he can prepare sermons and commentaries, but, here it is boiled down in a clearer and simpler way for you to understand and apply so you can then teach it to others! You will be able to mine more nuggets of precious precepts than others who may be in a hurry, who do not know how to go about it, or who have developed bad habits, causing them to miss some important stuff. Remember, these “Inductive Bible Study” methods are not for professional Christians only; they are the tools for all disciples of the Lord to use!

- Remember, there is no “best way;” it is important only that we do it. This study is about placing the “burr” under the saddle to get the horse moving, or plugging in the computer so we can use it!
- Good exegesis means we are to seek what God is saying not what we want Him to say. We are to dig out His principles not read in ours.
- Remember, to be in a state of prayer and humbleness before the Father!

A lot of people get lost at first as they dig out the family Bible with its beautiful leather cover and thin parchment pages, then find it difficult to understand and finally give up because the type is too hard to read, the font is too small for the eyes to track, and/or the translation is too difficult to follow. So, make sure you have a good, readable translation. There are numerous resources out there; take advantage of them, including Bibles with large, easy-to-read type.

How Does One Start?

Start with the proper approach—that of prayer and reverence. If we do not have the right attitude and mindset, we will not get much out of God’s Word, because our will gets in the way of His!

Prayer! “*Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law*” (Psalm 119:18). This is the essential, first step to always, always starting anything—especially the studying of the Bible and communication with God!

Attitude! Have a good attitude based on seeking Christ rather than seeking self. Our minds must be clear and childlike before Him, because, when you read His Word, you are standing before the face of God—the Holy God! So, adjust to a good attitude and reverence for God and His Word.

Select the verse, book, and passage you wish to study. Either start with Genesis or Matthew; some Bible teachers suggest John. If this is too much, then begin with 1 Thessalonians, as it is easy to understand. The point is to do it. Do not jump into tough books like Revelation or Romans first. Get to know the Gospels first! Discover what our Lord has to say to you! Do not be overwhelmed! Yes, the Bible looks ominous and un-climbable, but you have to just start. Just as when eating an elephant, you do it one bite at a time, and then one day it will be done! This is why we have so many Bible reading plans on our website.

REMEMBER: It is simply not enough to know what you want to do—you have to know the right way to do it. It is like following a recipe in cooking or using the manual when working on your car.

FIRST: PRAY!

- Ask God into your study as your Teacher. Ask Him to free your mind from distractions and help you concentrate. You are entering a learning partnership with Christ!
- You have to make a commitment and stick to it. Sticking to it will allow you to become more motivated and constant; thus, the more you do, the easier it becomes!
- A good plan is essential to any undertaking.

SECOND: Overview

Look at the whole book (a single book in the Bible) and “see the big picture.” For example, if you are going to study John, read the book of John in an

easy-to-read translation, like the *New Living Translation*. Read it like you might be reading a favorite novel. Enjoy it! Read it through in one sitting with no distractions. An average reader will take 30 minutes to one hour to do so. That way, you will gain an overall understanding. It is best to do this step at least two or three times!

Whole to Parts to Whole

Start by skimming the whole book, carefully re-reading each chapter, one at a time; then, reread it very carefully and slowly in a good translation. Keep in mind the question, “what does this passage say?” Then, check out other translations, commentaries, and dictionaries. Repetition is the key to understanding!

You may start off with Genesis, Matthew, or John. You may want to do a little O.T. and N.T. each time, in which case I recommend any of our Bible Reading Plans or the *One Year Bible*, published by Tyndale.

- Preview it. Read it like a novel. If you are having difficulty with one translation, try another. Then read slowly and keep re-reading. This will help you to remember.
- Like a wide-angle lens, OVERVIEW the big picture. Remember the context! See the whole picture of what is going on. The reason most people do not get it is because they do not get in it!
- Study whole books, book by book, and not just by topics or chapters.
- Like putting together a puzzle, start with a corner and then the straight edges. Start with the obvious in its context, and the rest will be revealed from there!
- Do not read a passage here and a passage there. Read a whole book through and through, systematically. First, read the chapters; then, study the verses, verse by verse, in order. You are not at a buffet; you are in His Most Holy Word.
- If you first look too closely at a tree, you may not realize you are in a forest!

Start Asking Questions!

- You are to study the Bible with quiet confidence in God. (Matt. 8:5-13; 14: 22-33; John 15:1-17; Eph. 3:20; James 4:3; Jude 24-25)
- The basic plan is that you interview the Bible; ask it questions to get to know the story, just as a reporter or researcher does. At the same time, whom you are interviewing is God’s Most Holy Word in His Holy presence!

Questions to ask the text to be more challenged and to draw out more information:

- Is there a lesson to learn?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim and keep?
- Make sure you trust and obey what God is telling you!

THIRD: Ask the Question: “What Does This Passage Mean?”

This is where we continue the Inductive Bible Study process using logic and sound reason. After you have done your overview, begin to read the passage more carefully, as if you are examining it with a microscope. This task is called the *exegesis*. This fancy word simply means to study a text carefully, rationally, and thoroughly to find the original, intended meaning. We are to do this without any preconceived ideas or agendas. If we come to the text thinking we already know all about it, we show that we know nothing, and we will gain nothing. Strive toward the “plain truth” of what the passage you are studying means. It is “common sense,” and yet, it is more than common sense. This is where we “pick” at the text, and in so doing, we are picking at our hearts and minds!

- Read carefully; study it! Remember, most Christians read the Bible, but few study it! Use a good translation such as the ESV, NIV, CEV, NKJV, or NASB versions. You can also compare it to a “paraphrase, a loose translation for more insights, but not always good for study such as, Philips, NLT, Message and Good News Bible. Do not be distracted and do not stop. Try reading aloud for better concentration.
- Study with reverence to Christ; see His Holiness so you have a proper sense of your ultimate reality, of who you are in Christ.
- Study with purpose! To be present with God, we must be willing and able to go deeper. Allow His conviction. Then, your personal knowledge and relationship with Him will deepen. Growing in Christ is our priority in life! (Psalm 27:8)
- Good exegesis means we look to what the passage is actually meaning not what we want it to mean.

- Look up words you do not understand, or would like to have more information on, in a good “Bible Dictionary” or “commentary”. You can also use a “concordance” to cross-reference to other passages for greater clarity and understanding (we have several of these tools on our Bible Study Tools Channel).
- Remember, God is God and we are not. God, being God, is to be the most significant and important Person in our lives. We need to honor Him so we can hear Him; as we know Him better, we worship Him as LORD.
- Imagine yourself as a participant. Read as if it is your story, as if you are there.
- Let God speak to you, as the main goal is for you to know the Lord better, not just to gain more knowledge!
- Look out for topics, logic, and direction.
- Meditate and pray over the passages that “speak” to you as you re-read, then memorize those key passages.
- Remember to examine what is being said...
 - First, in chapters.
 - Second, in paragraphs
 - Third, in verses
- Inductive Bible Study helps us study with a plan: consecutive reading, book study, topical study, and verse-by-verse. Luke 24:27, Acts 17:11

FOURTH: Charting: Start to Make Use of the Book Chart

Write down what God is saying to you and what you have discovered and learned. Doing this will allow you to apply it to your life better! Study with a pen and notebook. That way, you can record what you see and hear. Your insights and thoughts will become clearer and you can even disentangle what is false. His Word is clear, so make sure your notes are clarified as they pass through His Word to your fingertips onto a page for present and future use.

- A book chart will help you write down what the text says and means, and to tackle questions such as: Who? What? Where? When? How? and Why? *What does this passage say about God? About me? My sin? My struggles? My opportunities? What is my example to follow? What Fruit, Discipline, and Character do I need in order to develop and operate? What are the sins I need to avoid? What is my call and duty to carry out? What promise does He*

have for me to receive? What prayer do I need to offer? Then write down your reflections in first person singular because it applies to you.

- If you do not have a chart, you can easily make one. Take a piece of paper and draw three column lines down it. At the top of each column, write one of the three, basic, Inductive Bible Study questions. In column one, write “What:” As you ask the question, “what does this passage say?” you have a place to jot down your notes. Then, in column two, write “Meaning.” This is where you write down what you have learned by asking, “What does it mean?” and what God is telling you. Then, at the third column, write “Apply.” This is where you write down your insights on “How does this apply to me?” and “how I am encouraged.” Save some space at the bottom for questions to ask a mentor and/or research later, and save room for your prayers.
- Good exegesis means we write down what God is actually saying not what we want Him to say.
- The primary goal of interpretation is to find the “plain meaning” of the Bible so it can be used in your life, church, and community!

ALWAYS BE AWARE OF THE CONTEXT!

- The “nitty-gritty” for review: Read a whole book at least three times in an easy-to-read translation. Then, read each chapter you are studying in a good translation at least three times. Then, read the verses, verse-by-verse in order, and write down what you see and learn. Then you will be amazed at how much more you will pick up!

FIFTH: Ask the Question: “What is God Telling Me?”

This is where you are seeking conviction, and allowing the work of the Spirit, through His Word, to show you principles and precepts to apply to your life. Be aware that sometimes you may not like what is shown, but it is what you need to hear. This is where we *hear* His voice, where we become transformed and renewed, and we grow in our faith and practice. This requires that our will be poured out and surrendered to His. We must learn to study the Bible so we are challenged and convicted to gain more insights into God’s character and call for us!

Conviction is very important to make us aware of our wrong ways and for us to align our path with His Way. God has His ways of refining and purifying us so that the waste products of pride and selfishness can be tossed aside while His real redemptive work and sanctification come to us in power and conviction. People of strife in the world, and Christians who are weak in their faith will hold

on to their will and not allow conviction or change to enter their routine or life. Do not let this happen to you!

- As a Christian, the reality of who you are in Christ must hit home in power and certainty at some time or another. Has this happen to you? If so, how? If not, what would it take?
- Good exegesis means that God has control of what is being said and we do not, we are to hear and perceive what He has for us.
- God, the LORD over all, is LORD of our lives, too. Thus, He should have the primary place in our lives, where we recognize, trust, and serve Him with joy.
- God, our LORD, is to be trusted, loved, and enjoyed so we can be challenged to take His precepts into our will and actions.
- Here are some personal, inductive questions you can use to challenge yourself. Take a careful look at the passage you are studying; as you realize that it is indeed God's most precious Word, examine your life and compare it to the passage. Now ask yourself:
 1. How do I exhibit a life of *fruit, character, love, faith, and maturity* in my daily life now?
 2. How can I develop the willingness to be a more *disciplined, character, fruit and faith* driven person who will realize *I am called, empowered, and filled* by Christ?
 3. What blocks His work in me from working and being exhibited in me?
 4. How can I accept and commence His work, and discipline myself to carry it out?
 5. What can I do to make His work in me function better, stronger, and faster, even in times of uncertainty and stress?
- So, what is our LORD telling you?

SIXTH: Ask the Question: "How am I Encouraged and Strengthened?"

God calls us to encourage others, just as He encourages us. With His encouragement, we can tell others about Him just by our attitude. This builds unity and strength that cannot exist for selfish and alone Christians. To live a life that is not touched by Christ is to live a life that does not touch others positively, which is a very sad life indeed (Col. 4:7-8; 1 Thess. 5:11-14; Heb. 10:25).

In Christ you are a *pillar*. This refers to faithful people of God who are stable and can support others. Just as pillars hold up large buildings, we, as the faithful, hold up Christ (as in glorifying Him), and we also hold up others (as equipping and encouraging

them) (Ex. 24:4; Is. 56:5; 1 Cor. 3:16; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 3:7-13). When we feel weak, we still have His strength, and our faith and resolve to continue to grow our faith will become a mighty pillar that others can look to for an example and for encouragement. We are His example to others; even at our lowest, we can excel for His highest. Let us understand what He has done for us so we can do our best to be faithful even in times of pressures, waiting, and uncertainty.

His encouragement greatly helps us to see God's Word as real and impacting, without error or defect. This will help us study the Bible with expectation as we realize that Christ, Himself, is Lord over all.

- To grow in Christ, we must desire to be with Him and to learn from Him. (Phil. 3:10; I John 1 :3-4)
- Remember this important fact: Your Savior has a personal word for you! (Psalm 119:25- 28, 50, 72, 89, 90, 105, 130; Prov. 6:20-23; Ps. 40:7-8; Jer. 15:16, 23-29; Matt. 4:4; plus many more).
- When we are encouraging to others, it means we have been given the strength for others and we have a surplus for ourselves. Then, we can see our spiritual and personal lives supported and built up greatly, we can see what He has for us, and we can live a life worthy and for His glory. We will be encouraged and strengthened indeed!

Humbleness is characterized by the willingness to receive learning, and experience growth in Christ. Peter and James tell us we ought to be humble toward one other so that we can know the grace of God and not be in opposition to God. Then we can be humble, not only toward one another, but toward God. This is so straightforward. This is so essential if we are to be a blessed Christian and to be a growing church, not in numbers, but in discipleship!

SEVENTH: Ask the Question: "Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance are needed?"

Confession and *repentance* require us to employ our faith and repent, which means to embrace the liberation, empowerment, and abundance we have in Christ by completely and utterly turning away from our sin (as in our wrong desires and deeds), moving toward His love and plan. We have to see the wonders of God's Word and that His Word sets us free. It does not bind us to traditions and meaningless rhetoric; it liberates us into joy and contentment; it brings out the best in us, giving us purpose and real, authentic meaning (Rom. 2:4; 3:9-4:8; 2 Cor. 7:8-12; James 4: 7-10).

- What are you doing that is sin? How are you going to remove the sin?

- To grow in Christ, we need to let the Bible be a window to God and a mirror to ourselves. (James 1:21)
- God calls us and empowers us to authentic repentance (Acts 5:31; Rom. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).
- Repentance will facilitate our humility (Proverbs 3:34); then, Christ Himself will lift us up.
- Real repentance entails full, genuine confession, restitution, and the will to turn to Christ, not just as Savior, but also as Lord. This is not just a one-time deed, but a lifestyle that places Christ first and foremost in our daily lives.

This means we lift up our will to Him, and surrender it to His Lordship. He is our God and Commander, the One who first loved and cared for us. Thus, we should desire to use this imperative question to allow God's introspection upon our soul. It will help put our lives in order so we reflect His guidance when we first come to Him, and then, give us the desire to lead a life that glorifies Him. Subsequently, when we do wrong, we will realize it from the law written on our hearts and revealed in His Word; we can then turn to Him (2 Cor. 7:10-11).

EIGHTH: Ask the Question: "How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?"

This is the step that helps us *internalize* what we are learning. It is the process of interpretation, which means determining the meaning of the text—not just what it says, but what we do with it. Thus, when we ask "what does it mean?" we then need to determine how the answer is going to "fit" into our lives so we are changed individuals.

Wise people are those who are willing to grow and improve themselves. It is not an IQ thing; intelligence has nothing to do with wisdom (Proverbs 1:5-7; 3:11-12). You must be willing to learn about your personality and what you need to improve and work on; God's Word is the key to opening our hearts and minds.

- How do you begin to be a person who learns? Be a person who listens!
- No matter what is happening in our lives, God is working and leading us in the direction of learning and growing (Rom 8:28-29).
- Our hurt and pain, our rejection and loneliness may cloud us for a time, but we must not let it mislay our focus.
- God knows our suffering and has a plan to work it out—if not now, then in the life to come (Psalm 146).

- To grow in Christ, we need to know and do God's will. (Matt. 7:24-29, Rom. 12:2, Col. 1:9)

Just look at all the passages where God is directing us upward to learn rather than inward to be filled with contempt! (Ex 33:13; Job 6:24; Job 34:32; Psalm 25:4-5; Psalm 27:11; Psalm 51:6; Psalm 86:11; Psalm 119:12; 26; 33; 64; 66; 68; 108; 24; 135; 171; Psalm 143:10—and there are many more!) These are the principle verses for us as sincere, authentic Christians who are held responsible for doing something with our Christian lives. We are not called to be pretty; rather, we are called to get dirty! This is implied in all that we do and believe (Prov. 19:17; James 1:26-27).

NINTH: Ask the Question: “What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?”

Have you ever wondered what blocks the increase of our trust and faith in Jesus Christ? Why do some people grow in their faith, character, and maturity while others do not? The main reason is that many Christians set up so many barriers and walls to block growth in Christ that they cause us to hold back from receiving and living the best He has for us and we become stagnate. We become our own worst enemy. If we remain obedient, faithful, and take seriously our study of His Word, He will show us the way. In most cases, sin is not the only thing that holds us back from growing in Christ. Rather, it is often the refusal to recognize His divine power because we do not take His Word seriously; therefore, we do not apply it earnestly and continually. When we are ignorant of who He is and what He can do, then we become afraid, and our growth, as well as our usefulness as a church, becomes stagnate.

- Jesus calls to us to rise up and walk. To walk and to grow, we must desire to do so!
- What keeps you behind the barriers? Consider where your life is spent in time, purpose, thinking, relationships, service...?
- Carefully consider any barriers in your thinking that block you from the core truth and reality of Jesus Christ as LORD of your life!
 - Consider any barriers you may have to knowing Christ further—about Him, His story, His character...?
 - What about barriers from growing in Christ, and not taking time and effort in your spiritual walk?
 - What are the barriers from following His will?

- What about barriers we place in the way of worshiping Christ in a deeper, more heartfelt way? Consider what distracts you. Remember, worship is not just a service; it is a lifestyle!
- What holds you back in your spiritual development and deployment? Traditions? Presumptions? Time? Commitment?
- Are we able to understand how important this is? Do we trust in His provision? Do we know where we need to be, and that being in God's Word shows us the Way?
- Are we in the battle for Jesus' sake or for ourselves? What does God require? Are we maintaining a cause—or Christ?
- Are we willing to allow God to be God, to sanctify us beyond our comfort zone, experiences, and expectations? (Matt. 13:23; 1 Thess. 2:23)

TENTH: Ask the Question: “How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?”

This is the question that we ask to see how the truth of what we are reading applies to our lives.

Jesus calls us to be *doers* with His Word. When we really hear God's Word, without any barriers, it will impact us existentially (change us internally) down to the depths of who we are in personality, thinking, and attitudes, then it will lead us to godly actions. It will model and show both a loving concern for others and His precepts in concert. We have to be willing to hear it before we can practice it. If we do not practice, it becomes useless. This does not mean doing something without the knowledge to do it right, or going off without purpose or direction.

- To grow in Christ, we need to be strengthened in our faith formation so we can be obedient. (Rom. 15:4.)
- Good exegesis means that the precepts we have dug out are also to be applied and not set aside.
- We are not to submit to an application that we think should be or what the world says they should be, but apply what God says it should be.
- Application comes out of a changed life, and leads to a life transformed!
- What must I do to make God's Word real in me? What is my response?

- The Word of God should lead us to model the character of Christ, and to form us in the image of God. How should we carry out these changes?
- Pray and ask God how to implement His truth to you.

Righteousness cannot be achieved by any human effort; we can do nothing outside of Christ. God's will is in complete control; we must remove whatever is blocking us in order to realize this. We are to receive His grace and sanctification for our lives (Duet. 33:27; Rom 7:7-25; Rev. 1:17). We, at *Into Thy Word*, have many resources to help you in this journey.

The choice is ours to make it either simple or complicated, to be hurt or to be happy. By simply following 1 Corinthians 12-13 and Galatians 5:22-23, you will be able to transcend any barriers to discipleship and Christian growth. Your relationships will vastly improve because you will be acting as God calls you to, and people normally respond in kind as they are treated. The choice requires faith in action and growth in Him. It requires us to recognize what Christ has done for us so our fears and letdowns do not become either our gods or our focuses in life. He is the Focus; He is our God (Philip. 1:6; 27- 2: 11; 3:10).

ELEVENTH: Ask the Question: “What can I model and teach?”

This is the step where the rubber of our faith-formation tires meets the road of life. All of the previous five steps lead up to this. This is the main point of why we study the Bible—and that is to do something with it. Of course, we all do something with it; either we ignore it or we are transformed by it. We must ask ourselves, “How can the teaching about God’s Word relate to my problems, feelings, values, attitudes, situations, ambitions, needs, desires, and relationships?” And then, what have I learned that can benefit others?

God's Word will lead to godly action when it is received by a person who is rooted in Christ, whose life has been transformed. If not, we are self-deluded as James states in verses 23-27 and Ezekiel declares in Ezek. 3:30-32. Thus, the Bible must be read, it must be adhered to, it must impact us. Then, a visible and viable result will occur as our faith development increases and our purpose is set for a life that is worth living and one that leads others to Him. Further action would be taking our faith to the streets of life and actually helping others in a real, authentic way.

- To grow in Christ, we need to be equipped in Him by His precepts, and ready for His service. (2 Tim. 3:15-16)
- Remember, the Word of God’s purpose is to transform us into the image of God—to model His character! And then, we can tell and show others.

TWELTH: Ask the Question: “What does God want me to share with someone?”

God uses His Word to transform us; it is what He does, and then what we do. He sends us His Spirit; we respond. This incorporates a prime key to the success of finding our purpose in life, which is found by growing in Christ and applying His precepts. What we have learned will positively impact others just as what we refuse to learn will negatively affect others. The simple application of love, character, and fruit, and the willingness to be disciplined and to use them will be our signature, as a contagious Christian of the faith, in our witness and impact to others around us. Our trust and obedience will help us cross any barriers. In obedience, we become willing to serve God rather than our needs, even before we know what the call may be, and take this mindset into life and to others! To grow even further, we can be more contemplative in His Word and in prayer.

- To grow in Christ, we need to be willing and able to share with others what we have learned; this is mentoring, and we do it as a lifestyle and example as well as by being a counselor and guide to others.
- To be accountable, let someone else you know and trust hold you to your promises, especially as they relate to the study of God’s Word.

Conclusion

The Basic Inductive Bible Study Questions are simple and easy to memorize. We even have a “cheat sheet” you can put in your Bible with further questions (**INSERT LINK**). Basically, you will want to read the Bible for all that it is worth so that it and He impact you by this:

- **Seeing it!**
- **Knowing it!**
- **Doing it!**

In the Book of James, God is warning us not to just know, but also to do something with what we have learned. His Word must impact us; for this to happen, we must listen to Him so His precepts will affect us. We do not want to be as James says, “hearers only.” This is a statement that characterizes self-delusion and hypocrisy. In contrast, some Jews at that time believed they were required to memorize the Law (Word of God), but did not need to practice it. How many Christians do you know who do this too? I know some! For them, the value was only in the learning; the practicing of it was treated with contempt. We must realize how important this question is and not glance over it, because

complacency is deadly to a church; it will fall swiftly and hard into utter worthlessness and eventually close (Ezek. 33:30-32; James 1:21-27).

Hearing His Word is also the quintessential skill we need in order to be “doers of *His* Word,” and to apply His precepts into our lives; it also helps mature the lives of others. Is your faith weak? Are you listening to God? The first job of a Christian who wants to grow in his or her faith formation is to listen. Effective listening is essential to growing in faith or building a friendship! This must transpire so we can be “doers of the word and not hearers only” (James 1:22). How we choose to listen and lead our lives will be the proof that we belong to God and are not living just for ourselves (Luke 8:21).

- To grow in Christ, we need to be equipped by His precepts and ready for His service. (2 Tim. 3:15-16)
- Growing in the Spirit is a day-by-day progression, just like learning to read, the study of mathematics or science, or learning to play a musical instrument. It takes time and effort! So, do not be discouraged if your goals do not come about as quickly as you would like.

The Inductive Bible Study Basics will help you apply God’s Word to your life! When we listen, we open our minds and hearts to the Truth of our Lord. We will also hear what godly people are saying, which will sharpen us and let us know when there is error. The person who gets in His word, who sees, knows, and applies it, will be growing and useful for Christ. He or she will be exhibiting good character and godliness as he or she moves into actually applying Christianity, to being “doers of the Word” (Prov. 28:13-14; Mark 3:7-8; John 8:47; Rom. 12:15; Col. 3:12; James 1:2-27; 1 John 1:8-9).

Let us be doers of His mighty Word!

REMEMBER: BIBLE STUDY IS WORK!!!

So, what about devotional reading?

Can we just read the Bible? After all, cannot the same Spirit that inspired the writers of the Bible inspire us, too? Of course! We also need to read the Bible devotionally and regularly, as a love letter, for our edification and growth. Devotional reading is one kind of Bible reading that is essential for growth and discipleship. But, devotional reading is not always study, and this curriculum is designed to teach you how to study the Bible. As you learn these principles and tools, your devotional reading will increase in value too because you will be able to instinctively use these common-sense tools.

Check out some passages that tell us that discipleship and mentoring are not an option, but a command: Matthew 28:16-20; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 6:1-10; Mark 1:35 – 2:12. We must follow out of obedience, and mentor in a multigenerational lifestyle, caring for the total person. This will move us from just playing church to really *being* a church.

HARD WORK WILL PAY OFF!

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