
Leading Inductive Bible Studies

Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org

Leading Bible Studies

How to incorporate an “Inductive type” of study into your home or church Bible study

The main premise of Bible study is to lead your students into a deeper faith and understanding of God through His Word. What we must **not** do is distract people from their growth and maturity. One of the more sorrowful ways to distract people from God's truth is to allow pride to lead the study. Pride will cause people to pool their ignorance because they neither want to dig out the truth nor allow themselves to be properly instructed. This leads them to come up with misleading ideas that push people away from the truth!

Our endeavor at *Into Thy Word* is to open people's minds and wills to the wonder and insights of Scripture that have been almost lost to us. The Puritans were brand new to the Bible and had a *wanderlust* for it. Thus, they had to escape the persecution in England to be able to read the new Bible in English (they used the “Geneva” translation and not the KJV), which had not been available or even allowed. They lived in a very oppressed religious system where the worship was hidden behind a veil and in a language (Latin) that they could not understand. It would be like going to a church today and not be allowed to read the Bible--and the pastor does the worship service in the back room in an unknown and strange language, out of your sight and hearing. Thus, the longing to know God would be squelched by the people in leadership using their pride and power trips to control and “lord it” over others. By doing this, they set themselves up, to a degree, as gods. As attention and recognition is drawn away from God through control and manipulation, pride allows the leader to teach whatever they desire without concern for the truth of the Word. Pride, as well as apathy, allows the attendee and student to be led by people who are callous and who disregard truth.

So, the Puritans escaped to the New World to start a new life where they could exercise their faith and get into His Word. There they produced some of the most enduring and marvelous works of American literature ever conceived, such as “Pilgrims Progress,” and the works of Jonathan Edwards, to name a few. We have lost the wonder and excitement that they had. The Puritans dug and dug because they had the will, the excitement, and the education to do so. Too often today, we just pop in a tape and refuse to learn or dig for ourselves. Often, we allow others to “lord it” over us in their pride, so we miss the road God has for us! We must rekindle our love affair for the Word and the truth of our Savior, Jesus Christ! Do not allow selfish reasons or personal agendas to be the basis for

leading Bible studies. Rather, allow the truth to prevail! Remember, pride goes before destruction!

Pride skews the road God has for us. In an Inductive Bible Study format where the teacher has a heart for God's truth, and lets the Holy Spirit guide them into the truth of what the Word is saying, pride is squelched, and learning begins. In this way, the student's as well as the leader's relationship with God grows and matures. Truth is learned and truth is spread. A church then becomes built on what He has shown us in His Most precious Word rather than being built on the presumptions and the pride of the people. As students get into the Word for themselves, they will be dynamically changed by the power of God as He works through His Word. Bible study becomes more real and powerful as our sanctification (Growth in Christ) matures. Inductive Bible study gives God the opportunity to draw us, His children, deeper into relationship with Him, because it allows us to surrender our will over to His through His Word. Therefore, the barriers that separate us are broken down!

Since the popular outbreak of home Bible studies in the 70s, two things have happened. One is that people are studying the Word more! This is great, for it is one of the main reasons why the church is to exist and one of the main things the church has neglected for so long. However, we have a second outbreak that has occurred, and that is the rise of false doctrines. Out of these studies and other lay approaches to Bible study, a reading in of doctrine that just is not there has replaced sound logical reasoning and teaching. Presumptions, pride, and ignorance have taken a foothold into the Church and Christian thinking, pushing away sound Biblical truth. Some people have an insatiable appetite to make themselves known, and have found that a good way to do so in Christian circles is come up with a new teaching. Not convinced? Just watch some of the TV (or go to *equip.org*) preachers and take careful note of what they are teaching, then track them over a period of time and you will clearly see how much changing of truth occurs and how new things appear! This is a very sad and pathetic aspect of our human nature. We must fight against it and clothe ourselves in the firm foundation of His truth, not ours. His Truth is unchanging and true. Ours is always changing and untrue and will lead us way off the road of life.

The Inductive Bible Study method was developed to try to curtail these false teachings. Many people over the last three decades have contributed to this method, which traces its principles to Augustine, Aquinas, and the Reformers. By training people to get to the plain truth of the text, we do not read into it what is not there or take out what is there. And, we can do this by honestly observing the text, then asking questions and interpreting those observations, comparing them to other Bible passages, accepting God's truth and then applying what we learn into our lives so that it impacts others.

The *Into Thy Word* method is designed to allow you to read the Bible and get much more out of it than you normally could by just reading it. The outline is found on the *How to study the Bible* channel, and the full course is in the book, "Into Thy Word." More information is available on our Website channel, *Preparing Bible Studies*. Here we teach you how to outline the text and then prepare your own inductive Bible study questions, the kind of questions that stimulate discussion and excite people to learn and grow in the Word and faith.

As a leader, your task is to lead your students to the mainstreams, of the passage that follow the precepts, ideas and truths of our Lord. These are the fresh streams of truth; flows to a world that chooses to live in a desert. So you lead the student who lives in that desert yet thinks they do not need water or thinks they have enough already. You are to lift up the cross, the Person of Christ, and what He has done. You are also to show others what you have leaned and still be growing yourself, to show the wonder and truth of life that affects all of our being, that of who we are, why we are, and what we should do. The truth that created the *oasis* you live by, the truth of Christ and the following streams of His character. You cannot force one to drink the truths, but you can show him where they are and how to drink.

People learn best by discovering for themselves. Yet, at the same time, they need proper instruction. Stimulating discussion along with good Bible teaching will be the synergistic factor to make disciples for His glory. If all you have is good teaching, then your students may not process the information or understand it in an in-depth way. Nor, will they be inclined to take ownership of it and apply it to their lives. If all you do is have a discussion then a pooling of ignorance will occur, and your students will not receive proper Biblical instruction, possibly missing key insights and opportunities of application.

One advantage of Inductive Bible study is that no other book or study guide is really needed, once you know the steps. To begin, I suggest you use my "cheat sheet" and buy my book. (I need the money! Oh yeah, you will gain much more out of it too!) No other study material is needed. You may find a concordance helpful to find the location of all the passages that fit what you are studying, because comparing Scripture to Scripture is essential! By the way, this Inductive Bible Study technique can be used for any work of literature, topic, or study!

Thus, a good Bible study will have the key components of quality instruction and discussion. Of course, do not forget fellowship. First, it is best to have prayer and worship, then do the inductive steps, then have a discussion of those steps. The leader can then instruct on the key points of the passage. If you have a lot of people, break them down into small groups for the discussion with prepared leaders. Then, come back as a whole, with a time for questions and answers. Then, close by stating the main points of the passage and restating the application. You can also have people from each group share what they learned

and the application they came up with, then choose by vote or have the leader just choose one with which to emphasize and challenge the whole group.

If you have the time and resources, give your students a handout containing the main points from your outline and the questions, just as I do with the Online Bible Studies. That way, they have something tangible to take home and study. Yours does not need to be as comprehensive as mine is. A simple, logical outline will do. We have examples for you on the *Online Bible Study* channel.

Good, well thought out questions are essential to a good Bible study. If you just have quick simple questions, then you will have a quick and simple discussion. If you have well-thought-out questions, you will have a good engaging discussion that will challenge people to take ownership of the text and grow in the faith.

How to do this:

There are many ways to lead a good Bible study. These are mere suggestions, a guide on how you may lead an Inductive Bible Study. There are no right or wrong ways to do Inductive Bible studies. The suggestions are merely tools to help you gain more insight and information from God's Word in your personal Bible studies as well as for others who are listening to your teaching. What I will do here is give you some suggestions from my limited 20 years of experience, education, and the results from researching and interviewing the top Bible teachers. You then can tailor these ideas and customize your own format to fit the needs/age level of your students, your structure of time, and your environment.

Follow the steps from the articles on "How to Outline Scripture," and "How to Prepare Bible Study Questions." Then:

1. **Be prepared** and follow the first step of "Into Thy Word!" You cannot lead where you have not been! Thus, the love of the Word and the right attitude will be essential and contagious. This will make a great leader and a great study if applied, or a boring study if ignored. Know the inductive process. Do your own homework of studying the text for yourself first. After you do your own work, check yourself against good commentaries, such as the NIV Bible Commentary from Zondervan, or The IVP Background Commentary, or my favorite, the Reformation Study Bible. Good, trustworthy Bible teachers are also great resources.
 - a. **ATTITUDE is crucial!!!** (Gal. 2:20)
 - b. **REMEMBER TO ALWAYS: BEGIN and END YOUR STUDY IN PRAYER.** And, in the meantime, be in prayer.
 - c. **DIRECT YOUR WILL AND SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY!!!**
 - d. **BE OPEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

2. **Use a good format.** (1 1/2 hour study is usually the norm, but you can modify it to be more or less for a Sunday school class or retreat) There is no real best way, because each group is different in age, education, and walk of life...so be open to make changes, and be flexible. What usually works well is to:
- a. Begin the study in **prayer**. (2 to 5 Min) Consider having someone lead worship also! (10 to 15+ min)
 - b. Have the passage **read** (2 to 5 min), maybe twice in different translations. You could use the NIV or NKJV, and then a paraphrase such as the NLT (although more of a translation than the previous Living Bible, it is still a loose translation and not suited for serious study, but it is very helpful to gain insights. I highly recommend reading the New Living Translation for your Devotions. Always study off a good translation NIV, NASB, NKJV and not a paraphrase. A paraphrase is for a general overview and to gain some insights that may be lost in translations that read “wooden,” that is difficult to understand in our normal day-to-day use of language. Since it is not a word for word translation, a paraphrase is not for serious study) Have handouts with the passage in the two translations. (Print them out with wide margins for note taking.) You can get this from any Bible study software or on our Website under Bible Study Aids. That way, they can follow along in the same translations and circle key words, (in the translation, not paraphrase) highlight verses and write down notes.
 - c. **The Inductive part** (15 to 20 min): If your group can do this, (few will have the time or inclination) assign the text a week in advance, and have people do the inductive study themselves before the Bible Study. If not, set aside 15 to 20 minutes for people to do the steps. If space is available, spread out. For this part, people can work alone or they can work in teams of two to three or in small groups. Have no more than five in a group. Pass out copies of the “cheat sheet” (which has the main inductive steps and questions) and the “chart” (to write down notes in a syntactic and organized way) from the “*Preparing Bible Studies*” channel, (they are in the book, too) and have them chart the passage. If you have time restraints, you may want the students to focus on the key steps and questions from the “cheat sheet” that apply to the passage you are studying. As you and the students get more familiar with Inductive Bible Study, this step will become easier and faster!
 - i. Other ideas: students can do an outline, or use colored pens to circle key words and other information from the “cheat sheet” steps that apply to their passage. You can photocopy the passage for them if some do not want to mark in their Bibles.

- ii. Make sure your passage is not too long or too short for your time restraints.
 - iii. For youth, children, or older folks, pass out colored pens to circle in their Bible what they observe--key words as well as their questions. Then, have a discussion on what it means, and discuss how they can apply it. (The book has an excellent 15 week curriculum designed for High School youth and can be used for adults too!)
 - iv. As the students advance, you can teach them how to outline the text too!
- d. Then come together as a group and **discuss** (10 to 20 minutes+) what they have discovered. Use an opening statement such as “what did you discover with step...” then add your prepared questions to the discussion as they fit in. Try to have more questions prepared than what you may need. It is better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. If there are too many people, break down in small groups with prepared leaders. If you are new to this, it will take time for you to get used to it. Be honest with your students. Most people will allow you to stumble and they may get more out of it as they see you grow too! Remember, **He** is in charge, not you!
- e. **Teaching** (10-15 min.): Here, the leader can instruct on the key points of the passage, and field questions. It is best to be prepared and have an outline to work from and to share. Remember it is God’s most precious Word you are teaching, so be enthusiastic, and have a right attitude. Do not be afraid and think you have to be able to answer all the questions people might ask. Even the great ones are sometimes stumped, or just cannot think of the answer “off the top of their heads.” (For me, the answer usually comes as I’m driving home!) If you are not sure, tell them you will research it and get back to them next week. Pride will cause you to answer a question without knowing the correct answer, and that will cause people to have the wrong answer and then spread it to others!
- f. Save the **application** (5 min) for last. Brainstorm as a group the top one or two applications that the people came up with from the small groups or individual studies, or what you as the leader came up with, then discuss how you can apply them. Make a commitment to do it and then in the following week spend 5 minutes discussing how it went or what was in the way of the application. **This is where the “rubber meets the road” and what helps create the maturity and growth we all need!**
- g. **Close in prayer** (5 min). At least once a month spend 20+ minutes in-group or small group prayer. (See prayer suggestions in our Prayer channel.)

3. **Ideas for time constraint studies**--such as Sunday school classes where you have less than an hour:
- a. Have the students do the “inductive” part on their own before class, so class time is spent on discussion and teaching. This would be ideal if your students will commit to it. Of course, there will be those who forget or just were not able. They can still interact--do not leave anyone out.
 - b. Condense the above steps and concentrate on just one of the steps for the passage. Choose a “meaty” passage such as Romans 12, and spend a month in it. This could be done in four or five lessons, each one focusing on a step of the Inductive process. Examples could be: Week One, Observations; Week Two, Interpreting; Week Three, What does it mean to me; and Week Four, How to apply it.
 - c. Go over each step with the class in a fast paced manner (not too fast so it loses people), so the class will be more of an overview. Then, encourage people to dig out more on their own. During the class time, pause for interaction and ask questions. That way, it will be a lecture/discussion format. In addition, have five minutes of class time to ask them what they discovered on their own.
 - d. There are three basic parts to Inductive Bible Study. You may just want to try to focus on them, along with a quick overview and discussion:
 - i. OBSERVATION: What does it say?
 - ii. INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?
 - iii. APPLICATION: How does it apply to me?
 - e. **Key Word Studies:** Use **colors**; colored pens or highlighters work well. Colored pencils will work too. Pencils by “Berol” seem to work the best, and they are found at art stores. Experiment, because some highlighters bleed through to the other side in most Bibles. This is why I recommend using photocopies. You can mark key words throughout the passage. The student will be able to visualize the ideas and relationships within God's Word and how they apply to them. The key to making this work is being consistent by using the same colors in each of the steps. This will allow you to pick up Biblical truths, and enjoy your colorful work! Many people find this way very enlightening and beneficial. With this method you can identify common themes and follow the logical flow of the passage, especially in the Epistles. Colored pencils or highlighters or even a four-color pen will work. You can use the pen to make circles, underline, or even write little symbols that relate to the inductive step. For example, when I see a name for God, I mark it with a red cross. You can also use key words to answer the six “biggies,” Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why. (Use the same color for each of these.) They are the words that are repeated the most often. Other words to mark are the names of key people in the story and any pronouns. Names of God (see article on the “Names of

God,” “Names of Jesus,” and the “Names of Satan”), Jesus, and Holy Spirit can also be marked. You can mark time references, adjectives, nouns, places, contrasts, comparisons, and any key phrases. When you see a transition in the subject, highlight it. In that way, you categorize, and it keeps your thoughts and what you learn in segments, which become easier to find later! Kay Arthur, of *Precept Ministries*, suggests using colors for symbols such as **yellow** for the names of Jesus, **green** for promises, **orange** for salvation, triangle for Trinity, and heart for love. Each person can choose their own colors and style. This can be a lot of fun, especially for children, youth, women, and elderly groups. I have found that men’s groups prefer a traditional Inductive approach. But, again, each group is different! Don’t be afraid to experiment! And, do not forget to make notes in the margins!

The book “Into Thy Word,” takes you through each Inductive step and has an excellent 15-week curriculum designed for high school youth. It can be used for adults too.

The ultimate study guide tool for studying the Bible? It is the **will** to do it!

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In His Name,

Richard Krejcir

Num. 6:24

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Many people write in, asking how and why I wrote the book, “Into Thy Word.” Basically, it was to show how one can better study and understand the Word of God. It explains how to dig the meat out of it. (See the articles on “Why Inductive Bible Study” and others in the *How to Study the Bible* channel.) I have done this by incorporating what is called “exegetical tools,” methods that pastors learn in seminary in order to prepare sermons. Then, I hone them into everyday language in a logical systematic way. This is how a doctor in literature might study Shakespeare, and then explain to their students, with passion and excitement, the truths and wonders of Shakespeare.

I then did a comprehensive research project of finding out how the best Bible teachers teach and gathered their insights. Why is Chuck Swindoll better than pastor John Blow down the street? I did this by interviewing dozens and dozens of the top Bible teachers in the world, including Billy Graham, R.C.

Sproul, Charles Swindoll, Chuck Smith and even C. Spurgeon through his book, "Lectures to my Students", plus hundreds of great "regular" Bible teachers to find their methods and "tricks." I even interviewed *bad* Bible teachers to see their mistakes. I began doing the "How to study the Bible" seminars for others in 1988. (I actually started doing them in 1980 for youth groups and Young Life and Campus Crusade.) This research is ongoing as I am always researching and refining "Into Thy Word."