



# Manuscript Bible Study

(adapted from various IVCF materials by Kevin & Amy Offner)

## 1. The Goals:

- a. To gain a deeper understanding of God's word
- b. To learn a method of study
- c. To give a deeper response to God and his word

## 2. What you'll need to get started with Manuscript Bible Study:

- a. Use a double-spaced wide margined copy of the text with no chapter, verse, paragraph, heading information or breaks. Pages are numbered and every five lines are indicated in the left margin. (When making my own manuscripts I end up leaving in the verse numbers in part so I'll know where I am when others are reading from Bible in a group setting (but ignore them otherwise); and also because I don't know how to format in order to get the line numbers in the left margin easily, so we don't have those in our manuscripts. :-] )
- b. Colored pens or pencils (use to color code and track observations, themes, discoveries and info in 3a below, however you wish. May use shapes around words, underlines, squiggly lines, pictures, etc. Knock yourself out. Be as simple or complex as you want!
- c. Use modified inductive Bible study method. (see other side for more info on Inductive Method)
  1. OBSERVE - the facts of the text
  2. INTERPRET - what the facts mean
  3. APPLY - truth of text to daily life
  4. CORRELATE - these facts with other themes found in Scripture
- d. Ask the Lord to open up the passage to you through his Holy Spirit and then read through text once to become familiar with it and note broad themes and ideas....seeing the forest first and then the trees will come later.

## 3. Hints for doing Manuscript Bible Study:

- a. What to look for (now the trees)
  1. Words and phrases which
    - a. Repeat
    - b. Contrast or compare
    - c. Similar in meaning
  2. Cause and effect relationships
  3. Details pertaining to:
    - a. Time
    - b. Geography/Place: what facts do you find about the setting?
    - c. People
      - who are the characters?
      - what facts do you find about them?
      - how do folks relate?
      - what are encounters like?
    - d. Action (who is doing what?)
  4. Thought breaks/idea changes (paragraph or sections; give titles in margin and make notes)
  5. Scripture the recipients would have been familiar with
  6. Running Themes
- b. Techniques and Resources:
  1. Vary the color and shape of your notations (using colored pens or pencils)
  2. Use a Bible Dictionary for information about:
    - a. People
    - b. Places
    - c. Concepts foreign to our culture
    - d. Foreign words
  3. Use a Concordance for exact Greek word
  4. Use English dictionary for words you don't know
  5. Use Bible Atlas or Map
- c. Commentaries are not recommended or encouraged before one wrestles with the words of Scripture themselves. And cross-referencing other passages in Scripture (besides the text you are presently studying) should be done only (if at all) after one has spent adequate time studying the passage at hand.



# Inductive Bible Study

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## Observe: What has God said?

1. Read the passage a couple of times carefully.
2. Observe the facts and write some of them down

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Who is there?           | What is happening?     |
| Type of Literature      | What is setting?       |
| Descriptions of people  | Descriptions of places |
| Repeating words/phrases | Key words/ideas        |
| Note punctuation        | Contrasts              |
| Note grammar            |                        |

3. Look at the “forest” as well as the “trees.” What is the passage as a whole about?

- Give a few word title to this passage
- Divide the passage into paragraphs, and give short titles to each paragraph. (Usually the paragraph titles will be clearly seen as supportive of the overall passage’s title.)

## Interpret: What did God mean?

1. Find out what the facts mean. Draw conclusions based on the evidence. Remember that you are interpreting only your observations.

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Define key words         | Put into context          |
| Summarize main teachings | Ask “Why?”                |
| Examine cultural habits  | Ask “How come...?”        |
| Define analogies         | Review sentence structure |
| Explore language         |                           |

2. No individual passage stands all by itself, but needs to be seen within the larger context of the whole Bible. The Bible’s main message can be summarized under the rubric of “creation/fall/redemption/restoration,” and so the smaller individual passages need to be interpreted in light of this larger worldview. So:
  - a. Since Scripture exposes both sin problems (idols, pride, worry, etc.) and problems that result from living in a sin-ridden world (grief, sickness, loneliness), revealing our need for the grace of God, what sin problem or human need does the passage expose?
  - b. Since Scripture is redemptive, pointing us to our Redeemer and His work, how does this passage either:
    - a) predict; b) prepare for; c) reflect; d) result from the person and work of Jesus Christ? How is the wonder of God’s grace revealed to meet the specific sin problem/human need?

## Apply: How Should I respond to what God has said?

1. Determine whether or not you should change either your lifestyle or beliefs as a result of understanding the passage.

- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Example to follow | Example to avoid         |
| Sin to confess    | Attitude to assume       |
| Command to obey   | Encouragement to receive |
| Truth about me    | Verse to memorize        |
| Truth about God   |                          |

2. What do I learn here about my own sin and need for repentance? What do I learn about Jesus Christ and His grace?

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*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*