

▲ Personal Bible Study, Part 2 ▲

Objectives: LEAD participants will be able to describe options for types of Bible study, and to select and employ the most appropriate type of study for their situation.

Plan ahead:

- Time required: 70 min
- If possible, do this lesson at a place with internet

Supplies:

- Scuba mask and snorkel (if you can find one), or magnifying glass
- Concordance, Bible dictionary
- 5 computers that can get online, with power cords as required

Accompanying documents:

- Bible Study Template
 - Example of 1 Thess 5:17
 - Blank worksheet for Psalm 37:4
 - Method of Study "Filled out" for Psalm 37:4 (Instructor only)
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❖ **Get Started (hook, 15 min)**

Leave the building, go outside. Ask what the LEADs see as they just look around. Affirm their observations.

Have them spread out and look closely at whatever is right near their feet. Ask what they see as they make a much closer observation.

Ask:

- When you looked the first time and second time, were you looking at this same field or forest?
- Why did you observe different things?

❖ **Learn / observe (book / look, 30 min)**

(Go inside. Hold up a Bible.) This is the Bible. But it, too, looks different when we either read big sections and get the big picture, or dig really deep into just a word, or a verse or two. We could call it snorkeling when we read big sections to get the general story or flow, without digging in deep. Or we could call it an airplane view.

When we slow down and go deep, call it scuba diving rather than snorkeling, or looking through a magnifying glass rather than doing a fly-over. Both have great value. But they are different.

Before we delve into the options, what is the MOST important part of Bible study? (ask other questions if necessary to get to the most basic step: READ IT!)

And what is the most important result of all of our study? (ask other questions if necessary to get to the most basic step: APPLICATION that results in life change. Use James 1:22 *Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*, if necessary.)

So in every study, every day that you study, start by reading the Word and end by considering what God is asking you specifically to do or change.

First, how do you figure out where to scuba dive? What should you study more deeply? There is great value in making it a regular practice to read through the whole Bible at some point, if not repeatedly, to hear the beginnings of the Great Story that God is continuing in our day. If that is too scary, then read through whole books of the Bible, a section at a time or a chapter at a time, whatever works for you. Call this a **snorkel**, or **fly-over**. When you see something interesting or confusing, stop and scuba dive, or take out the magnifying glass.

What does that look like? There are many different ways to dig deeper, but in your notebooks is one methodical, simple but complete method of study. In the front, there is the outline. Flip to the example of 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and we will talk through it. Then you'll work through another verse in groups.

(Talk thru the example and where the information came from in each section. Remind them of the reference materials they learned about in Personal Bible Study, Part 1. Have those references available for them to use. Alternatively, have computers and internet available. Notes are below.)

Read the passage in at least 2 translations. Reading in different translations can help us get a fuller understanding of what the original author was trying to convey. It can also bring up questions that will lead to deeper understanding as we search for answers.

What questions come up as you read the passage? (Add to the list whenever questions come up.) Asking questions can lead to deeper understanding as we search for answers. Asking questions helps us learn.

Context – “context is king” - Context determines a great deal of meaning. Consider the meaning of the word "bar". The context in which it is used determines whether it is a place for drinking, a metal rod, a gymnastics event or something else. Context is HUGE. It is the starting place for discovering the meaning of a word or passage.

Context includes what comes before and after a given word or passage. Therefore, we explore both the context before and after the word or passage, and we look at the impact the context has on our word or passage:

- *Immediate context – what verses and topics covered just before and after the passage?*
- *General context – where does the passage fall in an outline of the book?*
- *What insight do you gain from the context?*

History - While God knew the situation that YOU would be in, and wrote the Bible in such a way that it would speak to YOU where you are, He also wrote it through human authors who lived in situations that have similarities and differences from our own. Often, looking at their culture and situation helps us better understand what they were trying to communicate. So consider these things and how they affect your word or passage.

- *What circumstances surrounded the writing of the book? (author, date, audience, purpose)*
- *Consider using reference works to dig into the history, culture and religion of the time.*
- *What insight do you gain from the history?*

Genre - Whether a passage is part of a story, part of a poem or part of a letter makes a big difference on how we understand it. If I see the word, Eagle, in a story, I will most likely think it's the large, predatory bird. If it's in a Psalm or some type of prophecy, I might look for a figurative meaning, like a person or country that is represented by the term "eagle". If it is a letter, I'd have to look at the context of the letter, both the words that surround it, the ideas that surround it and the situation in which the letter was written to figure out if this is an eagle-bird or a figurative representation.

All that to say, Genre has a significant influence on how we understand many words or passages. For each Genre that is contained in the bible, there are several specific questions that can help us understand the passage better. These are listed on your template of the Method.

Is it a historical narrative?

What is the plot?

Who are the characters?

Who is the narrator, who is his audience and what is he trying to say?

What insight do these things give you?

Is it a psalm?

When was it written? By whom? About what issues?

What insight do these things give?

Is it prophecy?

What situation is it addressing?

Is it predicting something, or is it God speaking to the people through His prophet about other issues?

Has it been fulfilled already, or is it referring to something in the future, or some combination of those?

Is it a New Testament epistle? Author typically wrote within a certain format, for a purpose, to a person/people

For what purpose and to whom did this author write?

What insight does this give you?

Is it a parable?

What is the immediate context?

Who are the recipients?

What is the Main Point?

What details are relevant? What details are irrelevant?

How does it compare / contrast with parallel passages?

Literary analysis - Use NASB or ESV for this type of study - Because these two translations are as close to the original languages as we can get, it is best to either use one of them for this step, or skip this step altogether.

What is the main phrase (independent clause) of the passage? - What is the main subject and verb, the fewest words that make a complete thought?

How are the other phrases (dependent clauses) related to it? - How do the other words modify this central thought?

What conjunctions tie the passage together (don't use NIV for this)? - Words like And, But, Or, For, Nor (Pass the But Or For Nor, Pass the butter for Nor) show how thoughts relate to each other.

How do the conjunctions impact the meaning of the passage? - How are the thoughts or ideas tied together and to the ideas before and after them?

Are there special features like repetition, switches in verb tense, or switches in person/people addressed or involved (like the switch from "them" to "you")?

What insight do these answers give you into the passage? - How do the answers to the questions above modify the meaning of the word or passage?

Word study

What are the important words or phrases? - Break them apart into individual words or phrases that you can dig into more deeply.

How are they translated in different translations?

What does the word in the original language mean? (use a bible dictionary such as Strong's or Thayer's or Brown-Driver-Brigg's, available online, free)

Where else is the original word or phrase used in the Bible? - This is a very useful, but optional step. You can also look at where else in the Bible a key word is used, but be aware that it may not be the same places as the word in the original language was used. Words are sometimes translated differently in different languages, based on their context.

What insight does this give you into the passage?

Parallel and related passages - TSK, or Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge is a good cross reference tool available free online through numerous resources

What passages of the Bible parallel this or deal with the same topic? - Look up one or several parallel passages to find out more of what the Bible says on this topic.

What insight do you gain from the parallel and related passages?

Theology

Are there problems that the passage raises when set beside other passages? - Do the parallel passages say similar things as your passage? Do these shed light on it? Do they seem to contradict it?

How do you resolve them, assuming that the Bible does not contradict itself? - This is a big assumption, but if God wrote all of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17) then it should never contradict itself. If it does, then God contradicts Himself and we can't really trust Him.

Summary - These questions are fairly straightforward. Simply answer them.

In one sentence, state the basic meaning of the passage in your own words. - Try not to use the same words as the passage.

How does this relate to the story / history of salvation?

How does the passage correct an error or problem today?

What promise or encouragement does the passage have for you today?

Application

What concrete change is God asking you to make as a result of studying this passage?

You don't have to do ALL of these steps for every passage. Doing all of them for a single passage is a true "deep sea dive" or a look under a microscope. It can show you new and fascinating things you never thought of. Most of the time, however, you only have time or interest to do a few parts of this Method, or just one. A word study is a very common section of this to do, for example.

The goal today is just to expose you to all of these. What questions do you have on these?

❖ Get Practical (took, 20 min)

Now that you've seen several things you can do to study the Bible more deeply, let's do one deep sea dive together.

(Direct them to their Template of Psalm 37:4. Break them into groups of 2-3 people each. Have each group start a Section. When they have finished that Section, assign them another Section, until all Sections are finished.

(Let them work until you run out of time - leave enough time to summarize - or they finish all sections.

❖ Homework (follow up assignment)