

How to Study the Bible 4: Three Steps of Bible Study

A. Three tasks required to study the Bible properly.

***1 Tim 4.13** Until I come, devote yourself to the public **reading** of Scripture, to **exhortation**, to **teaching**.*

1. **READ** the text.
 2. **EXPLAIN** the text.
 3. **APPLY** the text.
- These three tasks are really three _____ to studying the Bible.
 - These three tasks can be described in this way:
 1. Observation (Read) - Ask: What do I _____?
 2. Interpretation (Explain) - Ask: What does it _____?
 3. Application (Apply) - Ask: How does it _____?

Let's look more closely at each of these steps.

1. Observation - What do I see?

- Begin by reading the Scripture text several times.
- Pay close attention to what the Bible says to discover what it says for itself.
- Ask a lot of questions about the text, such as:
 - Who?
 - What?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - Why?
 - Why not?
 - How?
- Look for four things:

A. Type of Literature

- What kind of literature is this text?
- Is it poetry, a parable, a proverb, an historical story, an exposition (explanation), or a prophecy?

B. Historical Context

- Who are the main characters?
- What were they doing or saying?
- When did this take place?
- Where did this take place?
- Why would the author be writing about this?
- What was it like to be the author?

C. Important Words

- How is the author telling the story?
- How is the author using his words to persuade us of his point?
- What words does the author repeat?
- What is the author calling his readers to believe or do? (verbs)

D. Structure

- If you believe that God inspired the Bible, then you must believe that God inspired each of the _____ of the Bible.

Ask:

- What is the subject of the sentence?
- What are the main verbs?

For stories, ask:

- What is the climax of the story?
- What is the resolution of the story?
- What is the cause and effect of actions and words in the story?

2. Interpretation – What does it mean?

A. Questions

- You must continue to ask _____ questions of the text.

B. Answers

- Where will you find the meaning of a text?
You will find it _____!

- The more time you spend in observation of the text, the less time you will need to spend on interpretation, and the more _____ you will be in your results.
- The less time you spend in observation, the more time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate your _____ will be.

C. Put It Together

- After you “take apart” the details of a text by asking many questions, you must put the pieces back together again by using the answers the text gave to your questions.
- You cannot put meaning into a text, the correct meaning always comes OUT OF the text.

3. Application – How does it work?

- a. How does it apply to me?
- b. How does it apply to others?

B. Conclusion:

- These are the three basic steps to studying the Bible.
 1. Observation – read the text
 2. Interpretation – explain the text
 3. Application – apply the text
- How can you understand the correct meaning of a text?

By asking the right _____.