

Small-Group Discussion Questions

You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your sermon, or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to help students think critically about the sermon and what it means to them.

1. How was the time and place you picked last week? Did it work for you?
2. What observations can you give us about what you read last week?
3. How did God speak to you through what you read? What are the applications you took away?
4. What was your biggest struggle this past week finding time to read your Bible?
5. Did you pray before reading your Bible this week? Or during? If so, how did it help set your heart and mind before reading?
6. How do you break things down when you read a section of scripture?
7. Read Romans 12:1-2 together. Do you see how these trigger words help you to see the authors point?
8. Thinking through, what helps you the most? Inductive (Observation, interpretation, application), Literal, historical, contextual.
9. Is it easy for you to find applications when you read? Why or why not?
10. What are some questions you have about the Bible? After reading this week?

-If any are really good shoot them to me and I will try to answer them in the next week's video. (Matt)

Inductive Bible Study

Participation

“What Does It Mean For Me Today?”

Moves us from being intellectual to practical...

With your observations & interpretations in hand, ask:

- Does the passage address a specific issue for me to deal with personally?
- How am I like the characters in this passage?
- What seems to be the main thing God is saying to me through this passage?

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
James 1:22

How am I to respond to Him?

1. Is the Lord showing me a command to obey, a principle to apply, an example to follow or avoid, a sin to avoid or confess, or a challenge to face?
2. What action am I going to take? How am I going to be held accountable in this?
3. Is the Lord showing me a truth about Himself that I can rejoice in and be strengthened by? If so, where do I need this in my life now? Is He showing me a theological error I need to correct?
4. Is He pointing out a promise I can claim for myself? If so, what conditions are there for me to fulfill? What does He say that He will then do?
5. What will I believe? What would it mean for me to live like I believe this is true?

Continue To Apply The Truth In Your Life By:

- Reviewing/meditating on this truth
- Keeping a journal of truths learned, challenges, and applications made
- Sharing what you have learned and are applying with a friend, asking them to hold you accountable.

Inductive Bible Study

Observation

“What Does It Say?”

Who? What? When? Where?

Look for:

- Interesting or unique things
- People, place or time
- Situation, atmosphere or mood
- Type or style of literature
- Key words or ideas
- Use of metaphor or imagery
- What is happening
- Repetition of words, subjects, verbs, and ideas
- Note verb tense, modifiers, and prepositions
- Similarities
- Comparisons & contrasts
- Cause to effect, or effect to cause
- Things to define or explain
- Things omitted (unexpected left-out items)

Begin observation by:

- Grouping verses into units of thought (segments, paragraphs)
- Giving 1 to 3 word titles to these units of thought
- Noting the connections between units of thought

Continue observation by:

- Writing down the impression you now have
- Writing down the questions or problems you want to address from the study

Inductive Bible Study

Interpretation

“What Does It Mean?”

What meanings or conclusions come from the facts?

With your observations in hand, ask:

- Why is this word, idea or section here?
- How does it fit into the passage?
- What does the situation, atmosphere or mood tell me?
- What does the repetition emphasize or indicate?
- What do the similar ideas have in common?
- How do these ideas differ? Why?
- What is explained through comparisons & contrasts? How do they illustrate truth here?
- Noting the kind of expression, what response is the author looking for?
- What does grammatical analysis tell me? What do the verbs tell me? What clues do connecting words give me?
- How are outside quotes used in the passage? Why are they used here?
- What is the meaning/explanation of “-----“?
- Why is “-----“ not present in this passage?
- What directions do connecting words give me?
- How does context play a role in interpreting this passage?

Continue interpreting by:

- Noting connections between paragraphs & sections
- Writing down the main points of the passage

What is the central truth of this passage?

- This may be one of your main points with the others supporting it, or it may be a combination of the main points identified above

Interpretation

Discovering the Authors Meaning

(all good interpretation must get to the author’s intent)

1. Identify the historical context
2. Identify the type of literature
3. Get an overview of the book
4. Study the book passage by passage
5. Compare your interpretation with a good commentary

Principles of Interpretation:

1. **Content:** this is the purpose for observation; to see everything and to miss nothing
 - a. Know the terms and words used
 - b. Know the literary style, form, structure, atmosphere
2. **Context:** no verse exists in a vacuum; we must see what precedes and follows it

“Doctrinal errors are almost always the result of a failure to apply the principle of context.” –H. Hendricks
3. **Comparison:** scripture is its own best interpreter.

“That which is explicit always interprets that which is implicit in Scripture.”

 - a. Scripture is coherent and consistent. Our interpretation is incorrect if it is out of harmony with clear teachings of Scripture.
 - b. Obscure passages in the Bible must give way to clear ones.
 - c. There is a progressive revelation in scripture; the fullness of revelation is in the New Testament. “The New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed.”
 - d. Use a concordance to chase a word throughout scripture
4. **Cultural and Historical Background:** First interpret the message from their cultural perspective in order not to misinterpret it for ours.

“Distinguish the times and you will harmonize Scripture” –Augustine.

Types of inductive study

Type	Advantages	Suggestions
Book Study	Context Studied as written	Gospels: Mark Letters: Gal, Eph, Phil, Col James 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Old Testament: Joshua Ruth 1 Samuel Nehemiah Jonah
Character Study	Model of God at work in a person's life	Genesis: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph Exodus: Moses Judges: Deborah, Gideon, Sampson 1 Samuel: Hannah, Eli, Saul, Samuel, David OT books: Ruth, Jonah, Esther Gospels: Mary, Joseph, Mary & Martha, Peter Acts: Peter, Paul
Topical Study	Allows integration of scripture from several books (but remember to keep the verses in context)	Prayer Character Leadership Fear Evangelism Social Justice Temptation
Manuscript Study	Deep analysis of scripture	Mark

Tips in leading a discussion

1. **Begin your small group on time**
2. **Good questions are the key to a good Bible Study**
 - a. a good question is clear
 - b. a good question generates discussion
 - c. a good series of questions draws out the main points of the passage
 - d. a good series of questions call for application
 - e. a good series of questions is brief
3. At the beginning of your first time together, **explain that these studies are discussions, not lectures**. Explain the inductive study method and invite them into the process.
4. **Read the passage aloud** if you are studying one chapter or less.
5. Avoid answering your own questions.
6. **Don't be afraid of silence.**
7. **Don't stop with just one answer.** Truth is multi-faceted, and with each response we gain deeper perspective. Ask: "what does someone else think?"
8. **Acknowledge all contributions.** Try to be affirming and don't ever reject an answer. If it is clearly wrong, ask: "What verse led you to that conclusion?"
9. **Don't have every answer addressed to you.**
10. **Invite group members to question each other** to deepen discussion.
11. **Don't be afraid of controversy.**
12. **Stick to the passage under consideration.** It should be the source of answering the questions.
13. **Periodically summarize** what the group has said. Don't preach.
14. **Conclude your time with conversational prayer.**
15. **End on time.**

How to Study Different Literary Forms of the Bible

Type	Books	Purpose	What To Look For	Keys to Interpretation	How to Apply
Law & History	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Gospels, Acts	Civil Law Ceremonial Law Moral Law- Transcends culture and time. To record facts about events and people, showing how God has worked in History.	Principles behind the laws Personal examples to follow or avoid Israel's development paralleling our spiritual growth. Negative/Pos. examples Cycles of Sin & Obedience	Be careful in interpretation: You should not come up with doctrinal main truths that contradict or are not clearly taught in doctrinal sections of the Bible. Things to look for: -The movement of the story: what is different at the end of the story and why? -Characterization: problems they deal with, lessons learned/not learned; things discovered about God, etc. Remember God is the "hero" in all the narratives. Narratives record what did happen: not necessarily what should have happened.	Current application of the principle. Look for people or situations to identify with. Avoid making the same mistakes. Copy the lifestyle of the godly person. Look for evidence of these cycles in your life, family, church, and nation.
Poetry	Psalms, Song of Solomon	Express feelings to God. To consider his ways.	Worship: expressions of praise & adoration for God.	Parallelism- 2 lines work off each other to communicate meaning. Hyperbole-extreme or exaggerated language. As what is the central theme.	Use as examples of how to pray & worship-opening up to God
Wisdom	Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes	Give practical guidelines for living.	Practical wisdom.	Often uses parallelism Straight forward to understand Proverbs are not legal guarantees from God	Take each statement as a personal, commonsense directive
Prophecy	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lam., Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Jose, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah	God's representatives confronted national leaders/people with God's commands & promises. In this way, God often also foretold the future.	The prophet's example. The character of God. Social action: references to specific social conditions.	Primary purpose was warning and judgment God raised up prophets when the people resisted God. Purpose was for repentance and return to God. Ask: What is the main problem? What is the people's response? What does the message tell about God? What happens after the message? Why do you think God included this book in His Word?	Are there areas where God wants you to speak? Look for what God's actions and messages reveal about His nature. Look for similar social conditions in our world.
Gospels	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	To give an accurate record of Christ's birth, lifestyle, teachings, death, and resurrection.	Jesus' lifestyle & ethical teachings. Parables-stories with a message Figures-word pictures of Jesus, God and God's Kingdom.	Look under "History"	Look at Jesus to learn more of what God is like. Measure ourselves against standards of ethics and principles. Ask: "How is Jesus speaking to me?"
Epistles	Romans, 1 & 2 Cor., Gal., Eph., Philippians, Col., 1 & 2 Thess., 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 & 3 John, Jude	To give Christians doctrine and principles for living.	Doctrines- Relationship between law and faith Ethics-direct statements a/b how we should act Church conflicts/life	Carefully reasoned argument or explanation; well-organized; logical flow; terms are crucial; builds to a logical, compelling climax, the aim is agreement and action. Look for the structure of the argument (connections). A text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its original readers. Pay attention to the structure and terms that it uses.	Where does this need to transform my life? How can I bring these statements into our current setting and obey? Look for the principles to apply within your church.
Apocalypse	Revelation, Daniel (Part)	God gives glimpse into future to give believers assurance & hope	Messages to the church Hope Judgment & victory	Often a problem of speculation and subjective interpretation. Rather than worry about the time line of future events, ask what implications this book had to original readers.	Insight and direction for your church. See the hope when we face similar things.