

Lesson 12 - Pulling It All Together

Eleven weeks ago you began a journey to improve your Bible study skills. We had four objectives:

1. Develop a systematic approach that enables you to see how individual passages relate to their immediately surrounding text and the whole Bible.
2. Identify valid resources to aid your study and understanding.
3. Grow in your knowledge of God's Word.
4. Grow more like Christ.

Now that we have accomplished objectives 1 and 2, let's talk about how to use them to accomplish 3 and 4.

Planning Your Own Study

Remember that our inductive Bible study method has three stages - observation, interpretation, and application. Here is a sample plan you could use to do an in-depth study of any book in the Bible for your personal study.

1. Begin with a whole book survey. It ALWAYS starts here. Review lessons one through four if you need a refresher on how to do this.
2. After you finish your book survey, you will have lots of observations and questions about those observations - the who, what, when, where, how, and why so to speak. Take some time to answer some of the more general questions that arise from your work in order to create an overview. You will find it beneficial for your more detailed study on smaller passages to have these answers and summaries available. You can find an example of such an overview for the book of *Leviticus* at bit.ly/LeviticusOverviewHandout.
3. Before jumping into the verse by verse analysis of your book of choice, repeat steps 1 and 2 above on smaller sections. In lesson 2, you were given a sample outline of *Galatians*. For this step, complete a survey and overview of the three main sections of that outline: 1:6 - 2:21 Paul's Authority, 3:1 - 5:12 Faith vs. Law, 5:13 - 6:16 Spirit Guided Freedom. You can do all three of these at one time, or as you come to them in your study. The important factor is you should do the survey of the larger section before trying to do an interpretation of any of the verses in that section. You will probably find it advantageous to complete a survey of each smaller section as well before moving on to the verse level analysis. Lesson five is your reference point for how-to's in completing a section survey.

4. Now that you are armed with a book survey and section survey, you can get into verse by verse analysis. We will use Galatians 1:10-17 as our example here. If you did not complete a full survey of this smaller section in step 3 above, spend some time doing a minimal overview. Look for recurrences and other grammatical structures within this section. Lesson three contains your list of possible grammatical structures. As you read through these verses, jot down all the questions that arise from the observations. Here is just some of the questions that arise from a simple quick read of the first five verses of that passage:
 - a. Recurrences
 - i. “For” statements [v10 (2x), v11, v13] - Two of these statements (v11 & v13) refer to written statements. To what document do the “for it is written” statements refer? What are the implications of those particular instances? How do all these individual “for” statements relate to one another? Why did Paul use so many “for” statements in this short passage? What are the implications of this recurrence?
 - ii. References to curses [v10 (2x), v13 (3x)] - What is the meaning of “curse”? How do the individual occurrences relate to one another? How do they add understanding to one another? Why did Paul repeatedly use the idea of cursing? What are the implications of this recurrence?
 - b. Who accused Paul of trying to please man? Why did they accuse him of this? (verse 10)
 - c. Is there a different gospel being preached by others? What is the content of that gospel? Who is preaching it? Why are they preaching it instead of God’s gospel? (verse 11)
 - d. How and when did Paul receive this revelation from Jesus Christ? Why was it revealed by Jesus and not some other means? (verse 12)

Once you have your completed list of questions for that section, select the ones you most want to answer. Use lessons seven and eight as your guide for this process. Repeat this entire step until you have studied all the way through the entire book.

At this point, you might be thinking, “I’ll never finish studying the book if I have to answer every question that comes up.” You are right. That’s the point. You can come back to a book just weeks after finishing a whole book study and learn something new about the same passage. Do not pressure yourself to exhaustively learn everything there is to know about the book because you can’t. Set a realistic pace for how long and how thorough you will study. No matter how long you choose, ensure that you give yourself enough time to go deep.

The above process is easily adaptable for group study. Using *Galatians* again as our example, your group may decide to do a twelve week study on the whole book. The first week of your study should be an overview of the book, using your book survey as the guide for selecting questions for the discussion. Use your outline to pick eleven sections for more detailed study to round out the unit.

Let's Study the Bible

You are now going to work together to begin the work of planning a small group study for a specific section from *Philippians*. Your work today is dependent on all the work we've done before today. In general an assignment like this assumes that you have completed surveys of both the entire book (lessons one through four) and the section you are studying (lesson 5). Depending on which passage your group is assigned, it is highly likely you do not have a section survey since we only completed one during the course. Do the best quick overview of your section possible to help provide some guidance for your work today. If your group does not have a completed book survey, you can find one at bit.ly/PhilippiansBookSurvey.

For the section of *Philippians* given to your group:

- What are the key takeaways from this section?
- Identify 4 to 7 key questions from the section. This isn't the total number of questions you will ask in your lesson. They are the questions that lead to the important takeaways from this section.
- Determine how the key questions you selected relate to one another. Do they progressively build to one important idea or do they stand alone?
- Write the questions you think the group should discuss as they study this section. Remember to have a good mix of who, what, when, where, why, and how type questions. Order your questions so they lead the group to discover your key takeaways. Create questions that address repeated themes, words or phrases (recurrences), the relationships between sections and/or verses (grammatical structures, and definitions of important words and the implications of the definition.
- Look over your questions. What background information might be necessary to answer any of those questions? Identify this information so you can provide it to your group.
- Don't forget to include references outside this section that will help in understanding it. Make a list of other Scripture passages the group should consider in its discussion.