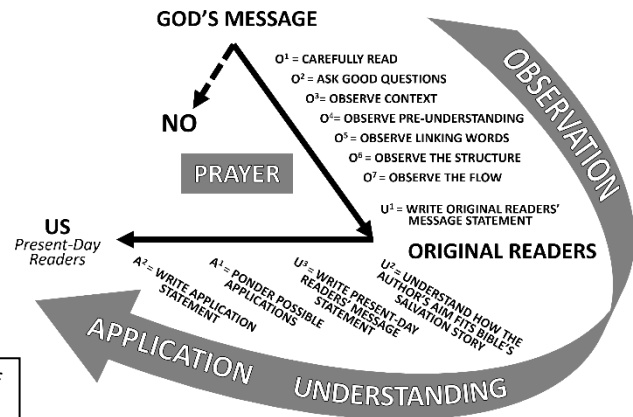


4 SESSION WORKSHOP ON THE

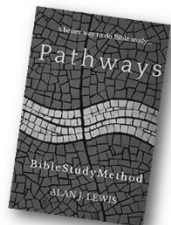
PATHWAYS Bible Study Method

FOR ROOKIES & SMALL GROUP LEADERS

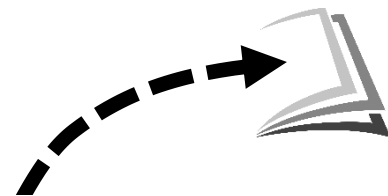


Pastor Gary deBock leads us through this better way of Bible Study. The workshop will help you be ready to join with a Small Group in our study of John's Gospel during Fall 2023 – Winter 2024. Great for those new to handling the Word rightly. Fantastic for Small Group Leaders so they can help those new to studying the Bible.

SESSION DATE	PAGES IN LEWIS	KEY STEPS	SESSION GOALS
Wednesday, August 2, 2023 6:30-8:00 PM	Pages 7-34	PRAYERFULLY & CAREFULLY READ (O ¹)	Discuss Lewis' intro and Session #1, #2, #3; see questions on pages 97-99
		ASK GOOD QUESTIONS (O ²)	
Tuesday, August 8, 2023 6:30-8:00 PM	Pages 35-47	OBSERVE THE CONTEXT (O ³) And PRE-UNDERSTANDING? (O ⁴)	Discuss Lewis' Sessions #4, #5, #6; see questions on pages 100-102
		LINKING WORDS? (O ⁵)	
Wednesday, August 16, 2023 6:30-8:00 PM	Pages 49-65	OBSERVE THE STRUCTURE (O ⁶) & FLOW (O ⁷)	Discuss Lewis' Sessions #7, #8, #9; see questions on pages 102-105
		WRITE ORIGINAL READERS' MESSAGE STATEMENT (U ¹)	
Wednesday, August 23, 2023 6:30-8:00 PM	Pages 67-95	HOW AIM FITS THE SALVATION STORY (U ²) and WRITE PRESENT-DAY MESSAGE STATEMENT (U ³)	Discuss Lewis' Session #10, #11, #12 see questions on page 106-108
		PONDER POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS (A ¹)	
		WRITE OUT YOUR APPLICATION STATEMENT (A ²)	



PATHWAYS BIBLE STUDY METHOD by Alan J. Lewis
Available at Amazon.com



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APPLYING THE PATHWAYS BIBLE STUDY METHOD

Adapted from Alan J. Lewis' Pathways Bible Study Method by Gerhard deBock

**OBSERVE WHAT THE TEXT SAYS →
SEEK TO UNDERSTAND ITS MEANING TO THE ORIGINAL READERS →
CLARIFY HOW THAT MEANING HAS APPLICATION TO US TODAY.**

THIS WORKSHEET APPLIES TO

(insert the Biblical reference):

OBSERVATION	<p>O¹</p> <p>Observe by CAREFULLY READING the text:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the passage through several times. • What seems to be the OVERVIEW of the passage? 	
	<p>O²</p> <p>ASK GOOD QUESTIONS:</p> <p>Who, What, Why, When, Where, How</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the human author of the Scripture passage? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do we know about him? • To whom is the passage addressed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do we know about them? • What is the author's purpose in writing the passage? Is it to warn? Admonish? Discipline? Instruct? Encourage? Inform? Something else? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the passage addressed to a specific circumstance or situation? If so, what is it? • What words or phrases do you need to know how the author would have defined them? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the words or phrases in the passage that seem key? Can you define them as the author would have? 	
	<p>O³</p> <p>Observe the immediate and broader CONTEXT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What backgrounds would the author have in mind? • Are there things that the author seems to assume that the original readers would have understood? • Are there words that have a technical or semi-technical definition from earlier Biblical writings? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does the author of the book use the word elsewhere in his writings? If so, does its use there shed light on the usage here? • What insights do we gain from looking immediately before and after this passage? 	
	<p>O⁴</p> <p>Observe our "PRE-UNDERSTANDING"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the assumptions and presuppositions we had about this passage and its subject BEFORE we started our study? • Commit to "STAY ON THE LINE" by not adding to the Word, nor taking away from it. 	

	<p>O⁵ Observe the LINKING WORDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there conjunctions that could be clues to the flow of the author's thought? Such as "and," "but," "since," "therefore," "in spite of," "since," "so." 	
	<p>O⁶ Observe the STRUCTURE & FLOW of the text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the passage arranged? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the main ideas? • How do the ideas logically flow from one to another? • Are there other patterns such as comparisons or repetitions? • What is the author's purpose for including this passage in the whole flow of his work? • Write out an outline of the passage. 	
UNDERSTANDING	<p>U¹ Write the ORIGINAL READERS' MESSAGE STATEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a sense of how God wanted to use the passage in the lives of the original readers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Was it as a promise or assurance? A command? An example? A sin to avoid? A warning to heed? ○ Was it a truth about Himself, or the Church, or some other key topic? • Can you see and follow the flow of thought in the passage and summarize it in one sentence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does your statement include the author's main points and his purpose for writing the passage? 	
	<p>U² Understand how the author's AIM fits into the overall SALVATION STORY of the Bible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where along the timeline of salvation history does this passage fall? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the passage is from the Old Testament, how should our application differ from the original readers? 	
	<p>U³ Write a PRESENT-DAY READERS' MESSAGE STATEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your understanding of how the author's AIM fits into the Bible's Salvation Story impact what the message would be to today's readers? • Does your message statement lead you to depend more upon Jesus and rejoice in Him? 	
APPLICATION	<p>A¹ PONDER POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are possible applications that could be made today? Remember to think in light of the Present-Day Readers' Message Statement? 	
	<p>A² Write your personal APPLICATION STATEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayerfully choose the applications the Holy Spirit wants you to make at this time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write out your Application Statement. 	

PATHWAYS BIBLE STUDY METHOD by ALAN LEWIS – REVIEW NOTES

1) SESSION 1 – THE BIBLE PATHWAY

- a. The Bible was not written directly to us but to people who lived a long time ago in cultures sometimes far different from ours.
- b. We are sometimes tempted to approach the Bible from our own cultural and personal outlook, often reading into the passage what is not there.
- c. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 1*
 - i. *In a sentence or two, state what you think the author of the book intended to say to his original readers in this chapter.*
 - ii. *How do you think he wanted them to apply this message to their lives? Do you think the application to your life might be slightly different? How?*

2) SESSION 2 – CAREFUL BIBLE STUDY

- a. “Careful Bible Study” contains three steps: Observation, Understanding, and Application
 - i. It’s helpful to remember that observations cannot be disagreed with.
 - ii. We’re trying to understand what the original author was thinking when he wrote the passage.
 - iii. We should notice if the passage offers an application in the text itself. Our applications should address what we do, how we think, and what we love.
- iv. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 1*
 1. *Carefully re-read 1 Thessalonians 1. As you read, observe thoroughly what you see. Write down as many observations as you can about the passage. Some of these observations may be words: important words, repeated words, surprising words, or difficult words you may not understand.*
 2. *Finally, think about how this might apply to your own life, asking God to help you understand how He wants you to respond to the passage.*

3) SESSION 3 – ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

- a. Asking good questions helps us observe more carefully what’s written in the Bible, which allows us to understand it better.
- b. Examples
 - i. Who are the people involved in the passage? Who is speaking? Who is listening?
 - ii. What is happening? What is being said? What is surprising about this? What are the key words in the passage? What is the tone of the passage? What are the connections between this passage and other verses around it?
 - iii. When did this happen? What is the sequence of events or thoughts? ➤ Where did it take place? What places are mentioned?
 - iv. Why did the author say this? What’s his purpose? Is it stated? Why does he say it here?
 - v. How did it happen? How does the author describe what happened? How would the original readers have heard this message?
- c. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 1*
 - i. *Once again study 1 Thessalonians 1, filling in the columns with your observations on each verse and any questions you have related to those observations.*

4) SESSION 4 – READ IN CONTEXT

- a. The words that we find closest to the ones we are studying (for example, the verse that precedes the one we are studying) have the most impact on what the verse we are studying means. Words found farther away, perhaps in previous or later paragraphs, chapters, or books, have less influence on what the words in our verse mean.
- b. *ASSIGNMENT: Group discussion of contexts of:*
 - i. *Philippians 4:10–16*
 - ii. *Revelation 3:14–22*
 - iii. *Matthew 6:24–34*

5) SESSION 5 – RECOGNIZE PREUNDERSTANDING & STAY ON THE LINE

- a. Preunderstanding describes all the ideas and perspectives that we bring to the text before we begin to study it. Some have called this term “presuppositions.”
- b. Things to keep in mind:
 - i. Our current understanding is always partial and imperfect.
 - ii. Although our understanding is always imperfect, the Bible is perfect.
 1. We must always be ready to adjust what we think and believe according to what the text actually says.
 - iii. We are not trying to come to the text with a completely blank understanding, which is impossible.
- c. Steps to Deal with Preunderstanding:
 - i. Come to the text with a submissive attitude.
 - ii. Come to the text with a dependent attitude. We depend upon the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us as we study. We’re
 - iii. Come to the text with a disciplined attitude. We must study carefully and work with the Holy Spirit if we are going to understand what the text actually says.
- d. “Stay on the line”
 - i. We must be careful to say no more than what the passage says, and no less.
 - ii. “Going above the line” = adding something to what God has said in His Word.
 - iii. “Going below the line” = saying less than the Bible says.
- e. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20*
 - i. *Walk through the study steps learned thus far, noting especially what your preunderstanding of the text is.*

6) SESSION 6 - NOTICE LINKING WORDS

- a. Linking words connect one idea in the passage with other ideas, much as links in a chain connect one part to the other. They show us the reason for or the result of what is said.
- b. When we see these words, we should ask: How do the linking words connect ideas in this passage? How do they help with the development of thought in this passage?
- c. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5*
 - i. *Walk through the steps of study, observation, questions, and context, remembering to pray for God’s help.*
 - ii. *Look for linking words and explain the role they play in the passage.*

7) SESSION 7 - WRITE A MESSAGE STATEMENT

- a. The message statement is the focal point around which the other ideas in the passage are organized. Doing the hard work of trying to write the author's purpose in a single sentence helps us think clearly about the passage.
 - i. The sentence should be single and complete.
 - ii. It should be relatively short, twelve to sixteen words.
 - iii. This would be the message statement for the original readers.
- b. The Message Statement answers two central questions:
 - i. What is this passage talking about? What is the subject of the passage?
 - ii. What is it saying about the subject?
- c. Examples
 - i. 1 Timothy 5:1-2
 - ii. James 1:2-8
- d. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13*
 - i. *Follow all the steps learned thus far and write an original readers' message statement for the passage.*

8) SESSION 8 - OBSERVE THE STRUCTURE

- a. The way the major ideas and events are arranged or organized is called the **structure** of the passage.
- b. Take note of not only the individual words but also the major ideas and events and how they are arranged. Sometimes we see this in relationships between stories. Sometimes it's a logical progression of ideas.
- c. Steps for taking note of the passage's structure:
 - i. List the main ideas
 - ii. Notice sections
 - iii. Message Statement
 1. Once you have an idea of the major sections, write down a short title that describes the content or what is happening in each section. These titles will help you see the major points in a passage and will help you write a message statement. The titles don't all have to be included in the message statement, but the ideas behind the titles should be.
- d. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12*
 - i. *Fill out the observation/questions worksheet, keeping in mind the context of the passage.*
 - ii. *Next, go through the steps to discover the passage's structure.*
 - iii. *Write out an initial message statement for the passage, break it into sections, and then give titles to the sections, describing the content of each section. Answer the following questions to help you do that:*
 1. *What are the major ideas in this passage? (There should be one major idea for each section.)*
 2. *How would you adjust your initial message statement after looking at the structure of the passage?*
 3. *Write out a new message statement.*

9) SESSION 9 - GRASP THE MESSAGE FLOW

- a. The flow of a passage may be thought of as a river of ideas. The ideas flow through the passage, one idea leading to the next. In this session we'll look at the process we go through to consider this flow of ideas and find the author's purpose.
- b. How the author sets up the flow is partly dependent on the type of literature he's writing.
- c. Individual passages of Scripture also have a flow. Sentences and paragraphs are put together in ways that lead us to the author's purpose.
- d. As we are studying, we break a passage into sections, giving each section a title describing the content of that section. Next we should think about why the author wanted to say these things to the original readers. What principles or lessons did he want to give them?
- e. Then to find the overall lesson, we think about how those ideas fit together. Where is the author taking his reader as he moves from one idea or principle to another? This is how we move from observation to understanding.
- f. The Process:
 - i. Step #1: Main Ideas: How does the passage begin? (Remember to look at the context.) What are the main ideas? Do you have questions about anything in the passage?
 - ii. Step #2: Sections: What are the steps in the progress of the passage? How will you break the passage into sections, each containing a main idea? Do linking words help here?
 - iii. Step #3: Titles: What ideas or lessons are taught in each section? Why were they important to the original readers? What titles would you give to these ideas?
 - iv. Step #4: Flow of Ideas: What is the flow of ideas in the passage? How does each section move the author's message forward? To what conclusion does the flow of the message lead us?
 - v. Step #5: Original Message Statement: What is your original message statement?
- g. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*
 - i. *Work through the steps learned so far, using the five steps outlined above.*

10) SESSION 10 – NOTE THE SALVATION STORY

- a. The Bible's salvation story helps us move from the message to the original readers to God's message for us today.
- b. The Bible's salvation story looks at this bigger story and considers how each part fits into the whole.
- c. The salvation story that precedes any passage, in the timeline of when it was revealed, forms part of the context of the passage itself.
- d. We stand in the New Testament age looking back at biblical history and view it from our position in Christ. The original readers looked at what was written from the viewpoint of their own time and place.
- e. We always want to begin with the author's intent for the original readers. But then, in light of the Bible's salvation story, we must look at the passage from our perspective as New Testament believers and ask what message God now has for us.
- f. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11*

11) SESSION 11 – PONDER THE APPLICATION

- a. We will need the Holy Spirit's help with application just as much as we need His help with our study. Don't rush to application before you've finished the other steps.
- b. Four Question Process based on 2 Timothy 3:16-17:
 - i. *"teaching"*: What's right in God's Word? What does this passage teach about God and His will for my life? What pathway has He laid out for me to follow Him? (Make a list of what you've learned from this passage.)
 - ii. *"for rebuking"*: What's wrong (lacking) in my life compared to this? What am I being convicted about? How have I moved from His pathway?
 - iii. *"for correction"*: What should I do? What does the Spirit want me to do differently in response to this? What changes must I make to get on God's pathway for my life?
 - iv. *"training in righteousness"*: How and when will I do it? What specific steps do I need to take to move toward God's pathway? When will I do this? Who will I share this with?
- c. The final step in the process of developing a good application requires us to think carefully about the gospel. No lasting change in our lives is possible apart from Christ.
- d. *"Aim of the Passage"*
 - i. By aim, we mean the application the author intended for the original readers. It's important for us to think about that because the aim God had for them will be consistent with the aim He has for us.
- e. *ASSIGNMENT: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28*

12) SESSION 12 – REVIEW

- a. *ASSIGNMENT: SUMMARIZE 1 THESSALONIANS*

13) ADDENDUM

- a. Types of Literature
 - i. Stories (narrative)
 - ii. Letters (epistles)
 - iii. Poetry and Wisdom Literature
 - iv. Law and Commands
 - v. Prophecy
 - vi. Apocalyptic Writings
 - vii. Parables