

## Bible study: Quick start guide

### **Observation:** What does it say?

- Read the entire book or surrounding passages (before and after) at least one time.
- Read and re-read the specific passage you are studying. Don't stop.
- Determine the genre
- Determine the author
- Determine the setting and the audience
- Note helpful historical information. (What was going on in the world at the time of writing)
- Answer: Who? What? Where? Why? When? How?
- Look for God
  - Father, Son, or Spirit
  - Ways (activity that reveals Him)
  - Character
  - Words
- Look for/ List:
  - Transitional words (But, then, therefore, because, however, etc.)
  - Key themes
  - Lists
  - Comparisons
  - Commands
  - Exhortations (encouragements, directions)
  - Warnings
  - Words that need clarifying/defining
- Write any questions

## **Interpretation:** What does it mean?

- Re-read the sentences and passages/chapters before and after the passage.
- Re-read the passage you are studying
- Note the **context** of the passage.
- Note the **content**:
  - Mark/write Keywords or phrases. Define them.
  - Biblical theology: In light of the greater story – look for themes that match God’s story (kingdoms, offspring, blood, blessing, exodus or exiles, priests, glory, suffering, dwelling, etc.)
    - Consider how this passage connects to the Bible’s overall flow and message and how it points to Christ and to the greater story of God in the Bible? (biblical theology)
  - Systematic theology: Discern how this passage is important in the Bible such as key doctrines. Does it speak to holiness? Faith? Grace? Is there any area of doctrine I must consider? (holiness, the nature of man, the nature of God, the role of the Holy Spirit?)
- **Consider**: Before consulting tools spend time considering what the author is trying to say in this passage. Let the Holy Spirit lead you in truth.
  - Be willing to sit in the hard passages if you feel uncomfortable or uncertain. God is okay with our struggles to understand. Consult study help *after* you have prayed through and considered the text.
  - What glimpses of the gospel are visible here? How does gospel truth give clarity to this passage?
- **Compare**:
  - Use cross-references (compare Scripture with Scripture)
    - Is there a story or example or use elsewhere in the Bible?
    - Are there multiple meanings based on context for this truth or these words?
- **Consult** maps, footnotes, trusted commentaries for hard to understand passages.
  - Ask- How does this passage fit into this book? The author’s message of the entire book?
- Summarize in your own words.

**Application:** What does it mean to/for me?

- What is true about God? How does this truth relate to me/my family/mankind?
- What has the Holy Spirit prompted or exposed in me?
  - An action of obedience
  - A posture of worship
  - A truth to claim and cling to
  - A change in my life, behaviors, responses or perspective? Teachability.
  - A sin to confess
- A plan
  - How I will turn away from the sin I confessed?
  - How will I step toward obedience?
  - How will I live in grace to those around me in light of what I read?

