



HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

Learning the Inductive Bible Study Method

Purpose

My goal in this series of lessons is to teach you how to take a portion of scripture, read the text, make observations about what it says, ask questions about the text, determine what it means, and apply its truth yourself. By teaching you this method, and practicing it together, I hope to give you the tools to feed yourself with the word of God.

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How to Study the Bible, Part 1

Psalm 119:1-8

¹ ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the LORD!

² Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!

³ They also do no iniquity;
They walk in His ways.

⁴ You have commanded us
To keep Your precepts diligently.

⁵ Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your statutes!

⁶ Then I would not be ashamed,
When I look into all Your commandments.

⁷ I will praise You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.

⁸ I will keep Your statutes;
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

Introduction

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (1 Peter 2:1-3).

What does that scripture say should be the desire of all born again believers?

What benefit does feeding on the word of God have for us?

What do you want to accomplish in this series of lessons?

What portion of scripture are we going to be studying?

Bible Study Step #1 – Prayerfully Read the Text in Context.

What is the primary resource for studying the Bible?

A. Pray Before You Read and As You Read.

Why Prayerfully?

How does the psalmist express his dependence on the Lord in these verses? (Psalm 119:18, 34, 73, 125, 144, 169).

Stop now and humbly pray that God would grant understanding into His word.

B. Pre-read the Text for the Context.

What is pre-reading the text? Why is this important?

What is “Context”?

How do we determine the context?

Psalm 119:1-8

What do you notice about where and how Psalm 119 appears on the page?

Where is Psalm 119 found in the Bible? What do you observe about the book of Psalms as a whole?

How does this information about Psalms help us in reading Psalm 119?

What kind of literature is Psalm 119? (Narrative? Dialogue? Drama? Poetry? Law? Letter? Prophecy?)

What do you notice about this kind of Hebrew literature in the Psalms?

How is Psalm 119 divided into sections? (See Psalm 119:1, 9, 17, 25, ...)

What is the little symbol and Hebrew word above each stanza mean?

Does Psalm 119 indicate anything about the author?

Can we tell when or where Psalm 119 was written?

Does Psalm 119 indicate anything about who it was written for?

Why is it important to ask questions about the passage before and while you read it?

Five Ws and H

Who: Who is the author of the text? Who was this text originally written to?

What: What is the historical background? What type of writing is this—narrative, prophecy, letter, sermon, song, prayer, quotation, etc.? What is the immediate context of the passage? What exactly is being said? What is the theme or purpose of the writing? What does the writing mean?

When: When was this written or when will this promise be fulfilled? Are there any time references in the text such as *before, after, until, then, when, at that time, immediately*, etc.?

Where: Where in the Bible and book does the text lie? Where was this text written? Where is the narrative taking place?

Why: Why was this written? Are there any purpose clauses (these typically begin with *so, because, to, for, so that*, etc.) which help us discern the author's purpose in writing a specific text?

How: How does this passage connect with other teachings in Scripture? How should this passage be applied? How should I pray from this passage?

C. Read the Text.**Psalm 119:1-8**

- ¹ ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the LORD!
- ² Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!
- ³ They also do no iniquity;
They walk in His ways.
- ⁴ You have commanded us
To keep Your precepts diligently.
- ⁵ Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your statutes!
- ⁶ Then I would not be ashamed,
When I look into all Your commandments.
- ⁷ I will praise You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.
- ⁸ I will keep Your statutes;
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

How should we read the text?

Why is it important to read the text more than once?

Bible Study Step #2 – Observe the Text in Detail.**A. Look for what is obvious.**

What is obvious to you from your reading of Psalm 119:1-8?

B. Look for Key Words or Phrases.

Key words or phrases will often answer one or more of the 5 Ws or H questions.

Who is speaking, acting, or central to the passage?

What is the passage about?

When does it take place?

Where is it happening?

How does it communicate its truth?

Questions to draw out key words and phrases:

Is there a purpose statement given?

Is there something unexpected?

Is there something emphasized?

Is there a command?

Is there a warning?

Is there a promise?

What words or phrases are repeated?

Are roles or actions of God mentioned?

Does the passage quote other scriptures?

Read the text again, this time look for key words or phrases that point to the theme or subject of the section. What is this text about?

Where do we find God in Psalm 119:1-8?

What words are repeated in Psalm 119?

What words are used repeatedly as synonyms in the text?

Law (v.1) - *Torah* –

Testimonies (v.2) - *`edah* –

Ways (v.3) – *Derek* –

Precepts (v.4) – *Piquwd* –

Statutes (v.5, 8) – *Choq* –

Commandments (v.6) – *Mitsvah* –

Judgments (v.7) – *Mishpat* –

Which words or phrases in Psalm 119:1-8 do you consider key?

Take time to ask the 5 Ws and H about these key words.

Who is saying it?

Who does it relate to?

What does the word mean?

Why is it used here?

Where else is this word used?

When does it apply?

How does it impact the flow of thought?

C. Seek the Subject or Theme of the Passage.

Some questions that might help at this point are:

What does the passage say about God?

What does it say about the human condition?

What does it say about God's people?

Is there a command, example, warning, or promise in this passage?

*Is the passage descriptive or prescriptive?
(prescriptive—tells you what to do, a command;
descriptive—tells what someone else did, narrative/story)*

Is there a change from before and after the event?

Is there a logical order or progression in the passage?

Does the passage compare or contrast things, people, or ideas?

Does the passage illustrate or explain something?

Is there a cause and effect?

Is there dialogue? If so, who is speaking? To whom?

Are there questions asked? Answers given?

What is the result or conclusion of the passage?

What is the subject of Psalm 119:1-8? (what is it about?)

*If you had to put the theme into one sentence what would you say?
(What does it say about the subject?)*

D. Examine the Grammar.Questions to Examine the Grammar*Who is the subject of the sentence?**What is the main verb?**Is there a direct object? Indirect object?**What do prepositions indicate?**Is the clause independent or dependent?**What do the adjectives and adverbs modify?**How could I diagram this sentence?**Are there pronouns and who do they refer to?**Are there figures of speech?**Are there conjunctions? What do they do?**Are the articles definite (the) or indefinite (a)?**What does this show?*

Read the text again. This time, notice the verbs (the action words). How are they related to the theme of the text (the law of the Lord)?

Read the text again. This time, look for hinge words (hinge words connect words and phrases).

Relationship	Conjunction or Connecting Word
CAUSE / REASON	Because, For this reason, Since, That, As a result, Consequently
COMPARISON	As, Also, Just as, Like, Likewise, More, More than, So as, So also, Too

CONDITIONAL	If, Since, when, while
CONTINUATION	And, Either, Neither, Nor, Or
CONTRAST	Although, But, Except, Even though, However, Much more, Nevertheless, Only, Otherwise, Whereas, Yet, Rather
EMPHASIS	Indeed, Only, Oh, Behold
EXPLANATION	For, Now, Because
LOCATION / POSITION	At, In, On, Over, Where, Wherever
PURPOSE / RESULT	For this purpose, In order that, So that, That, Then, Therefore, Thus
TIME OR SEQUENCE	After, As, Before, Now, Then, Until, When, While, First, Second, Next, Finally
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	And, Additionally, Also, Furthermore, Moreover, Besides, In addition, As well.

Hinge words in Psalm 119:1-8 are:

What do each of these hinge words do?

Read the text again. This time, notice the pronouns (They, those, His, Him, You, Your, us, I, my, me). What do these pronouns show you about the text?

Read Psalm 119:1-8 again. Look for figures of speech. What purpose do they serve?

How could we investigate these figures of speech more thoroughly to clarify what they mean?

E. Scrutinize What is Unclear.

Gaps We Need to Bridge
Language
Culture
Geography
History

Read Psalm 119:1-8 again. What is unclear?

What do I have questions about?