

GUIDELINES FOR INDUCTIVE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

Applied to Manuscript Text Format

A manuscript format of scripture is double-spaced with wide margins and no chapter, paragraph or verse designations and is 8½ x 11 in size. This format is designed to give freedom for marking the text, writing notes and findings alongside the text. It enables the person to see and remember the text more graphically by use of colored pens, underlining, and connecting your findings in the text, plus writing notes in the margins. Seeing leads to believing. “When your eyes are good your whole body also will be full of light.” (Luke 11:34)

PRINCIPLES OF STUDY

1. Focus your study on getting to know God. Imagine you are interviewing Jesus Christ, God the Father, the Holy Spirit - to help you see and know. Knowing Him leads to loving Him (the great commandment, Mark 12:29-31). Loving Him leads to action (John 14:15).
2. Be patient. It takes time to get to know a person. Trust God for one personally meaningful truth each day. Write these down in a separate notebook or in the margins.
3. Respond to what is clear. Enjoy the obvious before sorting out the difficult or obscure aspects of the passage. Record questions and problem sections and begin developing skills in thinking them through with the help of study tools and a mentor. Set aside time for in-depth study.
4. Review past findings (yesterday’s) before pressing on to new material. At the end of each week tie together main points, review applications. Take time to savor. God will illuminate and counsel.
5. Study as though you’ve never seen it before. Use only a dictionary and pencil and paper until you have exhausted what you can see by yourself. Then consult other Bible passages and commentaries on problems or questions. If at all possible, study in a group or with a friend and compare notes.

STUDY TOOLS: Manuscript - 8½ x 11, double-spaced, wide margins (available through IVCF)
Set of at least 5-6 colored felt tip pens
English dictionary
Bible dictionary
Concordance
Commentary

HOW TO PROCEED

MSS study is best done on an entire book. First do a jet overview. Briefly note content of first and last pages to see comparisons and contrasts. Then scan pages in-between. With some idea of what the book is about, settle into working a page at a time.

1. Note all references to Jesus Christ, God the Father, and Holy Spirit. Use a triangle symbol on each or identify with color, such as red for Jesus Christ, blue for God, yellow for the Holy Spirit.
2. Record information about each member of the Trinity in the margin, listing characteristics as well as verbs showing action demonstrated by each.
3. Underline references to other names of individuals or groups of people and record information in the margins.
4. Circle actions words or color green to catch the mood of the passage.
5. Box key nouns or use your choice of color.
6. Tie together any repeated key words with a bold line.
7. Underline contrasting words, then connect with a squiggly line.
8. Note other laws of composition (see separate sheet) and identify them any way you wish. Be creative!
9. Identify paragraphs and major breaks in the book.

The above suggestions are related to the observation phase of inductive study. Record your interpretation and application findings on a separate inductive study sheet or somewhere in the margins or back of previous page.

Observation - What does it say?

Interpretation - What does it mean?

Application - What does it mean to me?