

Manuscript Study Helps

Step #1: Prepare.

- * Pray
- * Survey
- * Record Impressions
- * Note Questions
- * Break into Chunks
- * Title Chunks

Step #2: Begin digging.

- * Who, What, Where, When, How?
- * Look up Place Names
- * Look up People
- * Look up Key Words

Step #3: Utilize the Laws of Composition (⇒).

- * Repetition
- * Comparison
- * Contrast
- * Cause/Effect
- * General to Particular
- * Particular to General
- * Introduction
- * Conclusion

Step #4: Ask questions.

- * Is there a principle being illustrated?
- * Is God revealing something about Himself?
- * Is this an example to follow... or avoid?
- * What would these words have meant to someone back then?
- * How does that apply to me?

Laws of Composition

- Repetition:** The repeated use of the *same* terms (In Leviticus the term “holy” is used many times)
- Continuity:** The repeated use of *similar* words, phrases, or ideas, including pronouns. (In Philemon, notice the terms “brother,” “partner,” “fellow-worker,” etc.)
- Contrast:** The association of *opposites*. (In Psalm 1 we see the blessed man and the wicked man)
- Comparison:** The association of *like* things which vary in some way (The parable in Mark 4 describes four kinds of soil; they are all soil but receive the seed in various ways). The use of the word “*like*” (James 1 says, “He who doubts is like a wave of the sea).
- General to Particular:** The movement from a general idea or activity to particulars about that idea. (Psalm 23:1 says generally, “The Lord is my shepherd...” The verses which follow give particulars. An example is “He makes me lie down in green pastures).
- Particular to General:** The movement from a particular idea to a general idea or activity (In Mark 1:30 Jesus heals Simon’s mother-in-law; in the following verses he heals many people).
- Cause to Effect:** The progression from cause to effect (In Mark 1 the mighty acts of Jesus cause the crowd to flock to him).
- Effect to Cause:** The progression from effect to cause (Ephesians 5:21 has an example of this: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ”).
- Explanation:** The presentation of an idea or event followed by its explanation (In Mark 4, Jesus presents the parable of the soils, then explains it).
- Prep/Intro:** The inclusion of the background or setting for events or ideas by which the reader is prepared to understand that which follows (In Mark 1 the quotation from Isaiah prepares the reader for the appearance of John the Baptist).
- Climax:** The arrangement of material in such a way as to progress from great to the greater and then to the greatest, with climax occurring at the greatest [In Psalm 23 the Lord is shown to meet everyday needs (great), then needs in times of crisis (greater), and then the needs of all the future, in this life and for eternity (greatest)].
- Means to End:** The setting forth of the means to an end as well as the end itself. Often the words “that,” “so that,” or “in order that” are present (John 20:31: “These are written that you may believe...”). This is a planned cause to effect.
- Interrogation:** The use of a question (problem) followed by its answer (In John 9:2 the disciples question Jesus; in verses 3ff. He answers.