

## Bible Study Ideas

The key to effective learning is to **slow down** enough that you can accurately observe what is being said. This is especially true when studying the Bible. Most of us tend to read through it rather quickly, *thinking* we know what is being said when actually we are missing a huge portion of what God is trying to get us to see.

- 10 percent of what we see (passive)
- 20 percent of what we hear (passive)
- 30 percent of what we see and hear (passive)
- 70 percent of what we say and write (active)
- 90 percent of what we say as we do (active)

So how can we improve on comprehending and remembering what we read in God's word. Here are a few principles to follow:

1. Take notes
  2. Ask yourself questions about you have read
  3. Listen to an audio version of the passage
  4. Read out loud.
  5. Read on paper.
  6. Impress, associate, repeat, how does it apply to you
  7. Introduce the information to others
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1. Take colored pencils and as you read highlight every reference to God and his character. You can highlight the Holy Spirit and Jesus in the same color or choose different colors for each. Highlight all of God's promise to you in another color (maybe yellow like sunshine in our life.) Last, highlight all God's commands for you (maybe in blue, as you will be blue if you don't do them, so will God!) If you don't like writing in your bible, make lists in a notebook.
  2. What do I know about my God? Take a notebook, a binder or use the computer. As you are reading your Bible make list of things you learn about God, his character and the qualities he wants us to have. Each time you come across a new category write it at the top of the page and then write out the verse. Possible categories are: My God is able, My God is all-knowing, ...is almighty... answers prayer... avenges...comforts...is compassionate...wants me to be content...is in control (sovereign)...corrects (chastens)...is creator...delivers...wants me to be disciplined...is to be praised...is my salvation...is strong and gives strength...wants me to be thankful, wants me to trust him, is a God of wrath (anger)
  3. SPACEPETS—look for the following things in the passage you are reading and write them in a notebook.
    - Sin to confess? Do I need to make any restitution?
    - Promise to claim? Is it a universal promise? Have I met the conditions?
    - Attitude to change? Do I need to work on a negative attitude and begin building a positive one?
    - Command to obey? Am I willing to do it no matter how I feel?
    - Example to follow? Is it a positive one to copy or a negative one to avoid?
    - Prayer to pray? Is there anything I need to pray back to God?
    - Error to avoid? Is there any problem that I should be alert to or beware of?
    - Truth to believe? What new things to I learn about God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit
    - Something to praise God for? Is there something I can be thankful for?

4. Read through a book of the Bible, making an outline of the book as you go.

An outline is a good way to summarize the important points and their supporting facts. The outline with its various levels of subdivisions will help you to categorize or group major segments of information. The major heading should identify the main themes of a chapter. They should be brief and clearly stated. Section headings. These statements should identify the key points under each major heading. The material covered by the section headings can usually be identified by a change in subject within each main theme. Next would be subtopics which consist of words or short phrases that further delineate the topics under each subject.

A sample outline of Colossians 1:

I. Introduction

Greetings

From Paul and Timothy  
To the saints and faithful brethren  
Grace and peace from God

Thanksgiving

The reason  
    Their faith in Christ  
    Their love for the saints  
    Their hope in heaven  
The basis  
    Response to the gospel  
    Understanding the gospel

Prayer

Knowledge of His will  
Walk worthy of the Lord  
Please Him in all respects  
Bear fruit in every good work

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,  
2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

5. Read through a book or passage, verse by verse, writing down any thoughts that come to you as you read. You might write down questions that come to mind, find answers, look up unknown words and cross references.

## 6. Inductive Bible Study (Also known as O.I.A.)

Step 1 – Begin with prayer. “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Psalm 119:18).

Step 2 – Read the text.

Step 3 – Observation. The goal of this step is to figure out what the text is saying. This is where you ask questions like:

WHO: Who wrote it? Who said it? Who are the major characters? To whom is the author speaking?

WHAT: What are the main events? What are the major ideas? What are the major teachings?  
What are these people like?

WHEN: When was it written? When did this event take place? When will it happen?

WHERE: Where was it written? Where are the recipients? Where was it done?  
Where was it said? Where will it happen?

WHY: Why was there a need for this to be written? Why was this mentioned?

Why was so much or little space devoted to this particular event or teaching?

HOW: How is it done? How did it happen? How is truth illustrated?

These questions should be answered from the very words of the text. Ask yourself if this passage reminds you of any other passages in Scripture. Write down any questions that arise in your mind.

Step 4 – Interpretation. The goal of this step is to figure out what the text meant to the original hearers.

This most important step is often skipped, but a lack of correct interpretation leads to incorrect application. We cannot understand what God is saying to us if we don't first understand what he was saying to his original audience, and why he was saying it. Your job in interpretation is to figure out the main point of the passage and understand the arguments that support the main point. Your interpretation should flow out of your observations, so keep asking yourself, “Can I support this interpretation based on my observations?”

- What would the original hearers have thought?
- How does this passage fit within the greater story of the Bible? (Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration)
- How does the surrounding context of the passage shed light on its meaning?

Step 5 – Application.

- What does this passage tell you about who God is?
- What does this passage tell you about your sin and need for a Savior?
- How can these truths transform your life today? Remember that all actions begin as thoughts and desires of the heart. How do these truths transform what you love, worship and value most?
- In turn, how will these renewed desires change the way you respond to God and others?
- Are there practical things God is leading you to do differently as your heart changes?
- What might these truths look like in action? Is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind specific people, circumstances, conversations or sins to mind for prayer, repentance or reconciliation?

## Isaiah 12

- 1 You will say in that day:  
“I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
for though you were angry with me,  
your anger turned away,  
that you might comfort me.
- 2 “Behold, God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.”
- 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
- 4 And you will say in that day:  
“Give thanks to the LORD,  
call upon his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples,  
proclaim that his name is exalted.
- 5 “Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be made known in all the earth.
- 6 Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel”

- ◆ Use these ideas but don't let them use you!!
- ◆ Don't make it an academic activity, “I have got to do this and this” the idea is to be in God's word and study slow enough to let it penetrate our hearts and to let God speak to us.
- ◆ No one is pointing fingers or watching to see if you do any of these things, you might very well have your own idea or plans.
- ◆ Remember to go slow, better 2 or 3 verses well done and remembered than 2 or 3 chapters done in a hurry.

## Colossians 1

### Greeting

- 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
- 2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

### Thanksgiving and Prayer

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