

Bible Study Basics

Prayer - Lord help me to know your will and heart within this passage.

Incorporating prayer before, during, and after your Bible reading is central to understanding and applying it to your life. Psalm 119:34, "Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart." (ESV)

Observe - What is going on here?

The most helpful aspect of observing what the text is saying is simply reading the passage within its context as well as having a basic understanding of the type of writing it is and how it fits into the Gospel story throughout the entire Bible. But for beginners this looks like reading the passage of Scripture within the setting of the book it written in. During observation you are trying to get a feel for what's going on in the bigger picture. Reading the passage or the book it is written within multiple times is often the best starting point.

Some helpful questions to ask might be:

- Who are the characters? Who is the author's audience?
- What is taking place / what is the central idea?
- What are the repeated words or phrases?
- Where is this taking place?
- When is it taking place?
- How does this passage connect to the one before it and after it?

Interpret - What does this verse mean?

What is the author doing? Is he warning or encouraging his audience?

Look up the meanings of various words that stood out or perhaps were repeated.

What is the author's purpose for the whole book and how does this passage fit into that?

You could also look up other passages that talk about the same thing by the same author or another, this is called cross-referencing.

Summarize the main point of the passage for the original readers?

Principle 1 - What was the author's intent for writing this?

Principle 2 - Intent must be done within the context of the passage, not just one verse by itself.

Principle 3 - Let the Bible interpret the bible.

Principle 4 - Interpretation is separate from application.

Principle 5 - Be sensitive to the type of literature you are reading.

Apply - What am I called to do in light of this Scripture?

Ask questions from the passage using the SPECK method

1. Are there SINS for me to avoid?
2. Are there PROMISES for me to claim?
3. Are there EXAMPLES for me to follow
4. Are there COMMANDS for me to obey?
5. Is there KNOWLEDGE about God or Mankind that I should believe?

Follow Up:

1. Share what you have studied with someone else. Community is huge for not only correct understanding but also for help in observing God's word with your whole heart.
2. Ask someone to keep you accountable to what you feel God is calling you to do in light of this verse or passage.
3. Pray
4. Continue to share with others