



A Guide and Instructions for Doing Inductive Bible Study

**Every
Opportunity**

Introduction

Inductive study is one of many ways to study the Bible. It works best when it's complemented by the other important ways people grow in their faith – going to church, learning from sermons, reading books on scripture or Christian growth. The reason why inductive study can be so helpful is that it gives people a method or roadmap they can use to study any passage of the Bible – individually or in groups. The inductive process starts with the observations (the details or “facts” of the passage) and then uses those as building blocks to understand the core meaning – like metaphorically fitting together puzzle pieces in order to see the whole picture. It emphasizes a discovery process just as much as it emphasizes knowing biblical truth, which both can make it an enjoyable way to study Scripture, but is also an important step to helping grow confidence and competence in interpreting Scripture. Lastly, because the focus of the inductive method is sticking with one passage and understanding how it fits together as a whole, it can minimize the temptation to take Scripture out of context or misapply it.

Inductive Process at a Glance

1. Read the passage
2. Make observations
3. Ask and answer questions
4. Clarify the main point
5. Apply

Description of Each Element

Read the passage. If a copy of the text isn't already provided, it can be very helpful to print out a physical copy of the passage versus just reading it in a Bible or on a phone. Doing this can allow for making notes right on the passage itself, which is easier (and many times more fun) than trying to write on a separate paper or doing it mentally.

April 10-11 / Acts 22-23
April 17-18 / Acts 24
April 24-25 / Acts 24-25

May 1-2 / Acts 26
May 15-16 / Acts 27
May 22-23 / Acts 28

Observe. Take time to notice what is going on in the passage. A great way to start is simply to ask “what is sticking out to me?” In this passage? As a companion, here’s a list of things to pay attention to in general when studying Scripture:

- Repeated words, phrases, ideas
- Dialogue (things with quotation marks)
- Actions
- Commands
- Comparisons
 - Metaphor, simile, analogy
- Images
- Important transition words
 - “Therefore, because, so that, but, instead”

Questions. Take time to notice what questions are coming up and write them down. It’s helpful to define any questions or areas of confusion before moving forward to interpret the passage.

Some examples of good prompts to jumpstart the process:

- What confuses me in this passage?
- What don’t I understand?
- What are the big themes this passage is talking about?

Sometimes it can be difficult to define questions about a passage. If so, here are a couple of foundational questions that can be used with any passage:

- What does this passage show me about God (His character, His values, His actions, etc)?
- What does this passage show about how I can follow, trust, or believe in God?

Interpret. Spend some time answering questions. As much as possible, try to answer questions by just looking at this passage in particular. However, at a certain point, it may not seem possible to answer a question. In that case, here are a couple of next steps:

- Ask a Christian friend or mentor figure what they think.
- Check out this list of resources that you can find here <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/ivp-nt/toc/>. These can provide extra information or ideas about the passage.

Main Point. Review the observations and questions. Then, spend some time trying to capture the main point or main truth of the passage in 1-2 sentences. Write it out.

Apply. This is the place to move from understanding the passage, to integrating it with real life in some way. Application many times can be the hardest step to do, so try to get as specific and practical as possible. If the passage feels hard to apply, here are some categories that can help:

- **How does this main truth speak to my mind?** How does it inform or change what I believe or know about God, others, myself, or the world?
- **How does this main truth speak to my heart?** How does it inform or change my attitudes or how I treat God, others, myself, or the world?
- **How does this main truth speak to my actions?** What is a practical next step I can take this week to live out the truth of the passage?



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