**Inductive Bible Study – reading scripture itself**

Psalm 119:130 (NIV)

**130**

The **unfolding** of your words gives **light**;

it gives understanding to the simple.

John 6:63 (ESV)

**63**It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and **life.**

**Therefore we pray:** Psalm 119:

**32**I run in the path of your commands,for you have broadened my understanding.

**33**Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees,that I may follow it to the end.

**34**Give me understanding, so that I may keep your lawand obey it with all my heart.

**35**Direct me in the path of your commands,for there I find delight.

**We come to the scriptures:**

**Prayerfully** – ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in truth and meet you in the Word

**Humbly** – remember who God has revealed himself to be in the **whole** of Scripture and how his Spirit speaks through the living Word of God. Be open to listen and be taught and changed.

**Carefully** – take time to look slowly the big picture, the context, the overview or flow of the story , argument or teaching, look at every phase and each word

**This is about how we read the Bible well for ourselves. It is also the foundation to any preparation for teaching**

\*We need to take time to read Scripture and take notes, pray and think about the passage itself, asking the Holy Spirit to lead **before** we look for what someone else is saying about it.

\*The way we prepare and read the Bible together should not only teach that study, but equip the group to read the Bible well **for themselves** and feed on the Word constantly.

\*look at where the passage comes in the chapter, the bigger section of the book, and the book. Read through a book of the Bible (not only individual verses or passages)

\*Take note of the “genre” – is it historical narrative, parable, prophesy, poetry, letters, teaching? Being aware of this will make a difference to how you approach each passage

***Here are some helpful principles for looking at any passage:***

Read the passage slowly, more than once, read it out loud

Read in more than one translation, include something different to what you normally read– more literal translations - NRSV, ESV

(Bible Gateway on the internet – choose translations, even put them side by side)

Find out where it comes in Salvation History, the big story (how do the New Testament and old Testament relate?)

If you are looking at several passages in a thematic study, look at was has just come before and what comes after to find the context of the passage

Work from the big picture down to the small details. Don’t miss the obvious. Notice who is speaking, who is listening and who is responding. What does God say or do? What does he show of his heart?

Look at what is actually happening or what is being said (often we focus on what we want to hear, what we have heard (teaching) and experienced or get into complicated detail and miss the simple – e.g. if demons fall begging at Jesus’ feet they are afraid of him and he has authority over darkness.

Write scripture down – you read things carefully as you write, you see patterns, remember more.

You can write key words from another translation, use colors to highlight or underline, note different people speaking , circle repeated words, verbs, desciptions.

Separate the phrases: rather than writing whole paragraphs or even whole verses. Eg:

**Acts 2**

**3**They saw

what seemed to be tongues of fire

that separated and came to rest

on each of them.

**4**All of them were filled

with the Holy Spirit

and began to speak in other tongues

as the Spirit enabled them.

**John 14**

**18**I will not leave you as orphans;

I will come to you.

**19**Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me.

Because I live,

you also will live.

**20**On that day you will realize

that I am in my Father,

and you are in me,

and I am in you.

**Romans 6**

**8**Now if we died with Christ,

we believe

that we will also live with him.

**9**For we know that since

Christ was raised from the dead,

he cannot die again;

death no longer has mastery over him.

**10**The death he died,

he died to sin

once for all;

but the life he lives,

he lives to God.

**11**In the same way,

count yourselves dead to sin

but alive to God

in Christ Jesus.

Look for any parables, comparisons (as …. so….) or word pictures.

Look for the names of God and descriptions of God, look at the verbs used for his heart and actions

If there are quotations from the Old Testament, look them up

Sometimes you might want to write out the steps of what happens in a narrative

Write out any questions you have as you are reading (to pray about and look up in resources later)

**Resources:**

**To be aware of the big Story, the whole sweep of scripture, it is good to look at a chronologic – this will show how things fit together.**

**“The story” Max Lucado and Randy Freeze**

“The Story of The Bible: the way Jesus and the apostles told it” (Kindle Edition)

by [Richard Bustraan](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_ebooks_1?ie=UTF8&text=Richard+Bustraan&search-alias=digital-text&field-author=Richard+Bustraan&sort=relevancerank)

the Chronological study Bible (Thomas Nelson)

The one year Chronological Bible (Tyndale)

Craig Keener – IVP NT background commentary

John Walton – IVP Old Testament background commentary

New Testament themes - IVP

Lion Bible handbook (good on the order and context of each book of the Bible and some basic notes on culture and geography)

**Bible gateway**.com – Free commentaries to view

choose a passage then look at “study this” on the right side bar. Click “commentaries” then scroll down

**Google** – Be careful to look at who is writing but you can often type in a word or an event or places and find free resources and explanations , maps and images– e.g. Sacrifice of Atonement, Ark of the covenant, Red sea, Passover Lamb, Temple of Israel, Holy of Holies, redeem, etc.

**Reading and praying any scripture**

**1.What does the passage say?**

(What has just happened and what is happening now? Where are they? Who is there? Who is speaking, listening or responding? What do they say? How do they respond? What are they **not** doing or saying? What does Jesus or God say here? Is there a parable, a comparison or a word picture?)

**2.What does the passage mean?**

**a. What does it say about God?** (his character, his heart, his power, his love, how he works? Look at the narrative, names, descriptions and verbs)

Father

Son

Holy Spirit

**b. What does it say about people?** (Our hearts? Our response to God? Our relationships? Our attitudes to others? The world’s way? What does it mean to be His? What the nouns or verbs used for people?)

**c. Is there a command?**

What is the challenge?

**d. Is there a promise?**

What is the encouragement?

**3. What does it mean to me?** How does this touch me or speak into my heart, my relationship with God, my life or my circumstances today?Where do I struggle to accept this for me?or for others? What truth do I need to receive or believe more deeply? How does the Holy Spirit want to work like this in my life? What would it look like for me to live this truth?

**4. How can I pray this passage?** (Ask for the Holy Spirit help me receive this.) What is the praise? Forgive me for what I have been and what I have not done? Change my heart? Draw me closer? Lead me to believe all of who you are? Show me what this means for my life? Pray this for others?)