

# Inductive Bible Study

*A straightforward approach to learning, understanding, and applying God's Word.<sup>1</sup>*

## Observations

Goal: Learn what the passage says to the original audience.

Pray: For insight to observe the details in the text God intends you to understand.

1. Survey: skim the book to get a sense for the theme, genre, and purpose.
2. Background: identify the author, recipients, situation, purpose, theme, and tone.
3. Observations: note various ideas communicated throughout the passage.
4. Structure: note literary devices such as repetition, comparison, word pictures, etc.
5. Terms: note semantic range, compare OT/NT usage, and make informed conclusions.
6. Consultation: use references for additional historical, linguistic, and textual insights.

## Main Idea

Goal: Understand and articulate the central message of the passage.

Pray: For clarity to articulate the ideas in the text that God intends you to remember.

1. Subject: identify who, what, when where, why, and/or how the passage is about.
2. Compliment: identify what the passage is saying about the subject.
3. Summary: rewrite the subject and compliment in a precise, concise, and memorable summary statement.

## Applications

Goal: Illuminate how the passage speaks to various areas of life today.

Pray: For wisdom to discern the various applications God intends you to see and share.

1. Assumptions: identify personal assumptions and biases about the text.
2. Audience Analysis: identify distinctive characteristics of the original audience.
3. Cross-Reference: find other passages that explain or compliment the text.
4. Bridge-the-Gap: determine the degree of transfer from the ancient context to today.
  - a. Obsolete: meant only for the ancient audience (e.g., dietary laws).
  - b. Pattern: illustrates a deeper spiritual truth (e.g. narratives).
  - c. Principle: the key idea carries over into different times and settings.
  - d. Universal: intended for all people, in all places, at all times.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Daniel J. Estes, *Learning and Living God's Word*, Rev. Ed. (Arlington Heights, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2018).