

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

I. Observation: What Does It Say?

These questions simply help people to understand what the text says. Look for the obvious - facts about people, places, and events. Often these will be repeated making them easy to see. At the end of this exercise it is often helpful to try to write your own paraphrase of the text capturing the nuances of meaning that you've discovered in your observation. Questions to ask yourself as you work out 'what does it say' questions are:

- When and where does this take place?
- Who are the main characters?
- What key words are repeated?
- What major themes are repeated?
- What stands out?
- What comes before and after this passage?
- What do I find difficult to understand?
- Are there specific instructions or warnings?

II. Interpretation: What Does It Mean?

What we mean by Bible interpretation is the correct meaning of the passage as it was intended by the original author. In other words, we must allow the Bible to speak for itself. We must work carefully to see that we arrive at the Truth instead of seeking to prove that *we* are right. We must seek to understand what the original author had in mind--in his context of life and history. We must seek to know what Bible words meant to the writers of the Bible. The main way to work through this stage is to put yourself in the passage and ask questions of the text and then use study tools to help answer those questions. Questions like:

- What does that word/phrase mean?
- What is confusing about this passage?
- What could I know that would help this to make more sense?
- What would the original hearers have heard?
- What would the original readers have read?
- What is the context – what comes before and after this passage that will help to clarify?

III. Application: What Does It Mean to Me?

The whole purpose of interpretation is not only for our understanding; it's also so that we can be changed to reflect God's intention for us and that ultimately we would impact others. Interpretation is acquiring knowledge; application is putting that knowledge into action. We should know there is only one interpretation of any passage, but there can be multiple applications of the interpretation.

The Need for Application

1. Bible study without application can be dangerous because knowledge without application puffs up-1 Cor. 8:1.
2. Bible study without application can be disastrous because we will forget what we don't apply to our lives—James 1:23-24.
3. Bible study without application can be dangerous because we build instability into our lives—Matt. 7:24-27.

Questions For Application – SPACEPETS - "Is there any . . ."

- 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? Am I willing to work on a negative attitude and begin building toward a positive one?
- Command to obey? Am I willing to do it, no matter how I feel?
- Example to follow? Is it a positive example for me 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 can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or other biblical teachings?
- Something to praise God for? Is there something here I can be thankful for?