

Ways To Study Your Bible
Woman2Woman Workshop
April 17, 2021

Pray: Prepare your Heart

If any of you lacks wisdom, let Him ask God who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given Him. James 1:5

Observe: What Does It Say?

*I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways
Psalm 119:15*

- Who wrote it?
- When was it written?
- To whom was it written?
- In what style was it written?
- Why is it written?
(For these historical facts you may want to read the Intro to the specific book in your study bible)
- Are there words that show chronology? (Feasts mentioned, the next day...)
- Are there contrasts, comparisons, or conditional statements?
- Are there words that indicate atmosphere, mood, and emotion? Figures of speech?
- Are there any repeated words or ideas?
- What are the section divisions and linking words?
- What don't I understand here?

These are simply guidelines. You don't have to answer every question as you read but try to read the passage several times in different Bible translations. (ESV, NAS, NIV,CSB)

2. Interpret: What Does It Mean?

*The unfolding of your words give light; it imparts understanding to the simple.
Psalm 119:30*

The next step is interpretation. You've considered what the passage says, but what does it *mean*?

- What did the author intend for the original audience to understand?
- Try to paraphrase the passage in your own words.
- Let scripture interpret Scripture. If the meaning of a passage is not clear, look up the cross references listed in your Bible to see what they can add to your understanding.
- Try not to rely on Bible commentaries or study Bible notes at first. It is best to attempt to interpret the scripture on our own before reading the interpretations of others.

Apply: How Should I Respond?

After **observation** and **interpretation** comes **application**. This is the ultimate goal of studying our Bibles...What should I do in response to what I've learned?

*But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourself.
James 1:22*

Helpful questions to ponder at this stage include:

- What have I learned about God—His character, His plan, His priorities, His promises, His desires, His ways?
- What have I learned about myself? My neighbor? The world?
- How do I need to change my thinking or living based on what I've learned?
- How should I be praying in light of this passage?
- Is there an encouragement or promise here that I need to meditate on?
- How do I interact with my unbelieving friends?
- How does this passage apply to my brothers and sisters in Christ? How does it speak to our life together as a church?

"The Scriptures are shallow enough for a babe to come and drink without fear of drowning and deep enough for theologians to swim in without ever touching the bottom" St. Jerome