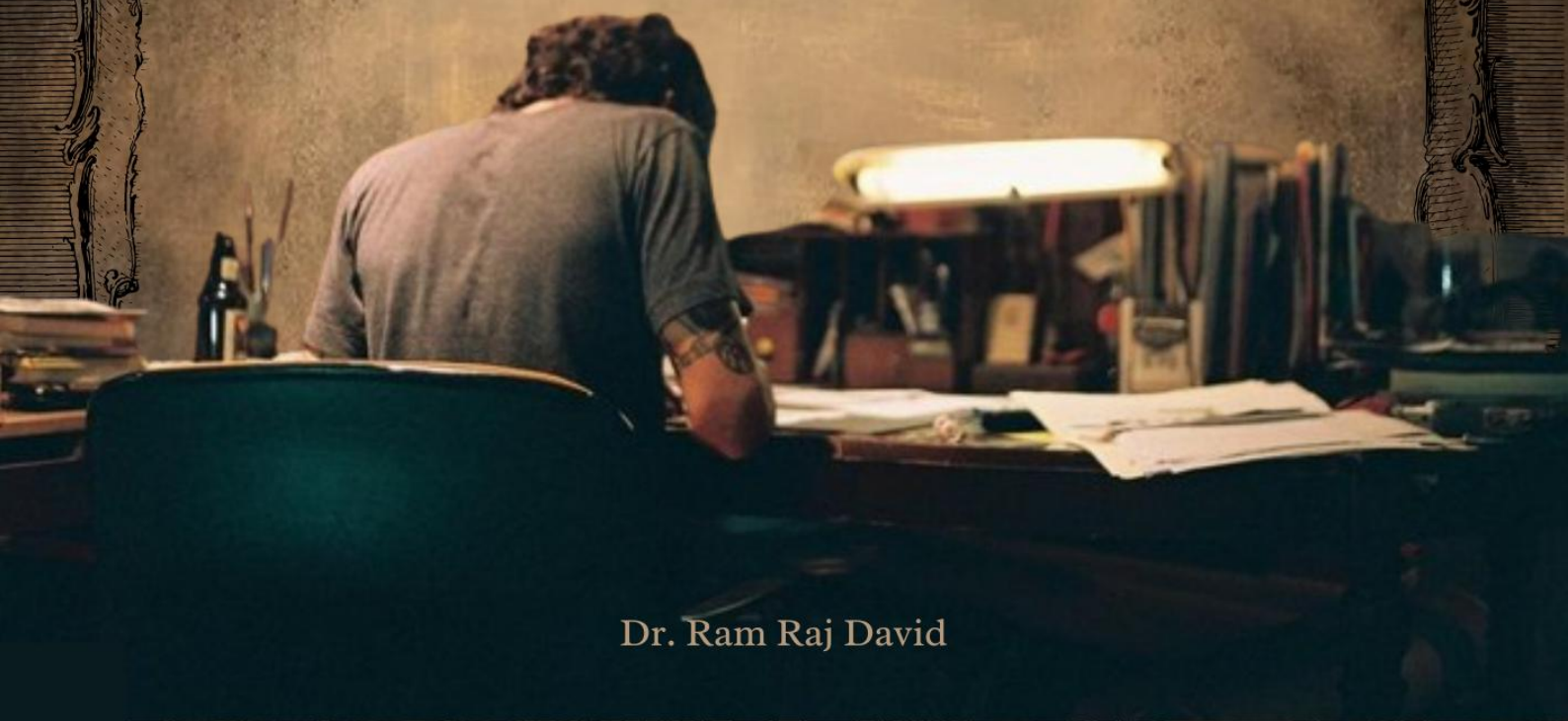




HERMENEUTICS



Dr. Ram Raj David

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I want to thanks God for providing this opportunity. In completing this Book, I also want to acknowledge who encourage me and give prayer support.



Contents

Preface

Introduction

1. Structure of Book
2. Important Tools for Book Study
3. How to Proceed
4. Principles of Interpretation
5. Making Sense of the Passage
6. The Devotional Method of Book Study
7. The Character Quality Method of Book Study
8. Inductive Study

Bibliography



Creation Autonomous Academy

Preface

Most students sincerely want to study their book on their own, but they just don't know how. They don't need more exhortation; they just need some instruction on how to study the book. And that is the purpose of this thesis –it is a 'how to' manual on book study. It assumes that you already know the importance of personal study, and that you have been waiting for someone to show you how to do it.

Each section in this thesis is presented in such a way that any student can follow the steps suggested and be able on his own to get something out of his study of the book. I trust that your reading, study, and use of this thesis will make you into an interrupter.

The purpose of this thesis is to teach you how to dig out the riches of the word for yourself. It will require some serious thinking, but an effort has been made to keep the procedures simple.

I trust that this thesis will become a well- worn and used reference tool which will guide you in a lifetime of personal study and in your teaching others to do the same.



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Introduction

The Bible is a one-of a kind book. It not only contains miracles, it is in itself a miracle. The Bible was authored by God and yet written through the personalities of ordinary men (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

The Bible is history's greatest writing written by forty authors who were from all walks of life, including kings, fishermen, poets, philosophers, peasants, statesmen, Jews and Gentiles.

The Bible is a collection of smaller books. Despite the fact that its sixty six books were written over such a long period of time on three continents by men from every conceivable background, the Bible has a single theme and purpose throughout: the presentation of salvation to sinful man through Jesus Christ.

Today the Bible is still the most printed, sold and read book on earth. The Bible is the one book, which holds the attention of men and women and boys and girls from every nation and class of people on earth. Why? Because its Author knows the human heart and his Word fully reveals the nature and needs of all men everywhere.

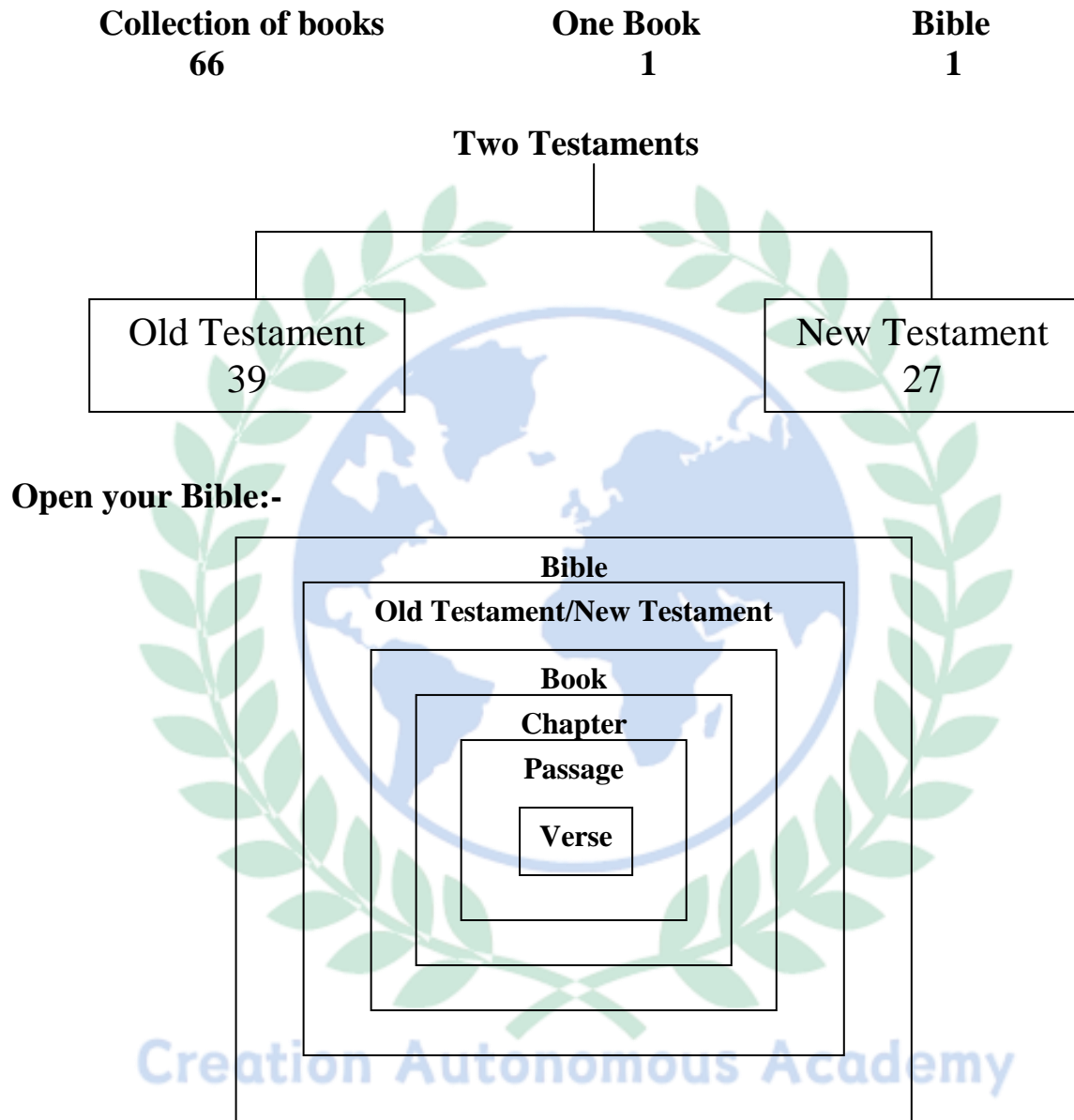
Why to Study the Bible? There is much to be gained from the pastors and teachers God has given His church. But there is limit to parental dependence. We should come to the source. The Bible is that sources for spiritual growth and spiritual nourishment.(II Tim.3:16-17)

List the benefits of personal Bible study: Joshua1:8, Psalms 119:9, 11,105, Prov.4:20-27, Matt.4:1-11, Acts 20:32, II Tim.3:16-17, I Peter 1:23, 2:2

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Chapter - 1

Structure of Book



Study your Bible:-

Alphabet-Word- Sentence-Verse-Passage-Chapter-Book-Testament-Bible

Chapter - 2

Important Tools for Book study

What are the tools that you need?

1- The Bible in your mother tongue:-

Your mother tongue is the language you know best, the language of your home, in which you were born. You can understand the Bible best in that language. So use the language you know best.

2- Other Bible versions or translations for comparison:-

There are many new translations of the N.T. or the whole Bible, such as Pavitra Bible-IBP, Dharamshastra-BSI, Pavitra Bible-IBL. These all have strengths and weaknesses. But they do bring the word to life by the use of modern language, and we can make use of them.

3- Language Dictionary:-

No doubt you know your mother tongue. But you do not know it perfectly. A dictionary helps in several ways. It enables you to understand clearly precisely, the meaning of words that you are acquainted with but cannot define. It suggests possible meanings to words that you do not know. It may surprise you by correcting you when you think you know the meaning of word but are actually mistaken.

But the value of a dictionary is limited. It does not normally give the exact meaning of a word as used in the Bible. The dictionary is concerned with the way people generally use the words. And it will give all the meanings of a word as commonly used, not just one. So you have to ask which of these the Bible one is. The dictionary will not tell you.

4- Bible Dictionary:-

A Bible Dictionary lists words and subjects found in the Bible and explains each one, summarizing the meanings in the Bible, but not necessarily giving many actual references. It treats some subjects like archaeology and Trinity, though the actual word is not found in the Bible. It tells, for instance, how many people in the Bible were named John, and who they were. It tells of historical and cultural facts in the background of the Bible.

5- Bible Commentary:-

This gives the opinion of the author as to the meaning of the actual text of Scripture, book by book chapter by chapter, and sometimes even verse by verse.

Some are very thorough, but others are brief and give only summaries of paragraphs or chapters.

6- Bible Concordance:-

A Concordance lists the words of the Bible by references. Smaller concordance such as Bagster's and Cruden's list the main occurrences of words, but do not attempt to list all, especially of those words that occur hundreds of time. The concordance is especially helpful for word study, when you want to find out where and how a word is used throughout the whole Bible.

7- A notebook and pen:-

If do not write down as you study, the study can never be what it should be. You will miss a great deal, for you can not trust your memory. Be sure you are not giving way to laziness.

The Use of the Tools:-

We can remember that a man uses tools to help him to do some work more effectively than he could do it otherwise. But he himself does the work. The tools help him do it. So the tools for Bible interpretation are to help the interpreter do the work, not to do it for him. We should use books in this way, to helps us someone else's study and interpretation.

An important fact to remember is this: what you learn yourself means more to you and will be remembered better than what someone else tells you.



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Chapter - 3

How to Proceed

Now we will give some specific suggestions for getting into the actual study.

1- Plan your study:-

You must plan your study to get the most from it. One very good plan is to study one book at a time.

2- Pray:-

Ask God to teach you through His Holy Spirit.

3- Read:-

It is good read the whole book.

4- Observe:-

It is vital to observe carefully when we read the Bible.

- a- The literary form of the passage
- b- Repeated words and phrases
- c- Connective or linking words
- d- Time words
- e- Location or place words
- f- Contrasts and comparisons
- g- Unknown words
- h- The core of each sentence
- i- Figurative expressions
- j- Logical sequences
- k- Anything strange, unusual, unexpected
- l- Related entities
- m- Grammatical elements
- n- Punctuation
- o- Differences and similarities

5- Take notes:-

Write as and what you observe.

6- Meditate, Think and Analyse:-

When you have read the portion enough times to make sufficient observations, and you have written down those observations, then you can meditate on them. Seek to get the meaning of the various facts

- 1-You may think about
- 2-You may be struck by the record
- 3-You may ask whether

7- Use the principals of interpretation

8- Apply the meaning of the passage to your own life and the church today.

Chapter - 4

Principles of Interpretation

There are some laws or principles that guide in interpreting all kinds of language, whether narrative, sermon, poetry, or anything else. For instance, it is important to understand different ways that words are used, and that one must not take a sentence out of context.

1. Think of Context First:-

We can state this principle simply: interpret a passage in the light of its context. Context usually means the portions near the one we are studying, both before and after it. Context means what is con (with) the text (our verse or passage).

Usually two levels of context are recognized. The near or immediate context is what goes just before or after the verse, say one paragraph or perhaps two or three. The far or remote context may be in the next chapter, some part of the same book, or elsewhere in the Bible.

Context shows itself in a variety of ways. You can understand a word normally only in a sentence, and its meaning is determined by the sentence or paragraph. The sentence then is the context of the word. The same is true for a phrase, in its sentence-context. Even one sentence by itself may be obscure, so the paragraph or section in which it is found is its context. For example, many of Jesus parables were told on some

significant occasion, and Jesus Himself drew some truth from them. That setting and application are the context of the story.

Guidelines for Context

It is not always easy to see the force of the context, and there are guidelines to help us do that.

- 1) **Look at the verse you wish to interpret and think of any possible meaning:** You may think of one or of several. Write them down. But do not try to speculate or bring up fanciful meaning. Do you see any problem of interpretation? Write that down. It is always good to think clearly of the possible meanings of a verse, and of any difficulty in it.
- 2) **Next, read the verse in the context:** Be sure to include enough context in this reading just a few verses or one paragraph. You must read enough to get the progress of thought

or events. The first time, read it straight through, not spending time to puzzle about the

problem or work out the interpretation. You need to get familiar with the section in which your verse is found. You are trying to see content first. Second, read it again more carefully. This time look for links, connections of words or of thoughts. Note them. Do not try to interpret yet.

3) Study the passage more closely:

A-Thoughts: and, so,

B-Time: just, after, then, when

C-Sign: it, this

4) Note any words in your verse repeated in the context: These may show one subject and indicate the connections.

- a. Note also synonyms (words of similar meaning), partake, eat, and drink, in 1Cor. 10:14-31.

5) Try to write the section: (your verse and context) in your own words to see if you understand and can express the thought clearly.

6) Try to answer the question: what does this verse mean in its context? If you cannot answer it, then you may need to study some more. Do not be discouraged if you cannot always get a clear understanding. Be willing to leave some things with God, for light that He may give you later.

2. Words are the Key:-

This is the second general principle of Interpretation and is simply: interpret according to the correct meaning of the words.

Of course our problem is how to find the correct meaning of the words. And for that we need to think about what words are and what they mean. Words are the building bricks of thought, of speech, of communication. Words put together in meaningful combinations make language. And the primary way human beings communicate with one another is by language. God in the Bible used language to communicate with man. And for the most part He used the ordinary language that men use to communicate with each other.

So a word is a unit of language, and as such has meaning. But it rarely has meaning when it is alone. If I say, “trunk” you don’t know whether I mean a box to put clothes in, or the long nose of an elephant, or (in America) the boot of an automobile. When you hear “light” alone you don’t know whether it

means the opposite of darkness, pale in colour, or less in weight. In each case you need other words to go with this one for it to have meaning for you. Most words have more than one meaning, so a word by itself is not clear. We can find out the meaning of one word by the words used with it.

In Rev.5:5 the word “lion” refers to Christ, but in 1 Pet.5:8 the devil is likened to a lion. In both cases, the other words that go with this one make clear the reference. But other words used with a word are its context. So again we are back to the first principle of interpretation.

Facts about Words

- 1) **Words change their meaning over a period of time:** People use them in new ways.
- 2) When the Authorized Version of the Bible was translated (1611 A.D.), the word “prevent” meant “go before.” That is close to the original meaning. But now, its common meaning is “hinder” or “stop”. So the 1 Th. 4:15 says, “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.” Well, of course not. True, we will not hinder them, but that is not the point. In 1611 when people read “we.... shall not prevent them”, they understood it to mean, “we shall not go before them.” If we want to mean that now we can say “will not precede them” so v.16 confirms this by saying, “the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

If we are to interpret according to the correct meaning of the words, we must be sure that what a word means to us now is what it meant at the time that translation of the Bible was made.

- 3) **Different words have the same or similar meaning:** For example Gal. 6:2, 5 load or burden-responsibility, 1 Tim. 2:1 The different words for prayer.
- 4) **God used human words to reveal His truth.**
- 5) **Sometimes the Bible uses the same word with different meanings in different places:** And occasionally the different meaning may come in the same passage

Guidelines for Words

- 1- Look up the word in the dictionary.
- 2- Study the words in its context. For example Prov. 14:15,18 simple means general but in the context simple means fool
- 3- Use a concordance.

3. Grammar: Words Belong Together:-

The third general principle that we need to look at can be stated this way: interpret according to the grammar of the sentence or passage. What does that mean? What is grammar? Grammarians say that it consists of two things: the form of words and the relationships of words. Both affect the meaning, but we are concerned mainly with the second. We need to understand how words are related to one another in sentence.

It is a fact that words are always used in combination not alone. They have clear meaning only in relation to other words. Grammar classifies various ways that words are combined.

If you are to interpret the Bible according to the grammar you must know something of it. One way is to get a grammar book and read it. Be sure you know the parts of speech, noun, verb, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. The important thing is the way each of the parts of the speech relates to other words in a sentence, and how this affects the meaning. You do not need to know all the fine points, but should understand the basic ones.

One of the points we need to watch in verbs is what is called tense. A verb usually refers either to past, present, or future tense: "I ate, I eat, I will eat."

A special problem of tenses comes in the prophetic portions of Scripture, especially in the Old Testament. Much of prophecy relating to the future is expressed by verbs in the future tense. Sometimes the past may be used for the future. Isaiah chapter 53, is mostly in the past tense, but refers to Christ in the future. See v.4, "surely he has borne our griefs...." Mathew 8:16, 17 show that it is a prophecy of Christ, fulfilled hundreds of years in the future. In prophecy the present tense also may be used for the future. Psa. 22:18 is largely in the present tense, but prophesies Christ's death in the future. Compare v. 18 with John 19:23, 24.

Look noun and pronoun in that passage carefully.

Look conjunctions. The main connecting words- conjunctions- in sentences are very important to the meaning. The conjunctions are important for meaning. See in Luke 12:15, 23, 32. In each of these verses there is the conjunction "for".

Guidelines for Grammar

Here are some guidelines to help you in applying the principle of grammar:

- 1- Where the meaning of a verse or passage is not clear, identify the significant word as to grammar.
- 2- Study the relation of each word to others.
- 3- Note the possible meanings that are indicated.
- 4- If there is more than one possible meaning, consider other principles, especially context?

4. Purpose and plan of the author: What the Author had in Mind:-

The fourth general principle is: Interpret according to the purpose and plan of the author. This principle covers two things, as you can see. They are so closely related that we can consider them together, but we must also see the difference between them.

The purpose of the author is the object he has in mind for the writing. As John writes in 1 John 5:13, "I write this to you....that you may know that you have eternal life." He has plainly stated his purpose. The plan of the author is the way he arranges the writing in order to carry out the purpose. It shows in the structure of the writing, a structure that is in some recognizable pattern.

The author's purpose: John states in 20:31 his purpose in writing the Gospel: "But these (signs v.30) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." John wrote that people may come to believe on Jesus as the Son of God (His person) and through that faith receive life (eternal life or salvation) through Christ.

The author's plan: An example of interpreting in the light of the author's plan can be found in the book of Genesis. Reading Genesis carefully you notice the repetition of the phrase "These are the generations of....".

Finding purpose and plan (Guidelines for purpose and plan): Here are some suggestions.

- 1-Note first whether the purpose is stated or not. If not, are there any hints or indications of it. But be careful about judging only from hints in the book. They should be clear hints.
- 2- Look for the plan or structure of the book.
- 3- When the purpose and plan is clear, and then study each portion of the book keeping that in mind, being sure that your interpretation fits into it.

5. Consider the Background:-

The fifth general principle is: interpret in the light of the historical, geographical and cultural background, as far as that can be known. The background includes different elements.

- 1) **Historical elements:** Dan.5:7, 16. Daniel was made the third ruler because Belshazaar and his father were then ruling together, there were two already. Mathew 2:22. History tells us that Archelaus was a greater threat to Jesus life than his father was.
- 2) **Geographical elements:** Jn. 4:4 Jesus had to pass through Samaria because that province was between Judea and Galilee. It was a simple geographical fact. Isa. 35:2. Lebanon, Carmel, Sharon were places of great natural beauty.
- 3) **Cultural, social, religious or material:** Lk. 9:59. First to go and bury his father. This was a sacred responsibility for the oldest son, and might involve years of waiting if the father was not already dead.

Some steps about Background:-

- 1-Learn the Bible. Read, read, read it.
- 2- Make notes as you read.
- 3- If you have a Bible with marginal references use them.
- 4- Use the maps in your Bible for the geographical points.
- 5-If other books are available, they are helpful.

6. The Bible as a Whole:-

The sixth general principle is: interpret any passage in the light of the Bible teaching as a whole. It is another way of saying, "Interpret Scripture by Scripture."

This means that we must get to know the whole Bible. Such knowledge will not come in a day, but will come by reading regularly, systematically, prayerfully, and reading over and over again.

Chapter - 5

Making sense of the passage

1-The Natural Sense:-

One of the greatest gifts God has given us is common sense. God has not communicated with us in a way which is meant to be perverse or only understood by those with theological degrees. God has clearly revealed for us.

2-The original Sense:-

The permanent and universal message of a passage is only understood in the light of circumstances in which the word was originally given. It is good to ask, what did original writer intend to be understood? What would the original hearers have understood? Certain things help to unlock to us the original sense.

(A) Situation:-

Some understanding of the historical circumstances of a passage often help enormously in making sense of its relevance and meaning. Take the **books of Old Testament prophecy** such as Amos, Hosea, Joel or Jeremiah. We have got to understand that they were written at times of great upheavals, All 16 prophetic books come within the period 760-460 BC, which was the period of the divided kingdom: Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel: the Babylonian obliteration of Judah: the exile: the return. In studying **Psalms 51**, that great psalm of repentance, it is enormously helpful to realize that David wrote it after the exposure of his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah. If we study **New Testament books**, we need to see in the light of Church history. If we study **Paul's letter**, we need to see in the light of Paul's missionary journey and situation that time when was letters written. The epistles are not theological handbooks, they are "task theology" that is related to specific problems, questions, heresies, and individuals.

(B) Style:-

The Bible is written not only in 66 different books but in many different styles: and different styles of literature cannot be treated in the same way.

These different styles include

Narrative	Law	Genealogies
Gospels	Prophecy	Wisdom
Parables	Poetry	Apocalyptic
Epistles	Sermons	

It is very important when we study from a Bible passage that we have some understanding of the type of literature it is.

(C) Language:-

When we say that God verbally inspired the Scriptures we do not mean that every word of the NIV, RSV, or KJV or any translation of the Bible is the verbally inspired text. All translation interpretation and difficult choices. What was inspired was the original Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew.

So a famous example is for the one Hindi word “love”- Greek used four words: agape = God’s love, philia = friendship love, storge = natural affection, family love, and epoq = sexual love. Although the meanings of the words in Greek do overlap, it can be a great help to realize which word is used in a text.

In a perfect world the ideal thing would be to master the Hebrew and Greek, and if possible Aramaic too. Very few Bible teachers have done this. If you can get at the original sense of the words it can be a great help and save you from some misunderstandings.

(D) Culture:-

Our perceptions are profoundly affected by the culture we live in. The Bible records teaching and events that took place in a very different cultural setting from our own. People and spiritual needs remain the same but we can easily fail to understand the point of a text when we don’t understand the culture. One of the tasks of the preacher or teacher is to help his hearers understand the meaning of the text better by explaining any relevant cultural factors which are reflected in that teaching or account in order to bring God’s word home to the hearers. Sometimes a cultural understanding simply adds a depth to our comprehension of the text. For example Jesus tells various wedding parables the parable of the 10 virgins, five wise and five foolish. We all are familiar with the idea of a wedding But in my society the centre of attention is the bride: but in the 1st century the bridegroom was much more important. And the arrival of the bridegroom on the evening of the marriage day in a great procession at the bride’s house was the great moment after which the marriage feast would be held. Jesus parable only really makes in the light of 1st century wedding customs.

3- General sense:-

Interpret any passage in the light of the Bible teaching as a whole. It is another way of saying, “Interpret Scripture by Scripture.

This means that we must get to know the whole Bible. Remember two types of context. Historical context and context in the Scripture. Remember whole Bible and his teaching.

1) Passage (Text)

Select the passage.

2) Main Idea

Read your passage, and then find out main idea of the passage.

3) Study whole book

Study whole book and than passage.

4) Make Outline

Make outline from this passage.

5) Key Verse

Choose a verse which summarizes the whole chapter or one which speaks to you personally. Find a key verse.

6) Interpretation

Interpret the passage.

7) Main Message

Write main message.

8) Application

Write application and plan in your life.

Passage (Text):- Luke 15

Main Idea:- Lost and Found

Outline:-

- 1- The lost sheep
- 2- The lost coin
- 3- The lost son

Key Verse:- Luke 15:7

Interpretation:-

1- The lost sheep

Jesus the good shepherd searching for lost sheep.

2- The lost coin

The Holy spirit our rightful owner finding and restoring.

3- The lost son

God the father waiting to welcome us home.

Main Message:-

God cares for sinners and anxiously waits for them to return home.

Application:-

To recover what was lost. Many of my friends are lost without Christ. I need to develop specific witnessing plan for reaching them with the Good News. I will start by sharing my faith with my friend Mohan this weekend.

I need to express more joy when I hear of people who have accepted Christ.

TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY

Introduction

2 Corinthians 4: 5-10

Phillip Brooks (Yale 1877) said to his students “Let us rejoice with one another that in a world where there are a great many good and happy things for men to do, God has given us the best and happiest and made us preachers of this truth”.

1. We face the demands of:

a) Godliness

Paul wrote to Timothy, 1 Tim 4:12-16

John Piper writes “Don’t strive to be a kind of preacher, strive to be a kind of person”.

Robert Murray McCheyne (died 1843 aged 30) said “It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God ... My people’s greatest need is my personal holiness

John Flavel wrote “Brethren, it is easier to declaim against a 1000 sins of others, than to mortify one sin in ourselves”.

Jim Packer says, “the preacher is inescapably part of the message. He must model both the authority of the truth he is communicating and the response to them that he seeks to evoke. There is no substitute for this: spiritual reality is a must”.

Richard Baxter wrote "Take heed to yourselves... lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hindrances of the success of your own labours... we must study as hard how to live well, as to preach well.”

b) Sacrifice

2 Corinthians 4: 8-12, 6: 3-10

Examples of God’s servants who faced severe struggles:

Hudson Taylor defined godly rule as “the seeking to help, not to lord; to keep from wrong paths and lead into right paths, for the glory of God and the good of

those guided, not for the gratification of the ruler - such rule always leads the ruler to the cross and saves the ruled at the cost of the ruler”.

c) Accountability

2 Timothy 4:2

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

James 3:1

2. We face the attack of the enemy

Three common weapons Satan uses against those who preach.

a) Pride

Listen to George Whitefield's experience. The year is 1737 and he is only 22 years old.

“The tide of popularity now began to run very high. In a short time, I could no longer walk on foot as usual, but was constrained to go in a coach, from place to place, to avoid the hosannas of the multitude. They grew quite extravagant in their applauses; and, had it not been for my compassionate High Priest, popularity would have destroyed me. I used to plead with Him, to take me by the hand and lead me unhurt through the fiery furnace. He heard my request, and gave me to see the vanity of all commendations but His own.”

"God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:2).

Jonathan Edwards described “spiritual pride as that grand inlet of the devil into the hearts of men”

Jim Packer writes, “Being a Christian professional makes it harder to grow spiritually rather than easier ... the reason is that since professionals are expected... to perform... the temptation to a professional is to settle for an appropriate form of mask-wearing role-play, in which one’s own personhood is kept out of sight, is very strong - professional identity then eats up personal identity, so that one is no longer closely related to anyone, neither to people or to God”.

b) Immorality

Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4, "Train yourself to be godly" (v. 7), "set an example in purity" (v.12), "Treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters and absolute purity" (5:2), "Keep yourself pure" (5:22).

Examples of those in the Bible who failed in this area:

c) Indifference to People

Peter Adam comments: “It is one of the curious features of those who take preaching seriously that they often love books rather than people” .

Larry Crabb warns of “an awful assumption in evangelical circles that we can just get the Word of God into people’s heads, then the Spirit of God will apply it to their hearts ... it has excused pastors and leaders from the responsibility to tangle with people’s lives. Many remain safely hidden behind pulpits, hopelessly out of touch with the struggles of their congregations, proclaiming the Scriptures with an accuracy that touches no-one”.

John F Bettler writes “Good preachers are pastors, counsellors, encouragers. They know and work with people, close enough to appreciate their doubts, fears, hurts and joys. A good preacher must be a people person... Vitality, immediacy, earnestness are only watered and nourished in the garden of pastoral contact ... People drive me to Scripture and the Scripture drives me to people. You can’t have one without the other”.

2 Corinthians 2:4

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

3. We Run to God

In the face of all this how can we sustain this responsibility? “Who is equal to such a task?” (2 Corinthians 2:16). Only God.

a) It is God’s idea

“We all stumble in many ways” (James 3:2).

Hebrews 11 lists heroes of faith: what examples are there of them struggling with weakness?

We need individually to know that God called us.

James 3:1

Romans 10:14-15

It is not necessarily the case that God's call is what we want to do. Examples?

Our gifts need to be appropriate, tested and developed.

We need others to recognise our calling, we need to be accountable, so that like Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:2-4 we are set apart and sent by the church (v.3) and by the Holy Spirit (v.4).

John Newton advised a younger man wondering about God's calling to him in this way: "That which finally evidences a proper call is a correspondent opening in Providence, by a gradual train of circumstances pointing out the means, the time, the place, of actually entering upon the work. And till this coincidence arrives, you must not expect to be always clear from hesitation in your own mind. The principal caution on this head is, not to be too hasty in catching at first appearances. If it be the Lord's will to bring you into his ministry, he has already appointed your place and service; and though you know it not at present, you shall at a proper time. If you had the talents of an angel, you could do no good with them till his hour is come, and till he leads you to the people whom he has determined to bless by your means."

b) God is sufficient

"Who is equal to such a task?" (2 Corinthians 2:16)

"Our competence come from God. He has made us competent" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

"This all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

"A Christian communicator has to learn that he cannot present himself as a great preacher and teacher if he also wants to present God as a great God and Christ as a great Saviour" (Jim Packer).

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "The best man here, if he knows what he is, knows that he is out of his depth in his sacred calling ... the whole affair is quite beyond us and we must work miracles by Divine power, or else be total failures".

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Form

Passage (Text):-

Main Idea:-

Outline:-

- 1
- 2
- 3

Key Verse:-

Interpretation:-

Main Message:-

Application:-



Chapter - 6

The Devotional Method of Book Study

Important steps of meditation:-

When you do a devotional Bible study, follow simple steps. These steps can be summarized in the words pray, meditate, apply, and memorize.

Passage:-

1-Prayer:-

Ask God to help you apply the Scripture you are studying and show you specifically what He wants you to do.

2-Meditation:-

Meditation is the key to discovering how to apply Scripture to your life. Meditation is essentially thought digestion. You take a thought God gives you, put in your mind, and think on it over and over again.

Writing:-

3-Application:-

Write an application of insights you've discovered through your meditation. Writing your application out on paper helps you be specific. If you don't write something down, you will soon forget it. This is particularly necessary when you are dealing with spiritual truths. If you can not put it down on paper, you haven't really thought it through. It is been proven that if you write something down, you'll remember it longer and be able to express to others what you have learned.

You need to remember four factor in writing out a good application.

1- Your application should be personal.

2- Your application should be practical.

3- Your application should be possible.

4- Your application should be provable

4-Memorizing Verse:-

Memorizing a key verse from your study. So that you can continue to meditate on the passage you are applying, and to help remind you of your project, memorize a verse that is a key to the application you have written.

The Devotional Method of Bible Study

Date: -5/5/2004

Passage:-Luke 12:22-26

Prayer: - done

Meditation:-

I shouldn't worry so much. God will take care of all my needs. Since God gave me my life, surely I can trust Him to sustain it. I can learn from the example of birds- they do not worry about the future. God takes care of them on a daily basis. And if God takes care of the birds, of course He will take care of me. Besides, worrying never does me any good. It never really changes the situation. So what's the use of worrying? None.

Command to Obey: Don't worry! (v.22)

Application:-

I need to apply this lesson in the area of our family finances. I will resist that thought by quoting Luke 12:24

Memorizing Verse:-

Luke 12:24

The Devotional Method of Bible Study

Date: -

Passage:-

Prayer: -

Meditation:-

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Application:-

Memorizing Verse:-

Chapter - 7

The Character Quality Method Of Book Study

How to determine Biblical Character Qualities

A major goal of Christian living is to develop Christ like character in our lives. Daily we want to become more and more like Jesus Christ by replacing bad character qualities with good ones. But before we can work on Chris like quality in our lives. We must be able to recognize it. This study is designed to help you identify negative and positive character qualities and then be able to understand them.

You may then work on setting aside negative character qualities and building positive ones in your life. Doing these things will enable you to become more and more like Jesus Christ.

Definition

The Character Quality Method of Bible Study involves finding what the Bible says about a particular characteristic of person, with a heavy emphasis on personal application. It is, furthermore, a combination in simplified form of three other Bible study methods: the Word Study Method, the Biographical Method, and the Cross-Reference Method.

It differs from the Biographical Method in that here you are studying the characteristics of a person rather than the person himself. These qualities can be negative or positive, or both. The point is that we learn to avoid the negative ones and work on building the positive ones into lives.

Why this method is vital for our Lives

The purpose of this method of Bible study is to *identify* character qualities taught in the Bible with the view of learning to avoid the negative ones and learning to work on the positive ones, so that we become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. It is obvious that until you know what character quality is, you cannot avoid it or develop it. For example, if you wanted to become meek, as the Bible admonishes you to be, you would have to know what meekness is before you could really study it.

This is the first method in this book that requires the use of some tools. So let us look at some of the reference tools you will need:

1. A study Bible
2. An exhaustive concordance
3. A Bible dictionary and/or a word study book
4. An English dictionary

If you want to develop positive biblical character qualities in your life, follow these tips:

- Step One** - Name the Quality
- Step Two** - Name the opposite Quality
- Step Three** - Do a Simple Word Study
- Step Four** - Find Some Cross-Reference
- Step Five** - Do a Brief Biographical Study
- Step Six** - Find a Memory Verse
- Step Seven** - Select A situation or Relationship to Work On
- Step Eight** - Plan a Specific Project
- Step Nine** - Write Out A Personal Application

1. Only work on one quality at a time. Don't try to work on two or three or more, for it takes concentrated effort to see how that one quality applies to every area of your life. It is far better to build one quality solidly into your life than to work on several weak ones.
2. Don't rush it! Character development takes time. Even though one of the steps is writing out an illustration after one week, you should probably want to work on one quality for much longer time. I've found in my own life that God works on an area for months (sometimes years) before it becomes part of my daily walk with Him.
3. Stay with that one quality until you get victory in that specific area. Don't skip around trying to work on many qualities when you need victory in that one. Remember that the quality of diligence is one you want to work on.
4. Be alert to a negative quality in your life that is actually a positive one being misused. Realize that the Lord wants to turn your weak points into strong ones. If you are rigid, legalistic, and unbending, it might be that the quality of self-discipline is being misused. That discipline needs to be tempered with compassion and concern for others.
5. Trust the Holy Spirit to build these qualities in your life. In the final analysis, it is God's power in us that reproduces the fruit of the Spirit in your life. It is God alone who can change your character. "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Phil. 2:13). So let God do it, trusting the Holy Spirit to work in your life.

Nine Steps for Doing a Character Quality Study

Step one – name the Quality

Select the quality you want to study and write it down. Then look it up in an English dictionary and jot down that word's or concept's definition. List any synonyms or related words that help you understand this quality.

Step Two – Name the Opposite Quality

Write down the opposite quality, or the antonym, of the one you are studying, and write out its dictionary definition and similar words. If you can't think of the opposite, use a dictionary of antonyms. For example, unfaithfulness is the opposite of faithfulness. But in some qualities you might be studying, there might be two or more opposite. For example, you could have the following:

- Faith and doubt
- Faith and apathy
- Faith and fear

Step Three – Do a Simple Word Study

Look up the Bible definition of the quality you are studying. Find the ways it is used in the scriptural contexts; then check a Bible dictionary, encyclopedia, or word study book for the way the quality was used in biblical times and in the Scriptures. Some of the tools will tell you how many times the word is used in the Bible, each testament, the writings of different authors, and in the book you are studying.

For example, if you were studying the quality of meekness, you would discover that the word *meek* in the original Greek meant "breaking something and bringing it under submission." The word was used to describe the training of valuable horses, which were brought under submission to their masters. A stallion would still have all the power and strength of its wild days, but it was now under its master's control. Meekness, therefore, is not weakness. As a Christian character quality, meekness is strength that is in submission to Jesus Christ.

Step Four – Find Some Cross_ Reference

Using cross-reference will give you additional insights from other portions of the Bible. Scripture is still the best interpreter of Scripture. Use your concordance and topical Bible to find all the verses you can on this quality. Look up the word and its synonyms in the concordance and topical Bible, write the cross-reference on the form in the appropriate section, and give a brief description of that verse. Then ask some of the following questions about the quality you are studying as you meditate on the cross-reference verses:

- What are the benefits this trait can bring you?

- What are some bad consequences this trait can bring you?
- What are benefits this trait can bring to others?
- What are some bad consequences this trait can bring to others?
- Is there any promise from God related to this trait?
- Is there any warning or judgment related to this trait?
- Is there a command related to this trait?
- What factors produce this trait?
- Did Jesus have anything to say about this quality? What?
- What writer talked about this quality the most?
- Is this trait symbolized by anything in Scripture? Is that significant?
- Is this trait listed with a group of qualities? What is the relationship between them? What does this suggest?
- What Scriptures tell us directly what God thinks of this trait?
- Do you want more or less of this trait in your life?

After asking a series of questions such as these, or others that you think of, you might write a brief summary of the Bible's teaching on this quality. You may list any lessons or principles that you learned from this mini-topical study, or you may paraphrase a few key verses on this trait.

Always be sure to write down any difficulties you have with the verses you looked up, or questions you would like to see answered. Possibly, later on you will understand what is difficult at present and then find answers to your problems; often one verse sheds light on another verse you have studied.

Step Five – Do a Brief Biographical Study

Now go back to your Bible and try to find at least one person (more if possible) who showed this character quality in his life. Briefly describe this quality and write down the Scriptures which refer to it. Ask these questions as you do this part of the study:

- What shows this quality in his/her life?
- How did this quality affect his/her life?
- Did the quality help or hinder his/her growth to maturity? How?
- What results did it produce in his/her life?

An example of this step may be seen in the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob, who manifested different qualities of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) in each incident in his life. It is interesting to note his testimony before the heathen: "so Pharaoh asked them, 'Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the Spirit of God?'" (Gen. 41:38) we find these qualities in Joseph:

- He displayed *love* in a difficult family situation (Gen. 47).

- He displayed *self-control* in a difficult temptation (Gen. 39)
- He displayed industry and patience in difficult circumstances (Gen. 39:19-40:23)
- He displayed *faithfulness* in a difficult task (Gen. 41:37-57).
- He displayed *goodness, gentleness, and kindness* in difficult family reunions (Gen. 42; 50).

Occasionally, some of the qualities the Bible teaches are evident in the ways of certain animals (particularly in the book of proverbs). When you find these qualities, write them down.

Step Six – find a Memory Verse

Write down at least one verse from your cross-reference or biographical portion of the study that really speaks to you, and that you intend to memorize during the following week. This verse should come in handy when God provides an opportunity for you to work on this character quality in a specific way.

Step Seven – Select a Situation or Relationship

We are now getting to the application part of the study. Think of an area in which God wants you to work on this character quality avoiding it if it's negative or building it in your life if it's positive. This can either be a situation or an interpersonal relationship.

If it is a situation, anticipate in advance what you will do when the situation arises. For example, you have been slothful (lazy). Your study on slothfulness challenged you to get rid of this quality in your life. As you plan ahead, you will know when situations will arise that will bring out the lazy streak in you, so you decide ahead of time what you will do. You will set *two* alarm clocks, one on the far side of the room, to help you get up in the morning to have a quiet time and be on time to work or school.

If it is relationship, then determine ahead of time how you will respond in your interactions with the person. This person could be your wife, your husband, your parents, your children, your girlfriend, your boyfriend, your work associates, your school friend, or your neighbors. Look for opportunities to work on that character quality in your relationship with that person or persons. Your goal is to have more mature relationships.

One way of doing this is to think back and recall a good situation or relationship in your recent when you did work on this quality.

Step Eight – Plan a Specific Project

This is the practical part of your application and is the actual working out of Step Seven. Think of a project that you will work on to build a positive quality

in your life, or one in which you will be working to get rid of a negative quality in your life.

Once I was working on the trait of gratefulness; one of my projects was to write grateful letters to five people who had been a blessing to me, saying, “I am grateful for you because ...” remember, applications should be personal, practical, possible, and measurable.

Step Nine – Write Out a Personal Illustration

A few days after you have completed the first eight step of this study, write out and illustration of how you were able to work on this quality you are applying to your life. This is the “measurable” part of your application. Be specific, and write down where you have succeeded and where you might have failed. In just a short time you should be able to develop a whole set of personal examples of how God is working in your life, getting rid of negative qualities and building positive ones.

These illustrations will serve a number of purposes. When you get discouraged, read over the backlog of your illustrations and see how God has worked in your life. When you are working with a “Timothy,” use your illustrations to teach him and to encourage him in his own illustrations. When you are sharing your testimony or teaching a class, use these illustrations to add a personal element to your presentation: “Here is how God worked in my life.”

God often builds character in our lives by putting us in situations where we are tempted to do the opposite. For example, God may teach you honesty by placing you in a situation where you are tempted to be dishonest.

Summary and Conclusion

When I was in college, I was active in a musical group. I owned about \$2,000 worth of its equipment. Once when I was preaching 500 miles away, another music group at our school came to my roommate and asked if they could borrow my equipment. He told them, “I’ m sure it would be all right, but you have to ask Rick first. I’ m sure he will let you use it.”

But because I was away, they didn’t ask me. They simply came back after my roommate had gone and took the equipment. Later that weekend I called in and was told about my equipment being taken. I got furious. I hung up the phone and was really steamed. I would have loaned it to them had they asked me, but they hadn’t and this was like stealing. I was upset, planning all kinds of things I would say and do when I returned.

In the meantime I had been doing a character quality study on forgiveness. That morning I had read in the Bible: “Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (I Thes. 5:15-18). I suddenly realized that if

I were to develop the quality of forgiveness in my life, I had to forgive those people who had taken my equipment, I had to remain joyful, and I had to give thanks for the situation.

So here was concrete situation that God had brought into my life that was going to help me build the character quality of forgiveness into my practical daily living. It was a tough lesson, but it was part of applying what we learn in Scripture. Writing that down has enabled me to share that experience with others.

How to Fill in the character Quality Study Form

Use the form you'll find at the end of this chapter to write down the nine steps of your Bible study. You may reproduce these sections or order some printed forms.

Sample Filled-out Form

See the example at the end of this chapter.

Assignment

A good place to start this study would be to go through the lists of qualities found in New Testament passages. Some positive ones are:

- Matthew 5:3-12- the Beatitudes,
- Galatians 5:22-23- the fruit of the spirit,
- Philippians 4:4-9- admirable qualities,
- 2 Peter 1:5-8- qualities that should increase in our lives.

Don't forget to study negative qualities as well, so that you can work on tiding these features from your life. Here are some negative qualities:

- Galatians 5:19-21- a list of the works of the flesh.
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5- have nothing to do with these!

Here is a list of specific qualities taught throughout the Bible that you should study and work on.

Positive Qualities

Servant hood

Honesty

Humility

Determination

Diligence

Faithfulness

Availability

Teach ability

Forgiveness

Generosity

Loyalty

Loyalty

Fairness

Cooperativeness

Discipline

Sincerity

Contentment

Negative Qualities

Laziness

A critical spirit

Pride

Selfishness

Unfaithfulness

Disrespectfulness

Rebelliousness

Gossip

Being unloving

Dishonesty

Impatience

Worry

Fearfulness

Lustfulness

Bitterness

Apathy

Many others may be found in Scripture, but these should get you started. A much longer list of biblical qualities, both negative and positive, is found in Appendix C.

Another excellent source for studying biblical character qualities is the institute of Basic Youth Conflicts, taught by Bill Gothard. In both the seminar and in a resource called *Character Clues*, Gothard discusses and defines 49 positive character qualities, giving each a terse definition, a Scripture verse which teaches that quality, and its opposite negative quality. (Information on the seminars may be obtained from the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, Box 1, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521.)

For Further Reading

The Building of Character J.R. Miller (AMG Publishers)

Character Sketches 2 volumes (Institute of Basic Youth Conflicts)

The Master Bible edited by J. Wesley Dickson (J. Wesley Dickson & Co.)

The Measure of a man by Gene Getz (Regal Books)

The Measure of a woman by Gene Getz (Regal Books)

Character Quality Study Form

1. Character Quality: "Boldness"

"An exhibition of courage and fearlessness; willingness to move ahead confidently in the face of danger."

2. Opposite Quality: Timidity, Fearfulness

"To shrink back from a difficult or dangerous circumstance; to be hesitant."

3. Simple Word Study:

Old Testament word: *Batah* means to be confident.”

Example: Proverbs 28:1- “The righteous are as bold as a lion.”

New Testament word: *Tharreo* means “to be
Confident, bold or daring”

Example: Hebrews 13:6- “So that we may *boldly* say.

‘The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me’”(kjb).

Parresiazomai means “to speak boldly, or freely.”

Example: Acts 19:8-“He went into the synagogue and *Spoke boldly* for the space of three month, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (kjb).

Reference tools used:

- Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible
- Vine’s Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words

4. Cross-Reference Insights:

- Christ spoke boldly in the face of opposition (John 7:26)
- Our confidence and boldness come from knowing that the Lord will help us in difficult situations (Hebrews 13:6).
- Peter and John were bold because they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).
- When the Holy Spirit fills your life, you will be able to speak the Word of God boldly. The first Christians prayed for boldness in witnessing and God answered their prayer by filling them with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:29-31).
- When Christ’s love is in us we will be bold because there is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4:17-18).

5. Simple Biographical Study:

The Apostle Paul is a major example of boldness, His entire life seemed to be characterized by this quality;

- As a young Christian in Damascus, he witnessed boldly for Christ (Acts 9:27).
- Everywhere he went, he shared his faith boldly in spite of opposition

<p>and persecution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In Jerusalem (Acts 9:28-29)- In Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:46)- In Iconium (Acts 14:3)- In Ephesus (Acts 19:8)- In Thessalonica (1 Thes. 2:2) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He wrote bold letters to the churches (Romans 15:15).• He asked people to pray that he would continually preach and teach with boldness (Eph. 6:19-20).• His Christian testimony while in prison caused others to speak boldly for Christ (Phil. 1:14).• He even faced death boldly (Phil. 1:20). "In nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (KJV).
<p>6. Memory Verse(s): "So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my Helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" (Heb. 13:6)</p>
<p>7. A Situation or Relationship (where God wants to work on this quality in my life):</p> <p>I have been afraid to witness to my friend Ted, who works with me at the office.</p>
<p>8. My Project: First, I will ask my wife to pray with me about overcoming my timidity in witnessing to Ted. Then, each day this week I will pause before going into the office and ask the Holy Spirit to fill my life and give me boldness to witness to Ted (Acts 4:31).</p>

9. Personal Illustration:

Monday and Tuesday of this week I prayed for boldness to witness to Ted but the opportunity just didn't arise. Tuesday night, I decided that I needed to be more earnest in my prayers so I asked my wife to pray with me specifically for a chance to share my faith with Ted on Wednesday.

Wednesday morning, I paused at the office door before going in and I prayed silently that Ted would sense that I "had been with Jesus" like Peter and John (Acts 4:13). Then I went in and placed my Bible on top of my desk, hoping Ted would recognize it.

During the coffee break, Ted came over to talk to me. He noticed my Bible and said, "Is that a Bible?"

I answered, "It sure is. Have you ever read it?"

"Not lately," he said.

I said, "Well I've been reading it a lot lately and I've discovered some neat things in it," I then shared a brief testimony of what God was doing in my life. Ted seemed mildly interested- at least he wasn't turned off. It's a start, and I thank God for giving me the boldness to go this far.

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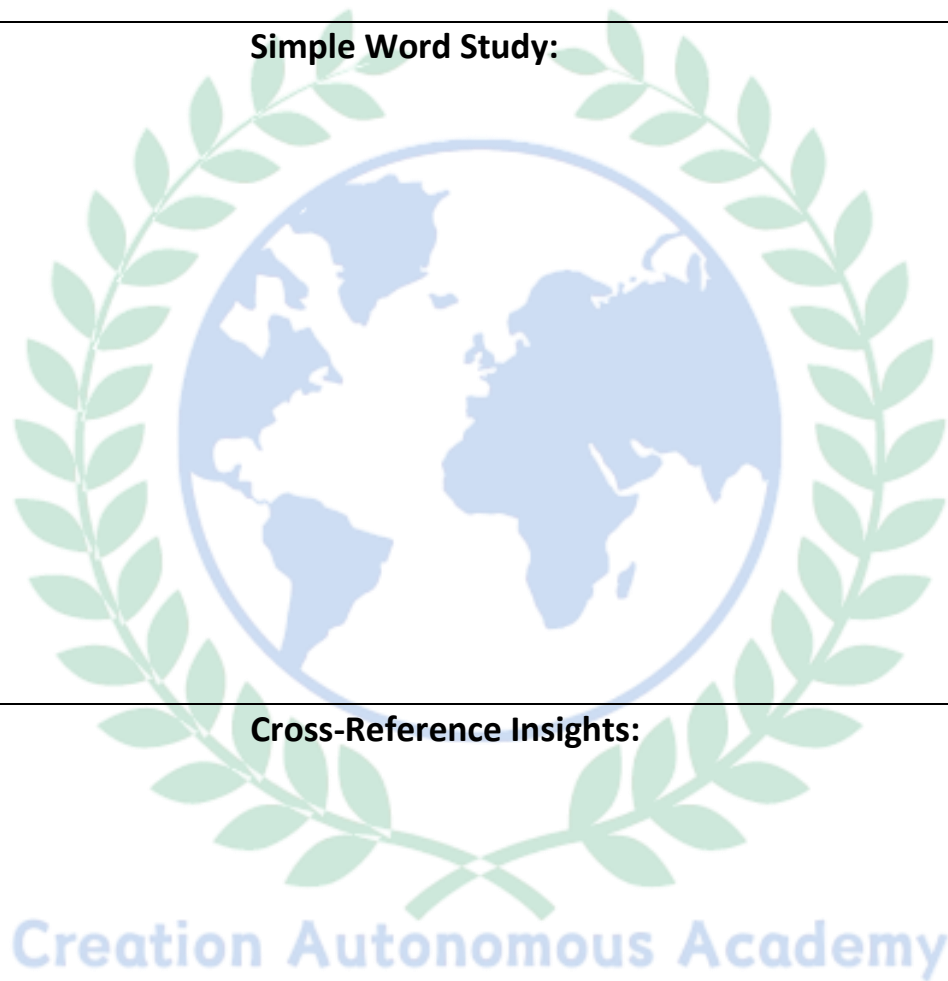
Character Quality Study Form

1. Character Quality:

2. Opposite Quality:

3. Simple Word Study:

4. Cross-Reference Insights:



5. Simple Biographical Study:

6. Memory Verse(s):

7. A Situation or Relationship (where God wants to work on this quality in my life):

8. My Project:

9. Personal Illustration:



Chapter - 8

Inductive Bible Study

Inductive reasoning, or induction, means taking a number of facts and drawing a logical conclusion from those facts. This can be perhaps be more easily understood by comparing induction with deduction.

Induction means first examining various facts and then drawing a logical conclusion from them. While deduction means starting with a statement or idea, and then finding various facts, which prove that the statement or idea is true. Merrill C. Tenny clearly contrasts the two kinds of study: Induction is the logic of discovery, while deduction is the logic of proof.

Three Steps in Inductive Bible Study:-

The inductive study approach has three steps: **observation, interpretation and application.** Irving Jensen in this way has summarized the three steps of inductive Bible study:

The inductive method of Bible study is scientific in its order of procedure:

- 1-It begins with the observable-What do you see here?
- 2-It follows with the interpretative-What dose it mean?
- 3-It pleads for application-How does this affect you?

Taking a close look at these steps, we find that they answer the three key questions of Bible study:

1. Observation

What do I see? Examining the facts is the foundation of inductive Bible study. Observation moves from the general to the specific, investigating the facts in a passage. Good observations are the key to good inductive Bible study. If this step is now done with great care the rest of study will be weak. We are interested only in what the text says, not what we think.

Three Steps of Observation:-

The process of observation can be divided into three steps of study, following the logical sequence. First, we look at the whole, divide that up into its parts, and finally scrutinize the details

Observing the whole:-

The first essential of observing the whole is careful reading. Spending time in the pages of His truth develops our relationship with Christ. If we do this, we are spending time in quiet and concentrated study. There is no substitute for reading.

To have overall grasp of the contents we should read repeatedly, taking time to read the text number of times. We should also read thoughtfully, concentrating on what

we are reading. In order to remember what we read, we should write down our thoughts as we read and study. This is the most effective way to concentrate.

We should also read patiently, taking time to fellowship with God. Irving Jensen writes in his book, Enjoy your Bible:

Where does one find time to read the Bible? Free time is so scarce for most Christians that it is never found. So we must take time to read the Bible, scheduling it at a regular time, if possible, in each day. Someone has said, We ought to have a Medo-Persian hour-an unchanged able hour for our Bible study.

After completing a reading of the text, we should jot down our initial impression. It is at this point we are forming first impressions and whetting our appetite for the contents of the passage. It is like meeting the person for the first time. When we walk away and begin listing in our mind our first impressions of the persons, we are observing that persons. We have not got the complete picture but it is the beginning of coming to understand the person. Does the exercise using Philippians 2:1-11.

Record the major facts:-

Once we have read and recorded our initial impressions, we can go back and look for more. Observation in other words is bombarding the text with questions. The facts can be gathered by answering key questions. The four interrogative words that are listed and explained in the following section are probably the four most important words in Bible study.

Who? Who is speaking and who are the listeners? Who are the characters involved, and what can we learn about them? We should identify all the principle character in the passage.

What? What is happening? Is the passage about events or ideas? What is the main subject, and what are the key words? What is the tone of the passage? Does it reflect joy, sorrow, victory, and defeat? What took place before or after the events described in this passage which might help us understand it?

Where? Describe the location of the action if the passage is a narrative. Where is the author while writing, and where are the recipients? Are there key

geographical locations that need to be identified on a map for us to understand the setting of the text.

When? When are these events taking place? Is the timing significant? At what point in the history of Israel or the church is this event occurring? Is the timing important in the life of the author or the recipients?

Studying the Parts:-

Every portion of scripture, whether dealing with the thoughts or events, has organization. This organization is broken down into divisions or parts. Now we will look how the author organizes his presentation? What is the logical development of his idea? The term structure is defined as the relationship of ideas or action to another within a passage or a book.

Observing the details:-

The final step in observation is the study of details. We are now ready to begin looking for the fine details in a text of Scripture. Perhaps by now, we have been drawn to a key word or an interesting character. It is always fruitful to check the cross-references and consult a concordance. In this step of observation, we will closely examine those intricate gems which give passage so much richness and meaning.

During this step of observation, we are isolating those details in the passage that stand out in our mind-Details that raise questions or need to be more fully explained to be understood. It is during the second phase of inductive Bible study-when doing

Interpretation of passage- that we find the answers to questions now posed. Following is a summary list of questions related to the details of a passage.

Who? (the characters)

- The writer
- The recipients
- The characters involved in the action
- The characters not directly involved in the action
- Special people addressed in the passage

What? (the key truths or events)

- Key ideas
- Theological terms
- Key events

- Important words
- Figures of speech
- Atmosphere

Where? (the geography and location)

- Places mentioned
- Buildings
- Cities
- Nations
- Landmarks

When? (the time factors)

- Date of authorship
- Duration of the action
- When in the church age
- When in the life of Israel
- Past, present, or future?

2. Interpretation

What does it mean? Drawing conclusions based on our study of the facts is the process known as interpretation. It is during this stage that we seek the meaning that the author the text had in mind. It is the science of discovering the author's original meaning as he wrote the scriptures under the interpretation of the Holy Spirit.

Interpretation brings meaning to the facts. Let us consider the contents of the Philippians 2:1-11. Are there several messages? Can we discover more about the meanings of the important words? What do all the facts lead to when brought together?

What is the intent of this lesson: to give insight into the science of interpretation, equipping us with the tools we need to determine accurately the meaning of Scripture.

Whether focusing on a work of art, a poem, a sermon, or a passage of Scripture, there is the logical demand for meaning-the need to answer the question, what is the author or artist trying to say? In the case of Scripture, the ultimate question is, what is God telling me?

Identification with the author is essential to sound Bible study. It enables to recreate the meaning of the message as if he were the writer himself.

In the interpretation of scripture, our objective is driving the message of the writer we are after. And behind the writer stands Jesus Christ Himself,

communicating his truth through his servants. New and wonderful insight into the Scriptures is our goal. We can create this empathy by asking and answering the questions of interpretation.

The science of biblical interpretation is not easy. As Westminster Confession reads, all things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, or alike clear unto all. Charles Spurgeon said, he had to simply knell down and worship God when he faced Scriptures he couldn't understand. Bernard Ramm has said, everything essential to salvation and Christian living is clearly revealed in Scripture.

The science of interpretation is known by the technical term hermeneutics derived from the Greek word *hermeneuo*, meaning, to interpret, to explain, as found in the gospel of Luke. And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained (*hermeneuo*) to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (LK.24:27)

This word is also derived from the name of the Greek god Hermes, the mythical messenger of the gods. It was his task to interpret what the will of the gods was for the people. Thus the term hermeneutics was born- the science of interpretation. It is the science of decoding the message so that it can be plainly understood.

Sound hermeneutics is built on four foundational principles. These four principles form the basis of our understanding of God's message to us through His Word.

- 1- Let scripture interpret Scripture.** First tenet of the Reformation, known in Latin as *Sacra Scriptura sui interpretis* (Sacred Scripture is its own interpreter). The Bible cannot contradict itself. Because God authors the Bible, the message is in complete harmony and agreement with itself.
- 2- Interpret the Bible literally.** The word should be first taken at its face value. During Reformation this concept of spiritualizes and mythologizes came to be known as *sensus literalis*, Latin for the literal sense. The word literal comes from Latin, *littera* meaning letter. Paying attention to the actual words and letters of the text, each having the intended meaning in the usage of the day in which it was written.
- 3- Interpret the Bible grammatically.** The scripture should be interpreted in their natural, literal sense, according to ordinary rules of grammar.
 - A word has only one literal meaning when spoken in a sentence.

-A word's meaning is tied to the sentence by rules of grammar.

-The meaning of the word must be derived from its context.

3. Application

Application is the goal of Bible study. In this part inductive process, we draw out principles from Scripture that should affect our behavior as a Christian. Once we have studied the text, we should allow it to study our lives. Ultimately God intends that the Scripture affect our behavior, not answer all our questions. The Scripture are given “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Application must be considered as the culmination of all our Bible study. In application, we answer the question, “How should I respond?” or “What should I do with what I’ve learned.” The ultimate goal of Bible study is a changed life. During the observation and interpretation stages of Bible study, we study the Word of God, in application; the Word of God studies us.

Application, as it relates to Bible study, can be defined as: “the process of discovering the principles of truth in Scripture that are meant to affect one’s behavior and diligently putting that truth into practice in one’s life.” In the application process, we are summarizing our discoveries and looking for principles to apply to our daily life. Our application should arise naturally out of the passage. These applications should form the foundation of our obedience to Christ.



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Dr. Ram Raj David

Duluvamai, Manikpur, Pratapgarh,
Uttar Pradesh – 230202

Email: drmraraj64@gmail.com



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