

“Cheat Sheet” on How to Effectively Do a Thematic Bible Study

The secret of good Bible study is learning to ask the right questions. In doing a thematic Bible study, you decide on a set of questions to ask about the chosen theme before you look in the Bible. Your questions should be based around the questions: What? Why? When? How? Where? Who?

Definition

The Thematic Method of Bible Study involves approaching a biblical theme with a set of not more than five predetermined questions in mind. You then trace that theme through the Bible or a single book by asking only those questions, summarizing your conclusions, and writing out a personal application.

The reason for limiting the number of questions is that, while a theme (another type of Bible study) may have 100 or more references, if your set of questions get too long you will get bogged down and discouraged.

WHY THIS METHOD IS IMPORTANT

The purpose of this method is to discover what you can about a chosen threme with specific, prepared questions that you will ask of each verse chosen for study. There are some great advantages in using it, and we will include some practical tips for it.

- 1. Choose a Theme to Study**
- 2. List All the Verses You Intend to Study**
- 3. Decide on the Questions You Will Ask**
- 4. Ask Your Questions of Each Reference**
- 5. Draw Some Conclusions from Your Study**
- 6. Write out a Personal Application**

TOOLS YOU WILL NEED

- *Study Bible*
- *Exhaustive concordance*
- *Topical Bible*

TIPS

1. Don't use too many questions.
2. Sometimes ask only *one* questions. Examples:
 - What are the things God hates
 - According to the New Testament, what things should we “endure”?
 - What are the things we should “consider” as Christians?
 - What traits of a fool are given in the book of Proverbs?
 - According to Solomon (in Proverbs), what brings poverty?
3. At times you won't get an answer to every question in every verse. It's OK.
4. If you want to know *everything* God has said about a certain subject in the Bible, you will need an exhaustive concordance. This can be a big project!

SIMPLE STEPS ON DOING A THEMATIC STUDY

Create the questions. For example, if you were doing a study on “Anger in the Book of Proverbs,” you could ask:

- What are the characteristics of an angry man?
- What causes anger?
- What are the results of anger?
- What is the cure for anger?

All four of these questions used the term “What?” but you could have come up with other questions using the other five pronouns: Why? When? Where? Who? How?

IDEAS

1. Knowing God's will. (Look up the word *will* in a concordance, and find the references to God's *will*, *will of God*, *will of the Lord*, *the Lord's will*, and any other related words.) Suggested questions:
 - a. What specific things are God's will?
 - b. Why am I to do God's will?
 - c. How am I to do God's will?
 2. Praising the Lord in the Psalms. Look up *praise*, *adoration*, *thanksgiving joy*.
 - a. Why should I praise the Lord?
 - b. How can I praise the Lord?
 - c. When should I praise the Lord?
- d. What are some results of praising the Lord?