

## How to Study the Bible

September 9 & 12

Dr. Ken Hanna

“*God did not give us the Bible to inform us but to transform us!*” D. L. Moody

“The Bible should be a personal companion for everyone. God intends that all should read and study it. ... It is true that some experts are called to fields of specialization or concentration in biblical studies. ... But the analysis of the Bible passage is still the student’s task, or project. Bible study is an *individual* task for all Christians. They should be growing *personally* in the knowledge of God, and one of the first steps in this progressive growth is that of becoming an *independent* student of the Bible.”

(Irving L. Jensen, *Independent Bible Study*, p. 16.)

A. What we aim to accomplish in this class:

1. Sharpen our Bible reading skill
2. Increase our ability to understand Scripture and apply it to everyday life.
3. Add to our effectiveness and enjoyment of personal Bible study.
4. Our ultimate goal is personal growth through inductive Bible study.

B. Inductive Bible study is concerned with the discovery of truth (uncovering the true, original meaning of the text). It begins by observing the details (facts) of Scripture and pursues them to their logical conclusion (meaning). “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 interpretive—what does it mean? (3) It pleads for application—how does this affect you?” (*Independent Bible Study*, p. 37.)

The text is king! Inductive Bible study demands careful attention to the detail (words) of Scripture, the grammatical structure of the text, and the historical as well as the cultural background of the text. “Induction and deduction are opposite methods. In induction, you first observe, and then conclude. In deduction you begin with a general principle or conclusion, then observe whether the conclusion is true. Stated another way, ‘Induction is the logic of discovery, while deduction is the logic of proof.’” Francis Bacon likened the deductive method to the spider spinning its web out of itself, whereas he compared induction to the bee’s intense engagement in flights from flower to flower to gather its store of honey.” (*Independent Bible Study*, p. 38)

C. What does inductive, transformational Bible study require?

1. A seeing eye, Psalm 119:18
2. An understanding mind, Jeremiah 9:23-24;
3. An obedient heart, James 1:22-24; John 7:17

D. How do we improve our ability to read and understand Scripture?

1. Read prayerfully- 1 Samuel 3:10; Psalm 119:18;
2. Read attentively- concentrate, focus on the text, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
3. Read inquisitively- cultivate an inquiring mind, ask questions, observe detail,
4. Read meditatively- think deeply and personally about the meaning of the text

Let's practice on Romans 5:8,

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners,  
Christ died for us. (ESV)

Write down five to ten things you observe (see) as you read this passage

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Next week: The foundation of Bible study

The Bible is God's word, a revelation from heaven, but it is written in human language. The Bible was written to us and for us and in words and ways that we can understand. The process is first, to discover what the Bible actually says, second, to discover what that means, and third, to make an appropriate transfer of that truth into our everyday life. Next week we will review that process and discover ways to improve our skill at "seeing" what the Bible actually says in order to discover what it means.

Get a head start! Read the following Scripture passages, Hebrews 1:1-2; John 14:25-26; 1 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 Timothy 2:15.

What do these passages tell us, 1) about the process by which God has made Himself known to us and 2) how we can discover or understand that which God has made known?