

# discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living  
Study Guide

## CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

### LESSON 2: STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD – PART 1

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module entitled Christian Disciplines. This series of lessons introduces the disciplines of a Christian life, including prayer, Bible study, as well as fixing our mind on eternal things. This is exciting content that should energize and renew the spiritual life of mature Christians and propel newer Christians into deeper faith. The material is practical in nature, yet focused on the many spiritual rewards of a life devoted to God.

The Student's Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on [www.discipleshipessentials.org](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).

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# CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

## LESSON 2: STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD – PART 1

### WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Have you ever wanted to know what the Bible was saying to you? The purpose of this lesson is to introduce a method of Bible Study that will help you grow in your faith and apply the Word of God to your life!

### JUST SO YOU KNOW...

This lesson teaches a simplified method for inductive Bible study. This lesson comes in two parts. This first lesson deals with observation, and the next lesson discusses interpretation and application. Inductive Bible Study is a method that looks at what the Bible has to say for itself, and it tries to use other portions of the Bible to explain difficult passages. Essentially, Bible Study involves more than just reading a passage of the Bible, but asking specific questions of the text and looking for the answers. These questions will help you understand the text and make life application. This is how we feast on the Word of God – which is God's gift to us!

## GETTING STARTED

1. What is Bible study? What is the difference between reading a book and studying it?

2. Do you believe that studying the Bible is too difficult for most Christians and best left to the trained professionals or that God's Word is given to all of us and God will help us to understand it?



# STUDY

❖ **INTRODUCTION TO INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY:** There are several ways to study the Bible. We can use tools such as concordances or Bible study books which help us in our thinking. We can also use a deductive method which starts with an idea and looks to Scripture to confirm it. The method we will look at today allows Scripture to speak for itself, and lets us gather evidence and observations from the text. This is called the inductive study method.

- What do the following verses tell us about why we should be engaged in studying the Bible, not merely reading it?

Deuteronomy 6:6-7	
2 Timothy 2:15	
Joshua 1:8	

When the Apostle Paul and his friend Silas were traveling and establishing the earliest Churches through their teaching, there were many in Jewish Synagogues who did not trust their teaching. Paul and Silas taught them all that Jesus had come to fulfill in the Old Testament, which they should know well. Read Acts 17:10-11. What was different about the people in Berea? How can we be like this?

❖ **THREE STEP INDUCTIVE STUDY METHOD:** The three steps to inductive Bible study method are:

- **Observation:** This involves observing the text by asking **"What does it say?"**
- **Interpretation:** This involves interpreting the message or the meaning of the text by asking **"What does it mean?"**
- **Application:** This involves applying the message of the passage to your life, by asking **"What does it mean to me?"**



- ❖ **OBSERVATION:** Every quality Bible study starts with good observations. Interpretation depends directly on the nature of the observations made. Our natural tendency is to move immediately into interpretation without making proper observations. Observation deals only with the text, not the meaning of the text. The process of observation asks questions of the text such as what, how and why. It also looks for repeated words, themes or ideas as well as grammatical construction.

Who?	Who is writing? Who is mentioned? Who is the audience?
What?	What is discussed? What is happening? What is the time frame?
Where?	Where is this occurring?
When?	When did this take place?
Why?	What reasons are given? <i>WARNING: Many "why" questions are interpretation.</i>
How?	How did it happen?
Repeated Words	Are there any words, phrases or ideas that are repeated?
Cause/Effect	Cause and effect means if "this" happens, then "that" will result.
Questions	Does the writer ask any questions?
Preposition/ Conjunction	What words connect key ideas and relationships? How are phrases linked together? (examples – but, and, therefore...)
Verb tenses	Is it past, present or future tense?
Literary Form	Is it a poem, a story or a parable? Is it factual or figurative?
Atmosphere/ Mood	Does the author seem forceful, sad, excited, concerned, etc.?
Comparisons/Contrasts	Does the author make any comparisons? Any contrasts between things?
Commands/ Promises	Are there any commands for us to obey? Any promises for us to claim?

- ❖ **OBSERVATION PRACTICE:** We are going to practice observing a passage of God's Word together. Open your Bible to [Luke 19:1-10](#). Then as you read, fill out the chart. A few observations are made for you already.

Bible Verse	Observation
1. Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.	Jesus was travelling. His destination was actually Jerusalem (vs. 28). He didn't plan to stay long.
2. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich.	
3. He was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature.	
4. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.	He really wanted to see Jesus so he planned ahead and made a way to see him. Zacchaeus expended effort and time to seek Jesus.



<p>5. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him,</p> <p>"Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today. "</p>	
<p>6. So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.</p>	
<p>7. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."</p>	
<p>8. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."</p>	<p>He stood up. He called Jesus Lord. He called attention to the decision he was making. Half of what he owned must have been a lot of money. Repentance involves a change in attitude and action. True repentance involves restitution.</p>
<p>9. And Jesus said to him,</p>	
<p>"Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.</p>	<p>Zacchaeus was saved that day. When did salvation come? The same day that Jesus came. Zacchaeus was not the literal son of Abraham so this must have some other significance.</p>
<p>10. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."</p>	

❖ **THE STUDY OF GOD’S WORD:** You can study any passage of God’s Word by asking yourself questions about it, and writing those down. You will become more comfortable studying God’s Word as you practise. It might be helpful to find others to study with. Then you’ll be able to learn from one another and help each other understand. What do you do when you don’t understand a passage of the Bible?

- The first thing to do is pray for understanding. God wants to reveal Himself to us, and to do so through His Word.
- After prayer, find other portions of the Bible that talk about the same event, topic or idea. Other Bible tools – if available to you – will help her. These could be concordances or topical handbooks. If none of these are available, keep an eye out for these ideas in your regular Bible reading.



- Talk to others who have studied longer than you. It is always best to study the Bible for ourselves, but we can be helped out by the study of others.
- Take your time as you study, and don't rush. Write down what you learn so that you won't forget and will be able to share with others.

### IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Inductive Bible study allows Scripture to speak for itself, and lets us gather evidence and observations from the text.
- ❖ We should be engaged in studying the Bible in order to grow in our faith.
- ❖ Inductive Bible Study involves observation, interpretation and application.
- ❖ Observation involves asking questions of the text, and observing what it says and how it says it.
- ❖ When we do not understand God's Word we should pray for understanding, look at other passages of the Bible for clarification or ask someone who has studied for longer.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to discern for ourselves what the Word of God is saying? Why learn how to study the Bible when we could listen to others talk about the Bible, or read books about the Bible?

2. What are the benefits of an inductive Bible study method? What Bible study methods have you used in the past?