

# Inductive Bible Study

## Phase #1 - OBSERVATION – Getting the Big Picture

We want to give all the home groups a head start in learning how to study the Bible for themselves. We really like the 3 Phase Process of “Observation, Interpretation and Application.”

Observation is always the first phase. You aren’t asking what it means, but you’re asking what is being said. You are trying to identify the context and ask lots of questions – some may not be answered yet.

**Step 1** – Begin on your knees (John 16:13-15). Ask God to lead you into all truth – to be able to understand and apply what is written.

**Step 2** – Identify the Context

- You must begin with a thorough evaluation of the context
- A good Bible student learns how to interpret Scripture in the light of its context.
- Context = “that which goes with the text”. The context can be found in the surrounding words, phrases and sentences of a passage.
- We must carefully observe what is repeated in the text and see how it relates.
- Read **2 Corinthians 12:8** by itself. What is the “it” that Paul begged God to take away? We read the previous and following verses and get a better idea. Even then, we don’t specifically know. The context demands that we keep it general.

**Step 3** – Observe the Obvious

- Look for the things that are easy to see
- E.g. Jigsaw puzzle – always easiest to start with the 4 corners and the border.
- Look for the obvious facts, details or ideas of the passage you are reading.

**Step 4** – Deal with the Text Objectively

- Let the text speak for itself
- Don’t just seek words that make you feel good. Read the entire text and expect God to speak to you (correct you, inspire you, convict you, awe you, etc.)

**Step 5** – Read with a Purpose

- It happens by asking questions of the text
- Be a journalist – use the “5 W’s and an H” (who, what, when, where, why, and how)
  - **Who** wrote it? Who said it? Who are the major characters? To whom is the author speaking? About whom is the author speaking?
  - **What** are the main events? What are the major ideas? What are the major teachings? What are these people like? What is his purpose in saying that?
  - **When** was it written? When did this event take place? When will it happen? When did he say it? When did she do it?
  - **Where** was this done? Where was this said? Where will it happen?
  - **Why** was there a need for this to be written? Why was this mentioned? Why was so much or so little space devoted to this event or teaching? Why was this reference mentioned? Why should they do such and such?
  - **How** is it done? How did it happen? How is this truth illustrated?

E.g. - **JOHN 7:1** - *“After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for he was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill him.”*

Who is this about?	Jesus
What was He doing?	Walking
Where was he walking?	Galilee, not Judea
Why was He not in Judea?	Because the Jews wanted to kill him
When was this action taking place?	After these things
What things?	Whatever happened in the previous verses

Don't feel that you have to find all 5 W's and an H every time you question a passage, because they're not always going to be there. Simply read the text and answer all the questions you can.

Remember, Observation is all about.... Observing! Don't try to interpret, understand or apply what you've read. Not yet! First do a good job at observation.

### **ASSIGNMENT – 2 Timothy 1:1-11.**

Read 1-2 verses at a time and write down areas of context and then practice all 5 steps of Observation as well as you can. Try to not look at the study notes already in your Bible. Let the text speak for itself. Just ask the right questions for now and answer what you already know just by reading.

(When you get to the next phase of “Interpretation” you can start to read other people's notes and opinions.)

### **2 Timothy 1:1-11 New International Version**

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

<sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

<sup>3</sup>I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. <sup>4</sup>Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup>I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. <sup>6</sup>For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup>For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

<sup>8</sup>So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, <sup>9</sup>who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup>but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our

Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. <sup>11</sup>And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

## **2 Timothy 1:1-11 - New Living Translation**

<sup>1</sup> This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> I am writing to Timothy, my dear son.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. <sup>4</sup> I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again.

<sup>5</sup> I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. <sup>6</sup> This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. <sup>7</sup> For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

<sup>8</sup> So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. <sup>9</sup> For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. <sup>10</sup> And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News. <sup>11</sup> And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News.