

Basics of Bible Study

3 DISCIPLESHIP



The Discipleship Ministry
“Reaching the World One Person at a Time”

DISCIPLESHIP



The Discipleship Ministry

The Discipleship Ministry exists to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ the Son of God to “*Make Disciples of All Nations*” by equipping Christians to *Win, Build and Send people for Christ!**

The Discipleship Ministry

PO Box 880277

Pukalani, Hawai'i 96788

U.S.A.

e-mail: DiscipleMinistry@aol.com

Website: www.discipleshipministry.com



Coordinator - Kenson Kuba

Kenson Kuba is a graduate of Multnomah School of the Bible. He served on the staff of **Campus Crusade for Christ** for 12 years - including six years in Papua New Guinea where he lived with his wife, **Gail**, and their three children. Today he works as a Water Microbiologist on the island of Maui in Hawaii where he resides with his family and 4 dogs.

**Campus Crusade for Christ, Int'l*

Discipleship 3

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I. Introduction to Bible Study

Introduction

We are about to embark on one of the most exciting journeys anyone can experience! No, I'm not talking about a trip up the Highlands Highway into the mountainous interior of Papua New Guinea (*though that, too, is exciting ... trust me!*), but a trip into the *heart* and *mind* of God as we learn to *explore His Word!* But, as in all journeys, before we begin our adventure, we must first make necessary preparations. These include the following:

Having The Right Heart Attitude

1. A New Heart ~ In order to truly understand the Bible, a book of Spiritual Truths written by the *Spirit of God*, the Bible student must possess the **Author (the Holy Spirit)** in his heart to be his *Guide and Teacher!* He must be "*born again*" by God with a *New Heart!* (1 Corinthians 2:13-14)

2. A Hungry Heart ~ The main requirement to studying God's Word is not a seminary degree, but *an intense desire to know God's Will.* Studying God's Word is hard work! It requires patience and perseverance! Unless you really desire to know God's Will, you will find Bible Study laborious and, God forbid, boring! *When you passionately desire to discover God's Will in His Word, the discipline that it requires will come (super) naturally!*

3. An Obedient Heart ~ Along with a strong desire to Know God's Will is the passion to **Do God's Will.** It is fairly easy to gain academic knowledge of Biblical facts and events, but only a desire to do God's Will turns that *knowledge* into *wisdom* (John 7:17). How badly do you want to do God's Will? That, more than most other things, will determine how much we will get out of God's Word!

4. A Humble Heart ~ Discovering God's Truths requires *humility*, with a *willingness to learn from others and to change our own thinking* should it be found in error. **Only God is infallible!**

Having The Right Conviction

1. The Bible is God's Word ~ The Bible is Inspired by God, both in its message and in its very words. By *Inspiration*, I mean more than that the authors themselves were inspired to write, but that *God Himself sovereignly worked through the various human authors and their unique personalities to record exactly what He wanted to communicate to mankind.* We can be assured that when we read the Bible, we are reading God's very Word to us! (2 Timothy 3:16)

2. The Bible Conveys God's Message ~ The Bible consists of 66 books, written by approximately **40 different human authors**, over a span of **1500 years** and in **varying places.** And yet, it clearly communicates a *single message* without contradiction: **God's Plan to Rescue Man from Sin and Transform Him into a Child of God!**

Study the information on the next page to gain a better understanding of the books in the Bible.

Book	Author	Date	Summary
Old Testament			
Genesis	Moses	1450-1410 BC	The Beginning of the World , Man's Fall, Israel's origin.
Exodus	Moses	1450-1410 BC	God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses.
Leviticus	Moses	1450-1410 BC	God's Laws for Israel.
Numbers	Moses	1450-1410 BC	Israel's 40 years of Wandering in the Sinai.
Deuteronomy	Moses	1410 BC	Moses' Last Words to Israel.
Joshua	Joshua	1400-1370 BC	The Israelites' Conquest of Canaan Led by Joshua.
Judges	Uncertain	1050-1000 BC	Heroes of Israel: Post Conquest & Pre- Kingdom.
Ruth	Uncertain	1000 BC	Story of Ruth, a Moabite and Member of David's Line.
1 Samuel	Samuel	930 BC	The First Two Kings of Israel: Saul and David.
2 Samuel	Samuel	930 BC	Reign of King David.
1 Kings	Jeremiah	550 BC	Reign of King Solomon and the Divided Kingdom.
2 Kings	Jeremiah	550 BC	Elijah, Elisha, Assyrian and Babylonian Conquest, and Exile.
1 Chronicles	Ezra	450-425 BC	Reign of Kings Saul and David.
2 Chronicles	Ezra	450-425 BC	Reign of King Solomon, Divided Kingdom and Exile to Babylon.
Ezra	Ezra	456-444 BC	Israelites Return to Jerusalem to Rebuild Temple.
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	445-425 BC	Israelites Return to Rebuilds walls of Jerusalem .
Esther	Uncertain	465 BC	Esther, a Jewess, Becomes Queen of Persia.
Job	Uncertain	Uncertain	Job, a Righteous Man, Undergoes Extreme Tribulation.
Psalms	Various	Various	A Collection of 150 Psalms and Prayers.
Proverbs	Solomon & Others	950-700 BC	A Collection of Wise Sayings of King Solomon and Others.
Ecclesiastes	Solomon	935 BC	King Solomon Answers the Question of Meaning in Life.
Song of Solomon	Solomon	965 BC	Songs that Express the Love Between a Man and His Bride.
Isaiah	Isaiah	740-680 BC	Prophecies of God's Judgment and Redemption of Israel.
Jeremiah	Jeremiah	627-585 BC	Prophecies of God's Judgment of Israel.
Lamentations	Jeremiah	586-585 BC	Expressions of Anguish Over Jerusalem's Destruction.
Ezekiel	Ezekiel	592-570 BC	Prophecies of Ezekiel During Exile in Babylon.
Daniel	Daniel	537 BC	Story of King Nebuchadnezzar & Prophecies of Daniel.
Hosea	Hosea	710 BC	Hosea's Broken Marriage a Picture of Israel's Betrayal of God.
Joel	Joel	835 BC	Prophecy of God's Coming Judgment.
Amos	Amos	755 BC	Amos Speaks Out Against Social Injustice.
Obadiah	Obadiah	840/586 BC	Obadiah's Prophecy Against the Edomites.
Jonah	Jonah	760 BC	Jonah's Reluctance to Prophesy Lands Him in a Fish.
Micah	Micah	700 BC	Micah Prophesies for Social Justice and True Worship.
Nahum	Nahum	663-612 BC	Fall of Assyria and God's Sovereignty.
Habakkuk	Habakkuk	607 BC	"Why Do Evil People Prosper?"
Zephaniah	Zephaniah	625 BC	Zephaniah Prophesies Doom for Jerusalem.
Haggai	Haggai	520 BC	Haggai Encourages Israel to Rebuild the Temple.
Zechariah	Zechariah	520-518 BC	Zechariah's Prophecies Concerning the Coming Messiah.
Malachi	Malachi	450-400 BC	Malachi Confronts Israel with Her Sins Against God.
New Testament			
Matthew	Matthew	60's AD	The Life of Christ Written for a Jewish Audience.
Mark	Mark	50's AD	The Earliest Account of the Life of Christ.
Luke	Luke	60 AD	Account of Christ's Life Written for a Non-Jewish Audience.
John	John	85-90 AD	Unique Account of Christ's Life Emphasizing His Deity.
Acts	Luke	61 AD	Account of the Origin and Growth of the Christian church.
Romans	Paul	58 AD	Paul's Explanation of the Gospel.
1 Corinthians	Paul	56 AD	Paul's Response to Problems of Division & Immorality.
2 Corinthians	Paul	57 AD	Paul's Follow-up letter to the Corinthian Church.
Galatians	Paul	49/55 AD	Paul's Response to Legalism in the Church.
Ephesians	Paul	61 AD	Paul's Teaching on the Church and Unity Among Christians.
Philippians	Paul	61 AD	Paul's Letter of Encouragement to the Philippian church.
Colossians	Paul	61 AD	Paul Writes About the Supremacy of Christ.
1 Thessalonians	Paul	51 AD	Paul's Letter of Encouragement and Christ's Return.
2 Thessalonians	Paul	51 AD	Paul Explains More About Christ's Return.
1 Timothy	Paul	63 AD	Paul Encourages Timothy as a Church Leader.
2 Timothy	Paul	66 AD	Paul Encourages Timothy in his Final Letter..
Titus	Paul	65 AD	Paul's Letter of Encouragement to Titus, a Church Leader.
Philemon	Paul	61 AD	Paul Asks Philemon to Forgive Onesimus, his runaway slave.
Hebrews	Uncertain	64-68 AD	Jesus Completes What the Old Testament Began.
James	James	45-50 AD	The <i>Proverbs</i> of the New Testament.
1 Peter	Peter	63 AD	Enduring Persecution and Suffering.
2 Peter	Peter	66 AD	False Teachers and the Return of Christ.
1 John	John	90 AD	Walking in the Light, Loving One Another and Assurance.
2 John	John	90 AD	John Encourages Love One for Another.
3 John	John	90 AD	John's Warning to Gaius to Beware of a Dictatorial Leader.
Jude	Jude	70-80 AD	Jude, Jesus' Brother, Warns Against False, Divisive Teachers.
Revelation	John	90's AD	The End of the World and the Return of the King!

Having The Right Tools

I. A Good Bible Translation: *Few of us have the training and ability to read the Bible in its original languages (Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament).* We must therefore depend on translators to bring the Bible into our own language. The question that is often raised is *“Which translation is the best?”* If you expect to receive an answer from me, you will be disappointed. *I will not recommend nor endorse a specific translation*, but it may help if you understand the various principles used in Bible translation work.

a. Literal ~ Translators using this principle seek to translate *each original word* into the *closest equivalent word in the reader’s language*. The *strength* of this method is that it is a word for word translation of the Bible giving the reader *a close rendering of the literal words of the original writings*. The *weakness* of this principle is that the translation can be stiff and difficult to read, and that words cannot always be found to translate the original words of the Biblical writings. For example, the one English word “love” is used to translate two Greek words in the New Testament. But unless you are acquainted with the Greek text, there is no way of telling which Greek word is being translated. *This problem is seen in the conversation between Jesus and Simon Peter in John 21:15-17. (Examples include: The New American Standard Version, The King James Bible and the Revised Standard Version)*

b. Dynamic Equivalence ~ Translators using this principle seek to translate, not the literal words, but the *meaning* these words convey. The *strength* of this principle is that the translation is *more readable* in the reader’s language. The *weakness* of this principle is that the Bible student who cannot understand the original languages, is now further distanced from the original words. An example of this is the Greek word “sarx” which translates as “flesh” in English. It is used repeatedly by Paul in Romans chapter 8. However, the translators of the New International Version, using the principle of Dynamic Equivalence, express what they believe is Paul’s intended meaning with various English words and phrases such as *“sinful nature”* (verses 3, 5, 9, 12 & 13) and *“sinful man”* (verses 3 & 6). *(Examples include: The New International Version & Today’s English Version or Good News Bible)*

c. Paraphrase ~ Translators, taking the principle of **Dynamic Equivalence** further, seek to translate the original language into their *modern colloquial equivalent*. The *strength* of this principle is that the translation is *highly readable*. The *weakness* is that the Bible student is now further distanced from the original words by the translators’ interpretation of the original writings. *(Example: The Living Bible)*

So which type of Bible translation is the best for Bible Study? The answer is **all three!** You should *use a Literal translation as your primary Study Bible*, and *other Bibles to compare Scripture* to gain a better understanding. Ask your **Pastor** or **Bible Teacher** which Bible they would recommend. The **Christian Bookstores** can also provide help in choosing a good Study Bible.

2. A Notebook ~ *Studies should always be written out* to reinforce what is learned as well as **to keep a record for future reference**.

3. Reference Materials ~ There are many reference books that aid in a study of the Bible, including **Bible Dictionaries, Lexicons, Encyclopedias, Concordances and Commentaries**. These will be covered in subsequent lessons.

Having the Right Method

Finally, we come to the purpose of this Study. You may have attended at one time a Bible Study where a Scripture passage is read and then each person in the group is asked to share what that passage means to them. What often happens is that there are as many interpretations of the passage as there are people in the group. Each person brings their own personal experiences and therefore sees the passage in their own subjective and biased way.

But the question must be asked. “Which interpretation is right?” Why? Because *each Bible author had only one intended meaning* when he wrote the Scripture. Our task as Bible students is not to discover what *we* think the Scripture means, but to discover what the *original author* meant when he wrote that Scripture many centuries ago! We accomplish this by following a logical, methodical, careful and objective system of study. **Following a Method protects us from interpretations that are affected (or infected?) by our own biases and feelings, and allows us to share and compare our interpretations with others in an objective manner.**

The Three Steps of Bible Study:

I. Observation:

In this step we discover **What the Scripture SAYS**. This requires more than a casual reading of the passage. *The Truths of Scripture* are sometimes like *shells on a seashore* that can be easily seen and collected. But more often, they are like *precious gems* hidden beneath the surface, requiring careful excavation and a determined excavator. The extra effort yields valuable lessons and precious truths. *We will learn how to sift through the words of a passage in order to discover what the writer is saying.*

2. Interpretation:

Here, we will discover **What the Scripture MEANS**. It has been said, *“There is only one interpretation but many applications.”* Our task will be to discover that *one* interpretation, and our primary tool will be an inquisitive mind asking relevant questions. *It is imperative that we discover the correct interpretation, for if our interpretation is in error, so too will be our applications.*

3. Application:

Finally we will discover **What the Scripture MEANS TO US**. The Bible was not given to fulfill our curiosity, but to *transform* lives! God is in the business of changing lives, and He does it primarily through the ministry of His Spirit and His Word, transforming hearts, minds and wills, and conforming lives to the Living Word, Jesus Christ! *We will learn how to apply the Scripture in practical ways to our lives.*

With that said, let us begin our journey!

2. Get the Big Picture

Introduction

A crime has been committed. As *Chief Criminal Investigator*, your mind races with a multitude of questions. But as you approach the crime scene, you stop, look around, and do what you know must always be done first in order to solve the crime. **You get the big picture!** You observe everything carefully to make sure nothing is missed in your upcoming investigation, and that all items are accounted for and observed where they lie in relation to each other, *in order that your future investigation and conclusions can be supported by the evidence!*

Studying the Bible is very similar to investigating a crime scene. *The first step in Bible Study is to get the big picture;* to see the forest before the trees! We must observe the passage in its *entirety* in order to better understand the individual parts!

Structural Diagrams

One of the best ways to see a Scripture passage in its entirety is to arrange it in a **Structural Diagram**. This allows the student to *see* all the individual parts, and how they *relate* to one another. Follow the principles below when developing a **Structural Diagram**:

- 1. Read the Scripture passage as many times as necessary to understand what it is saying.**
- 2. Separate the passage into *Significant Clauses* which may range from a single word to an entire phrase.**
- 3. Arrange the Clauses by *indenting subordinate ones under primary ones* in order to create a *visual picture* showing how the thoughts relates to each other.**

It is important to note that ***there is no perfect Structural Diagram***. You do not need to be an expert in grammar to develop an outline of a Scripture passage. It is simply a matter of *identifying Significant Clauses* and *arranging* them in a way that ***visually shows*** how they relate to one another. The resulting outline allows you to **see the relationship of the various words and phrases** that make up the Scripture passage, and forms an organized structure on which to do further Observation and, later, Interpretation.

Observe the following Structural Diagram of Mark 4:35-41.

Structural Diagram of Mark 4:35-41

Mark 4:35-41

- 35 That day
 when evening came,
 he said to his disciples,
 "Let us go over to the other side."
- 36 Leaving the crowd behind,
 they took him along,
 just as he was,
 in the boat.
 There were also other boats with him.
- 37 A furious squall came up, and
 the waves broke over the boat,
 so that it was nearly swamped.
- 38 Jesus was in the stern,
 sleeping on a cushion.
 The disciples woke him and said to him,
 "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 39 He got up,
 rebuked the wind and
 said to the waves,
 "Quiet! Be still!"
 Then the wind died down and
 it was completely calm.
- 40 He said to his disciples,
 "Why are you so afraid?
 Do you still have no faith?"
- 41 They were terrified and asked each other,
 "Who is this?
 Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

The Structural Diagram is a visual tool that allows us to **see** the relationship of the various words and phrase in a passage. Notice how it helps your eyes focus on each **Clause** more than if the passage was written out normally. Also notice that punctuation marks often indicate the beginning and end of a new Segment. Try to indent *Clauses* of equal emphasis to the same extent. And remember: **There are no perfect Structural Diagrams**. It is simply your way of being able to see the *Big Picture* and how each individual part fits together in the whole.

Now it's your turn. On the next page, create a Structural Diagram of Mark 8:22-30. Use your own Bible for this exercise.

Mark 8:22-30

3. Just the Facts, Ma'am!

Introduction

Continuing our scenario of you as a Criminal Investigator, after getting the **Big Picture** of the crime scene, you must resist the temptation to draw any conclusions until your investigation is complete and **all** the facts are in. In Bible Study, it is tempting to jump to conclusions and begin interpreting and applying the passage before we really observe all the parts. But until a careful and thorough investigation of all the details has been done, there is a good chance that our interpretation will be inaccurate and our applications erroneous!

Make no mistake about it, the thoroughness of our Observation will determine the accuracy of our Interpretation and the correctness of our Applications!

How and What to Observe

1. Read, Read, Read! *Each time you read the passage, try to see something you missed the last time. Notice every word!* In your **Structural Diagram**, take out your *Pencil* and *circle, underline, frame and draw arrows* to clarify your Observations. Noted Bible teacher, *Kay Arthur*, suggests using *Colored Highlighters* to identify key details in the passage. *No matter how you choose to do it - do it!*

2. Look for:

Key Words ▶ Words that are especially important to the meaning of the passage. (*Words that answer the Questions: Who? What? When? Where? How?*).

Connectives ▶ Words that connect ideas and phrases (*but, and, or, because, therefore, with, in order that, if*). These indicate reasons, conditions, comparisons, contrasts and conclusions.

Grammatical Construction

Verbs ▶ note tense and number (*plural or singular*)

Nouns and Pronouns ▶ note names, places, relationships

Adverbs and Adjectives ▶ note how and what they describe

Repetition or Progression of Words, Ideas or Phrases

Advice, Warnings or Promises

Cause and Effect Relationships ▶ *"If ... then."*

Reasons ▶ an explanation or justification of a decision, command, action, etc.

Questions ▶ note what is being asked, and whether the question is *rhetorical*.

Contrasts ▶ the association of *opposite* things to *emphasize* or *compare* differences. Note the presence of the word **"but"** which usually signifies a contrast.

Comparisons ▶ the association of things *similar*. Note *Similes* indicated by the word *"like"*, and *Metaphors* which provide a more direct and stronger association (*ie. "I am the bread of Life"*).

Emphatic Statements ▶ statements that reveal *emotions* and *significance*.

Important! All of your Observations must come **directly** and **only** from Scripture. Be careful to see everything that is there, but beware of seeing something that isn't there!

Observations of Mark 4:35-41.

Mark 4:35-41

- 35 That day
when evening came,
he said to his disciples,
"Let us go over to the other side."
- 36 Leaving the crowd behind,
they took him along,
just as he was,
in the boat.
There were also other boats with him.
- 37 A furious squall came up, and
the waves broke over the boat,
so that it was nearly swamped.
- 38 Jesus was in the stern,
sleeping on a cushion.
The disciples woke him and said to him,
"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 39 He got up,
rebuked the wind and
said to the waves,
"Quiet! Be still!"
Then the wind died down and
it was completely calm.
- 40 He said to his disciples,
"Why are you so afraid?"
Do you still have no faith?"
- 41 They were terrified and asked each other,
"Who is this?"
Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Observations

"evening" = Key Word describing When!
 "he" & "disciples" = Who!
 Key Statement of Christ to disciples

"They took Him along" = Interesting description of relationship
 between disciples and Christ.
 "in the boat" = Where!
 "other boats" = description of surroundings

"furious squall" = adjective describing the intensity of what
 happened
 Descriptions of the gravity of the situation.

Description of what Jesus was doing through all this.
 Description of what the Disciples did.
 Disciples' emphatic statement to Christ.

Jesus' response to Disciples and the situation.
 "rebuked the wind and ...waves" = What! & How!

Result of Jesus' actions.

Question by Christ to Disciples.

Disciples' response to what transpired.

Notice how circles, frames, underlines and arrows are used.

Return to your Structural Diagram of Mark 8:22-30. Observe what the author is saying in that passage. Don't hesitate to use a pencil/pen to identify key words, phrases or ideas expressed in the passage.

Don't forget to use your Mind as well as your eyes. Think of yourself as a *Sherlock Holmes* or a *Lt. Columbo*! Nothing must escape your notice! *Every detail* must be noted and thought through, **for your ability to accurately Interpret the passage depends on it!**

4. Rules to Interpret By

Introduction

***“There is only One Interpretation
but Many Applications!”***

“The primary purpose of interpretation is to discover what the author meant by what he said, to discover his purpose and message. You should try to put yourself in his place and recapture his thoughts, attitudes and emotions. You should try to recreate in your mind the experiences of the author to discover why he wrote what he did in a certain historical situation for a specific purpose. Also you should try to understand the people for whom he was writing.”

(From the Joy of Discovery by Oletta Wald; page 41)

Bible Interpretation

In Interpretation, we will be piecing together the parts of the puzzle we discovered in our Observations in order to answer the question, **“What does the passage mean?”** It is important to keep in mind that *“there is only one interpretation”* to a passage. Because of this, it is crucial that the Bible Student be meticulous in his study, while at the same time, remaining humble and willing to adjust his interpretation as his understanding of the passage grows. ***We must always be on guard against a prideful heart which can cause us to be closed to a more correct interpretation, especially when suggested by others!*** How can we ensure the accuracy of our interpretations? By establishing Principles with which to Interpret Scripture!

These Principles encourage an objective and methodical search for the *meaning* of a passage. They enable us to remain *objective* in arriving at an Interpretation. The Interpretation can then be analyzed according to these same Principles by others and, if necessary, be revised!

Let us first begin with a few terms that are associated with the study of Scripture. *The science of Bible Interpretation and the study of the Principles it involves is called **Hermaneutics**.* The application of these Principles in our study of the Bible is called **Exegesis**. And teaching others the Interpretation we have arrived at is called **Exposition**. Therefore, ***Bible teachers use Hermaneutics to Exegete Scripture in order to present Expository lessons.*** As we examine these Principles, remember:

***“the primary purpose of interpretation is
to discover what the author meant by what he said”***

We must always guard against trying to make the Bible say what WE want it to say!

The Principles of Bible Interpretation

I. Always Interpret Scripture in Light of Its Context.

We must always interpret a passage in relation to the verses before and after it. The word “**context**” means *with (con) the text*. Failure to follow this Principle will result in erroneous interpretations since the meaning of the words are almost always linked to their context. For example, did you know that the Bible states “*There is no God*” (Psalm 14:1)? But a study of this statement’s context shows that “*The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’*” You can see how context can make a **BIG** difference!

But how much of a passage’s context should we examine? The answer is **as much as you are able**, for the more of the context you know, the less chance of an erroneous interpretation of the passage. Consider the following:

- At Minimum** ~ Read the verses **prior to** and **after** the passage you are studying.
- Better Yet** ~ Read the **entire Chapter** in which the passage is found.
- Even Better** ~ Read the **entire Book** in which the passage is found.
- Best** ~ Read the **entire Bible**.

2. Interpret Scripture by Scripture.

This Principle is related to the first and states that **all Interpretations of Scripture must correlate with the teaching of the Bible as a whole**. It also means that **whenever Scripture interprets another Scripture, that Interpretation is correct**. When interpreting any passage, first see if the Bible already contains an interpretation of that passage!

Example: *Jesus Explains The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:2-20)*

3. Interpret According to the Proper Definition of the Words.

A correct understanding of a Scripture passage begins with *a correct understanding of the words* that make up that passage. This can be done in various ways:

- a. **A Dictionary** will provide various meanings of a word to choose from. **A Bible Dictionary** is especially useful in providing definitions specific to Biblical words. **Strong’s Concordance** also includes brief definitions of *Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic* words. If you are able, purchase reference books that will enable you to work in the original languages of Scripture. If possible, take a class in *Greek* or *Hebrew* to familiarize yourself with the original languages.
- b. **The Context** of a word is vital to understand its meaning [see #1 above].
- c. **A Concordance** directs us to other verses where *that same word* is used. Bible Students do well to **examine every use of the word, first by the same author and then by other Bible authors to understand how it is used through out Scripture**.

4. Interpret According to Correct Grammar.

Though for many people *grammar does not denote a favorite subject in school*, for the Bible Student, it is important that the rules of grammar be noted and followed. **Interpretations must conform to grammatical rules.** If you are in need of a refresher course, purchase a grammar book and study it. Train yourself to recognize the *subject* and related *verbs* of a sentence - the *direct object*, *adjectives* and *adverbs*. Make sure you are able to correctly identify *pronouns* and their *antecedents*, as well as analyze *verbs* and their *tenses*. All of this, and more, are crucial to obtain correct interpretations.

5. Interpret According to the Historical, Geographical and Cultural Background

One of the great challenges of a Bible Interpreter is to bridge the gap between the **time, place and culture** of the Biblical authors and our own. A common mistake of many Bible Students is to read the Bible from a modern mind set while ignoring the fact that the original authors lived in a different time and place. We must *research* and *recreate* that time and place in order to better understand what the author meant when he wrote the Scripture.

Bible Encyclopedias, Reference Books and Commentaries can teach us much about the *History* and *Culture* of a passage. **Bible Atlases** help us to *visualize the Geographic surroundings*. These Reference Tools help us bridge the gap that separate us from the original authors and help us to better understand the true meaning of the Bible.

6. Interpret According to the Normal Meaning of the Words Unless That Meaning is Clearly Inadequate

Another common mistake of Bible Students is to *spiritualize* or find a *deeper [secondary]* meaning besides the *literal* meaning of a passage. It is tempting to seek hidden meanings in Scripture, but unless the passage indicates this, it is always best to interpret a passage according to its literal or normal meaning. Instances when it becomes necessary to find a secondary meaning are:

- 1. Metaphors and Similes**
- 2. Parables or Allegories**
- 3. Poetic Passages Using Imagery**
- 4. Prophetic Passages Using Symbolic Language**
- 5. Hyperboles**

(Though this principle seems to violate the "one interpretation" principle, it really does not. In the instances cited above, a secondary meaning is indicated by the literary genre or device, but even then, there is still one correct interpretation!)

Bible Reference Resources:

1. Bible Dictionaries ~ Ranges from single to multi-volume sets.

Vines Expository Dictionary

Do It Yourself Hebrew and Greek by Edward W. Goodrick - *Introduction to the original languages and how to use reference books to analyse them*

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament by Harris, Archer and Waltke - *excellent two volume dictionary of Old Testament words using the Strongs Concordance numbering system to locate specific words.*

Dictionary of New Testament Theology edited by Colin Brown - *excellent three volume dictionary of New Testament words giving Classical, Septuagint and New Testament usage of Greek words.*

Wuest's Word Studies - *Four volumes with clear explanations of New Testament words.*

2. Concordance ~ An *exhaustive Concordance* will give you *every* reference for every word in the Bible. Note that Concordances are written *according to the various Bible Translations*. *Buy the same version as the Bible you use for Bible Study.*

Strongs Concordance - *excellent exhaustive concordance with a numbering system to aid in determining the meaning of the word in its original form.*

Youngs Analytical Concordance - *excellent concordance for tracing a word's usage in other passages.*

3. Bible Encyclopedias ~ These are indispensable for general, historical and cultural knowledge.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)

The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible

4. Bible Commentaries ~ *Commentaries*, which contain interpretations by various authors, should be used *only* to reference how others interpret a passage you are studying, and *never* to become dependent on the interpretations of others! *Available in Single and Multi Volume Sets*

5. Bible Atlas ~ Excellent reference to visualize the physical setting and location of the events in a passage.

6. Reference Books ~ These include references on Bible customs, Theology, or Topics of interest to the study you are doing.

ie "The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times" by Ralph Gower

7. Books on Hermeneutics ~

"How to Understand Your Bible" by T. Norton Sterrett

"Protestant Biblical Interpretation" by Bernard Ramm

8. Bible Study Software ~ There are many excellent Software that combine many reference tools as well as versions of the Bible in one program. This greatly increases our ability to search and analyze Scripture with incredible savings in the time utilized.

Visit your local Christian Bookstore for other selections in the categories above. Ask your Pastor for advice on which books to purchase for your personal library!

5. That's Not What I Meant!

Introduction

What would you think if you wrote a “Dear John letter” to make it clear to an admirer that you are *not* interested in a serious relationship, only to have that person misinterpret your letter to mean the complete opposite? *It would be exasperating!* Maybe you’ve already experienced something like this? Well, just as your letter would carry a *single message*, so the Scriptures have only one interpretation. Remember the principle: **“There is only One Interpretation but Many Applications!”**

Continuing our illustration of the Crime Investigator, the crime scene has been mapped and photographed, and the pieces of evidence identified. Now to solve the crime! *The Investigator’s most important tool is his mind and his ability to find meaning and significance in the things he observes!* That is what sets a Lt. Columbo apart from the rest! But how does he find meaning and significance in the evidence? *By asking critical questions!*

The Quest for Meaning

The search for meaning involves asking *the right questions*. The questions below are designed to help us discover the meaning and significance of Scripture.

Determine Their Meaning:

What does this *word* mean?

What does this *phrase* mean?

Is this word or phrase to be interpreted *literally* or *spiritually*?

Determine Their Significance:

What is significant about this word or phrase?

What is significant about this verb tense or this connective?

Why did the author use this word? Why did he say it this way?

Determine Any Implications:

What is implied by the use of this word or phrase?

Determine the Key Words, Verses or Ideas.

Which words, verses or ideas express the purpose of the author?

Why do they?

Use your Observations and Reference Materials to answer your questions. *Don’t feel you have to answer every question. It is better to have no answer than to have the wrong answer!*

Interpretations Questions for Mark 4:35-41

Mark 4:35-41

- 35 That day
when evening came,
he said to his disciples,
"Let us go over to the other side."
- 36 Leaving the crowd behind,
they took him along,
just as he was,
in the boat.
There were also other boats with him.
- 37 A furious squall came up, and
the waves broke over the boat,
so that it was nearly swamped.
- 38 Jesus was in the stern,
sleeping on a cushion.
The disciples woke him and said to him,
"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 39 He got up,
rebuked the wind and
said to the waves,
"Quiet! Be still!"
Then the wind died down and
it was completely calm.
- 40 He said to his disciples,
"Why are you so afraid?
Do you still have no faith?"
- 41 They were terrified and asked each other,
"Who is this?
Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Questions:

- What is significant about it being "evening"?
- What is the significant about Jesus' instruction?
- Key Statement: Jesus' will expressed.
- How far is the "other side"?
- Why does Mark say the disciples "took (Jesus) along" with them in the boat?
- What kind of boat was it?
- What is the significant about "other boats" being with them?
- What is a "furious squall"?
- Are these storms common?
- What is significant about the situation?
- What is significant about how Jesus is described?
- What does the disciples' question imply?
- What is significant about Jesus' actions?
- What is significant about what resulted?
- Key verse: The reason behind this experience.
- Why does Jesus raise these questions?
- What were the disciples supposed to trust in?
- What is significant about the disciples' response?

In the search for a passage's meaning, there is no end to the questions that can be raised.

In fact, *the more questions asked, the more information gained, and the better your interpretation will be.* Don't hesitate to ask about anything and everything your Observation has uncovered. But *don't be distracted from your **primary goal**, and that is **to discover what the author meant by what he wrote.** Every question you raise must bring you closer to that goal!*

My Interpretation of Mark 4:35-41

The purpose of Mark 4:35-41 is to reveal Jesus' primary goal in His discipleship ministry: **the development of faith in His disciples' lives** (Key verse: Mark 4:40). The trip across the Sea of Galilee (Mark 2:1; 4:1 and Atlas), a trip of 8-15 miles, was Jesus' classroom where He is about to give a lesson on **Faith**. The lesson begins with Jesus' instruction for them to "*go over to the other side*" of the lake, a significant statement.

The text says that the disciples "*took Him along, just as He was, in the boat.*". Normally it is Jesus taking His disciples along, but here, *the disciples are taking the lead*. There is an air of *confidence* among the disciples, four of whom were professional fishermen on this very Lake (Mark 1:16-20). They were in their element, familiar with their surroundings ... been there, done that. But then the unexpected happens. A "*furios squall*", not an uncommon natural phenomenon where strong winds sweep across the eastern wilderness and down the cliffs, striking the surface of the lake and creating a sudden turbulence (Bible Encyclopedia), came up and strikes the boats with such fury that the boats are in danger of sinking.

To make matters worse, it is *evening* (4:35) adding to the danger the disciples feel they are in. Interestingly, and almost unbelievably, Jesus is asleep on a cushion in the stern. He is not anxious nor bothered by the storm swirling around Him. The disciples, however, have had enough and wake Jesus with the accusation "*don't you care if we drown?*". Dr. Howard Hendricks suggests that the implication is "*at least you can help us bail out!*". Their urgent plea only accentuates the seemingly dangerous situation of the moment, especially in light of the fact that, as noted, four of the disciples were professional fishermen!

Jesus awakens and with nary an effort simply *commands* the wind and the waves to cease and desist, which they immediately do! But what bothers Jesus far more than a "*furios squall*" at night in the middle of the lake is His disciples' lack of Faith! He scolds them with the questions, "*Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?*" The implication is that by then, they should have had Faith! Why? Because they were eyewitnesses of Jesus' miracles (Mark chapters 1 & 2) in which he demonstrated His power and authority over the physical and spiritual forces time and again. A study of Jesus' healings reveals that by the authority of His spoken Word, demons and sickness cease (Mark 1:24-27; 41-42). Therefore, when Jesus speaks and says that they are going "*to the other side*", **they are going to the other side!** The object of our Faith is **Christ**, with all His *Authority* and *Integrity*! No matter what may come up, Christ's Words will prevail!

The disciples, unfortunately, may be in the boat, but they have missed the boat, as they query one another "*Who is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him?*" Commanding demons is one thing, but nature? No way! That seems to be their sentiment as they perhaps shrink away with fear from the Lord, and maybe spend the rest of the trip huddled on one side of the now calm boat while Jesus returns to sleep on the other (*my imagination*).

Return to your Structural Diagram of Mark 8:22-30 and create Interpretation questions. Jot these down on your work sheet. Then write out your interpretation of that passage and what you believe the author (Mark) intended it to mean on the back of the sheet.

6. So What?

Introduction

When Christ left His throne in Heaven and entered the world of Man, John described it this way. **“The Word became flesh.”** (John 1:14). **Jesus fleshed out the Word of God!** It is as if *God’s Word* is the *genetic code (genome)* and Jesus is the *physical manifestation* of that code (*phenome*). God is still in the business of fleshing out His Word, but now it is through the lives of His children. *You and I have the privilege and responsibility of allowing God to incarnate His Word through our lives!*

The Main Objective in Application is to “*flesh out*” God’s Word in our lives. *Unless Scripture impacts and changes our lives, all of our work in Observation and Interpretation is in vain.* God’s Word was not given to satisfy our intellectual curiosity, but to transform our *minds, hearts and wills*, and to conform us to Christlikeness. Unless this occurs, Scripture says we are like people who gaze in a mirror, see our *unkempt appearance*, but then walk away *without doing anything about it!* (James 1:22-24) Numerous Scripture echo God’s promise to bless those who obey Him! (Deuteronomy 29:9; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; John 14:21; James 1:25; 1 John 2:17) *Why go through all the work of discovering God’s Will and miss out on the blessing by not obeying it!*

**“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.
Do what it says!”
James 1:22**

Scripture teaches much on foolishness versus wisdom. The *foolish person* is one who *knows the right thing to do and doesn’t do it*, while the *wise person knows the right thing to do and does it!* Application is what divides the foolish from the wise!

Be sure of this, that a Knowledge of God’s Word by itself does not make one wise. You can be an expert in Biblical Truth, and even possess degrees to prove it. But unless that Truth is lived out through your life, it is only head Knowledge. *You would be smart and foolish at the same time!* God is not impressed by how much we Know, but by how much we *Trust and Obey His Word* in our lives.

**Spiritual Wisdom =
Knowing God’s Word
Trusting God’s Word
Incarnating God’s Word**

Application Acrostic

The popular Acrostic (SPACE) has been used by many to reveal areas of personal Application from Scripture.

Sins ~ *Are there Sins I need to confess?*

Promises ~ *Are there Promises for me to claim?*

Attitudes/Actions ~ *Are there Attitudes/Actions I should adopt or avoid?*

Commands ~ *Are there Commands I ought to obey?*

Examples ~ *Are there Examples for me to follow?*

Plus

Truths ~ *Are there Truths to believe?*

Work through each item to see if they point out any applications to apply to your life.

If there are any Sins to Confess - Confess It!

If there are any Promises to Claim - Claim It!

If there are any Attitudes or Actions to Adopt or Avoid - Do It!

If there are any Commands to Obey - Obey It!

If there are any Examples to Follow - Follow It!

If there are any Truths to Believe - Believe It!

Applications from Mark 4:35-41

Applying the Acrostic SPACE to Mark 4:35-41 points out the following Applications:

Sins	▶ Lack of Faith in Christ and His Word.
Promises	▶ None given in the passage.
Attitudes/Actions	▶ Avoid the Disciples' lack of faith and Adopt Christ's Attitude of Trust in God.
Commands	▶ None. (<i>Note: Not every Command or Promise in Scripture can be applied to our lives. Some are given to specific persons in the Bible and apply to them alone.</i>)
Examples	▶ Follow Jesus' example of Faith in God.
Truths	▶ Believe that Christ is able to do all He says He would. Believe that Christ has authority over all things.

Use the Acrostic SPACE to find points of Application in your study of Mark 8:22-30.

Application Principles to Live By

Another way to apply Scripture to our lives is to discover **Principles in Scripture** that can be applied to our lives. Every **Principle** must meet the following **Standards**:

1. Application Principles are **Universal Truths Transcending Culture and Time**.
2. Application Principles **Must Be Clearly and Completely Supported by Our Observations and Interpretations**.

Application Principles From Mark 4:35-41:

Mark 4:35-41

- 35 That day
when evening came,
he said to his disciples,
"Let us go over to the other side."
- 36 Leaving the crowd behind,
they took him along,
just as he was,
in the boat.
There were also other boats with him.
- 37 A furious squall came up, and
the waves broke over the boat,
so that it was nearly swamped.
- 38 Jesus was in the stern,
sleeping on a cushion.
The disciples woke him and said to him,
"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 39 He got up,
rebuked the wind and
said to the waves,
"Quiet! Be still!"
Then the wind died down and
it was completely calm.
- 40 He said to his disciples,
"Why are you so afraid?
Do you still have no faith?"
- 41 They were terrified and asked each other,
"Who is this?
Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"

Principles

1. **Our Greatest Strengths Often Become Our Worst Weakness. (4:36-38)**
2. **Jesus is Not Blown Away by the "Storms" in Our Lives. (4:37-39)**
3. **Jesus Has Authority Over the Things that Swamp Our Lives (4:39)**
4. **Jesus Does Not Want Us to Have Fear, but to Have Faith in Him Instead. (4:35, 40)**
5. **What Jesus Says, He Does! (4:35)**

When developing Application Principles, remember to observe the standards stated above. And be open to having others analyse your Principles for error using the Bible Study Method and Principles.

The truth in these Principles, when based on Scripture, can be used to renew our minds in order to transform our lives.

Develop Application Principles from Mark 8:22-30.

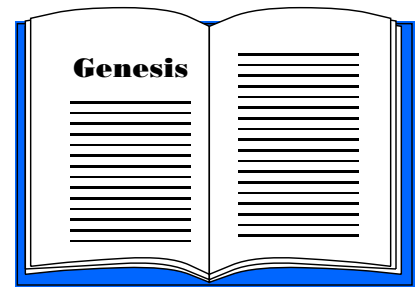
7. Book, Character & Topical Studies

Introduction

The Bible can be studied in a variety of ways, from a methodical study of an **Entire Book**, to a comprehensive study of a specific **Bible Character**, to a thorough study of a **Bible Topic**. No matter which is chosen, the *Principles of Bible Study* still apply. **Consider the following when undertaking Book, Character or Topical Studies.**

Book Study

A Book Study involves studying through an Entire Book in the Bible. This is the best way to learn God's message in an entire book and to learn His Will for us through that book.



Preliminary Study:

The Human Author ~ *Getting to know the author* helps us understand his perspective of what is shared in the book. *For example*, although Matthew and Luke both wrote about the life of Christ, because Matthew was a Jew and Luke a Gentile, their Gospels reflect these different points of view.

The Historical Setting ~ *Understanding the historical background* of the book gives us its context in relation to the surrounding events in history. *For example*, the Prophetic books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Isaiah were all written at various times when the surrounding nations of Assyria, Babylon and Persia were rising and falling, all impacting the nation of Israel.

The Dates of the Book ~ Knowing the Dates gives us an understanding of the time involved. *For example*, knowing that Israel remained in Egypt for 400 years between the time of Joseph and Moses gives us an appreciation of why the Israelites wanted to return to Egypt. As far as they knew, Egypt was their only home, a place of security even though it was also a place of slavery for them!

The Purpose of the Book ~ Most study Bibles will include an introduction to each book that gives the *Purpose* of the book. The *Purpose* helps us to understand what the author's main message is, and becomes the hub that ties his thoughts together.

Steps to Studying a Book:

I. Read Through the Entire Book (*in one sitting if possible*). Gain a feel for the **overall message** of the book. This will be especially helpful to understand the **context** of the passages we will be studying.

2. Read Through the Entire Book a Second Time. This time, make a **chart** of each Chapter listing the **topics** covered in that chapter. This list will help you to see all the parts of the book as a whole. It will also help you to see the progression of the ideas in the book, and how the author presents his message.

Example:

Ephesians 1

Greetings 1:1-2

Our Position in Christ 1:3-14

Paul's Prayer 1:15-23

Ephesians 2

Our Identify Before Christ 2:1-3

Our Salvation in Christ 2:4-10

Our Unity in Christ 2:11-22

3. Starting From the Beginning of the book, select Scripture passages that contain complete thoughts or events. Many modern Bibles already break chapters down into sections, usually indicated by subtitles.

4. Study Each Selected Passage using the *Bible Study Principles and Method* taught in the preceding Lessons of this study book. *Keep accurate notes of your Structural Diagram, Observations, Interpretations, Scriptural Principles and Applications. for Future Reference, as well as Personal Accountability.*

5. Share the Notes of Your Study with someone who is familiar with the Bible Study Principles and Method to develop **accountability and protection from error.**

6. Apply all that God teaches you through His Word!

Character Study

A Character Study involves *carefully studying through the entire Life of a Bible Character* in order to learn God's lessons through that person's life.

Steps to Studying a Bible Character

1. Select a Bible Character you would like to study.

2. Using an Exhaustive Concordance, locate every passage that mentions this Character.

3. Read Through the Passages and their Context several times to gain a good overview of this Character's life.

4. Copy these Passages in sequence so that you can see and study them as a whole.

5. Make a chart of the Main Events in the Character's Life listing them as Scripture relates them. This list will help us to see the Life and all its events as a whole. It will also help us to see the **progression** of this Character's Life and how God works in and through it.

6. Study Selected Passages containing complete thoughts or events using the Principles and Method of Bible Study. *Keep accurate notes of your Structural Diagram, Observations, Interpretations, Scriptural Principles and Applications.*

7. Make a List of the Spiritual Truths and Principles taught by the Passages. This list will be what the Bible teaches about this Character's Life.

8. Share the Notes of Your Study with another who is familiar with these Principles and Method in order *to develop accountability and protection from error.*

9. Apply all that God teaches you through His Word!

Topical Study

A Topical Study involves *a careful and thorough study of a Specific Topic addressed by Scripture.* These may be *Theological* in nature, such as a study of *God, Christ, Salvation, Christ's Return, Miracles, Sin*, etc., or they may be General topics of interest such as *Parenting, Marriage, Forgiving Others*, etc. *The Bible addresses nearly every aspect of our lives, so there is almost no limit to what can be studied.*

Steps to Studying a Bible Topic

1. Select a Topic you would like to study.

2. Using an Exhaustive Concordance, locate *every verse* that mentions this *Topic*. A **Topical Concordance** is especially helpful to direct us to related verses that speak about our selected Topic.

3. Read Through the Passages and their context several times to gain a good overview of what the Bible teaches about this Topic.

4. Copy these Passages on a separate sheet so that you can see and study them as a whole.

5. Study Selected Passages using the principles and methods of Bible Study. *Keep accurate notes of your Structural Diagram, Observations, Interpretations, Scriptural Principles and Applications.*

6. Make a List of the Spiritual Truths and Principles taught by the Passages. This list will be what the Bible teaches about the Topic.

7. Share the Notes and Results of Your Study with someone who is familiar with these principles and methods in order to develop *accountability* and *protection* from error.

8. Apply all the Truths and Principles that God teaches you through His Word!

8. It's Not What You Know ...

Introduction

You know the saying ... *"It's Not What You Know, It's What You **Do** with What You Know!"*

There is much wisdom in that statement, for unless we apply what we learn, we are not much better off than before we learned it! *And having learned the Principles and Method of Bible Study, it is now time to utilize them!* There are many ways that Bible Study can be applied. These include:

Personal Study

Every Christian should not only have a Personal Bible Reading program, but also a **Personal Bible Study** regimen. There is nothing quite like diving into the Scripture for yourself, researching God's Truths in His Word and discovering His Will for your life! Too many Christians depend solely on a teacher to *"feed"* them God's Word, limiting their intake of Scripture. This can stunt spiritual growth and fruitfulness! So consider the following in order to make **Personal Bible Study** a part of your spiritual regimen!

- ▶ **Commit yourself to a Personal Study of God's Word.**
- ▶ **Set a Goal to study a selected Book, Character or Topic.**
- ▶ **Determine a Place and Time for your Personal Bible Study.**
- ▶ **Keep a Journal of your study for future reference as well as to share with others.**

Group Study

One of the best ways to study the Bible is with others. There are many benefits to this, some of which are listed below.

- ▶ **Studying the Bible with others can make Bible Study more *interesting*.**
- ▶ **Studying the Bible in a Group can keep us more *motivated* than if done alone.**
- ▶ **Group Bible Study *enhances* our Observations, Interpretations and Applications as we *share* and learn from one another.**
- ▶ **Studying with others offers greater protection from *erroneous Interpretations*.**
- ▶ **Studying the Bible with others keeps us *accountable* to Apply what we learn.**

When forming a Bible Study Group, make sure everyone has learned to implement the Method and Principles for Bible Study. *Join with Christians with whom you are willing to be accountable toward, and whom you are willing to hold accountable.* Everyone must be willing to be Fair, Objective and Humble - willing to receive correction as well as give it. They must be willing to ***discuss, not argue,*** the Truths of Scripture.

Together, decide the Type of Study to be done: Topical, Character or Book. Then set a Time and Place, and enjoy one another's fellowship and contribution!

Actively Listen to Lectures and Sermons

Use the Bible Study Principles and Method *while listening to Lectures and Sermons.* By doing this, you will not only confirm (*or deny*) what you are learning, but also gain more from the passage. (*Acts 17:11*)

- ▶ **Listening Actively keeps your mind alert to what the speaker is saying.**
- ▶ **Listening Actively results in a better understanding of the Bible passage compared to listening Passively.**

Train Others to Study God's Word

Consider teaching others how to Study the Bible. As more Christians learn to study the Word for themselves, they will experience the rewards of discovering God's Truths and Will for their lives! And *you* will have played an important part in their spiritual growth! Simply use this studybook and take them through it step by step. By training a small group, you will also see the same benefits listed in the *Group Bible Study* section above.

- ▶ **Teaching others to study the Bible helps you to become a better Bible Student as you relearn the Principles and Method of Bible each time you teach it!**
- ▶ **Teaching others helps to fulfill the Great Commission by getting them in the Word.**

Creating Bible Lessons

If you are asked to teach from the Bible, *the Bible Study Principles and Method can be used to develop lessons to share with others.* The process of explaining Scripture directly from the Bible text is called **Expository Bible Teaching**. Two methods are described below: **Verse by Verse** and **Thematic**.

There is some disagreement on which form of Expository Teaching is better. There are supporters on both sides, some *adamant* in their belief. But which ever form you adopt, **the primary goal of Expository Teaching is to explain the meaning and the application of the Word of God in such a clear, accurate and relevant manner as to cause the hearer to believe and obey its Truth.** Anything short of this , no matter the form utilized, is unacceptable.

No matter the Method used, God's main concern is that we Trust Him, and utilize all that we have learned to serve Him. As we come to the end of this Studybook, remember ...

***"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded;
and from the one who has been entrusted with much,
much more will be asked."***

Luke 12:48b

Excellent Resource:

"How to Prepare Bible Messages" by James Braga

Copy the Worksheets in the back and start the exciting journey of discovering hidden treasures from God's Word! Make it a lifelong habit!

Verse by Verse Expository Lessons

Verse by Verse Lessons explain each verse in sequence. This ensures a thorough explanation of the individual verses as well as the whole of Scripture.

1. **Prayerfully** determine your lesson **Subject**.
2. Decide which **Type of Study [Book, Character or Topical]** is best for this Subject.
3. Do a **thorough** study of the Subject using the **Principles of Bible Study**.
4. Keep **accurate notes** of all your **Observations, Interpretations and Applications**.
5. Arrange your notes (**Observations O Interpretations O Applications**) so that you can share them in a **clear and logical** manner.
6. When sharing your Lesson, explain the verses **in succession** by sharing your **Interpretations and Applications**. Be careful of sharing too much and **boring** your listeners!
7. Include relevant **illustrations or anecdotes** to **enlighten** your listeners to the Truths of the text.

Note: When teaching God's Word, make sure you are filled with the Spirit of God. **Be enthusiastic!** One of the worst things you as a Bible Teacher can do is make the Bible boring! [Enthusiasm comes the Greek words for in (en) and God (Theos). Those who are "in God" will be *Enthusiastic!*]

Example of a Verse by Verse Lesson

Mark 4:35-41

- 35 That day
when evening came,
he said to his disciples,
"Let us go over to the other side."
- 36 Leaving the crowd behind,
they took him along,
just as he was,
in the boat.
There were also other boats with him.
- 37 A furious squall came up, and
the waves broke over the boat,
so that it was nearly swamped.
- 38 Jesus was in the stern,
sleeping on a cushion.
The disciples woke him and said to him,
"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 39 He got up,
rebuked the wind and
said to the waves,
"Quiet! Be still!"
Then the wind died down and
it was completely calm.
- 40 He said to his disciples,
"Why are you so afraid?
Do you still have no faith?"

Verse by Verse Lesson

verse 35

This passage begins at the close of an exhausting day of ministry, with Jesus and His disciples in a boat just off the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Because of the crowds, He has been forced to teach from the deck of the boat (4:1), and now, at the end of the day, He gives instructions to His disciples that, instead of going to the shore where the crowds were, they should go to the other side of the lake, a voyage of about 8 miles. Mark notes that evening had come, and perhaps before them lies the soft glow of the sky from the sun which has dropped below the horizon. In a few minutes there will be nothing before them but a foreboding darkness, and the sounds of lapping waves on the bow of the boat. They are heading into this darkness toward the opposite bank of the lake. And in this uncertain environment is heard the confident instruction of our Lord, "Let us go over to the other side."

verse 36

In verse 36, we read an interesting phrase. "They took Him along in the boat". There is a sense here of the disciples' confidence. They are now in charge. They are taking the lead. Why? Because at least four of them are in their element. They are literally in their "own back yard" having grown up as fishermen on this very Lake! Now it's their turn to show Jesus what they can do! Maybe they had even suggested that He relax and get much needed sleep as they took care of things. Little did they know what was about to transpire. There were no radars or weather satellites back then. But they should have known by experience the unpredictableness of the Lake and the dangers that can come up, especially during a night crossing. Perhaps their experience and confidence caused them to drop their faith in God and put it in their own skills. That's a recipe for trouble!

Thematic Expository Lessons

Thematic Lessons seek to organize Individual Truths in a Passage around a central Theme. These *Truths* are stated in such a way as to *support* the central Theme of the Passage, and are organized in a clear and logical manner.

- 1. Prayerfully determine your Lesson Subject.**
- 2. Decide which Type of Study [Book, Character or Topical] is best for this subject.**
- 3. Do a thorough Study of the Subject using the Principles of Bible Study.**
- 4. Keep accurate notes of all your Observations, Interpretations and Applications.**
- 5. Determine the Main Theme of the Scripture Passage being studied.**
- 6. Determine the Truths found in the Passage that support the Theme and which are supported by your Observations and Interpretations.**
- 7. Arrange these Truths in a clear and logical manner.**
- 8. Present your Lesson by explaining these Truths by your Interpretations.**
- 9. Include illustrations or anecdotes that help make the Truths of Scripture relevant to your students.**
- 10. Share the practical Applications and Principles that apply to each Truth.**

Example of a Thematic Lesson

Mark 4:35-41

- 35 That day
when evening came,
he said to his disciples,
"Let us go over to the other side."
- 36 Leaving the crowd behind,
they took him along,
just as he was,
in the boat.
There were also other boats with him.
- 37 A furious squall came up, and
the waves broke over the boat,
so that it was nearly swamped.
- 38 Jesus was in the stern,
sleeping on a cushion.
The disciples woke him and said to him,
"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"
- 39 He got up,
rebuked the wind and
said to the waves,
"Quiet! Be still!"
Then the wind died down and
it was completely calm.
- 40 He said to his disciples,
"Why are you so afraid?
Do you still have no faith?"

Theme: Developing Faith

The first Principle we learn from this Passage is that ...

1. Developing Faith Requires an Encounter with Our Failures. (4:36-38)

In God's economy, things that we consider ourselves strong or experts in often turn out to be the opposite! Here, in this Passage, the disciples are given an opportunity to display their expertise as fishermen on the very Lake they grew up sailing and fishing on. They were literally in their "own back yard"! Never mind that evening had come, and the safe light of the sun was now being engulfed by a foreboding darkness hiding the eight miles of water separating Jesus and the disciples from the opposite bank. The disciples were in their element. By practice, they knew what they were doing, and for once, they didn't need Jesus' care. Perhaps in their confidence, they had suggested to Jesus to take it easy, to relax, to get some sleep. No problem, they had everything under control! No one can accuse God of not having a sense of humor, for when you think you're finally on solid ground, it caves in on you! Why? In order to show us that the only solid ground is Jesus Christ! The disciples' failure will become their strength!

2. Developing Faith Requires an Encounter with "Storms" We Cannot Control. (4:37-39)

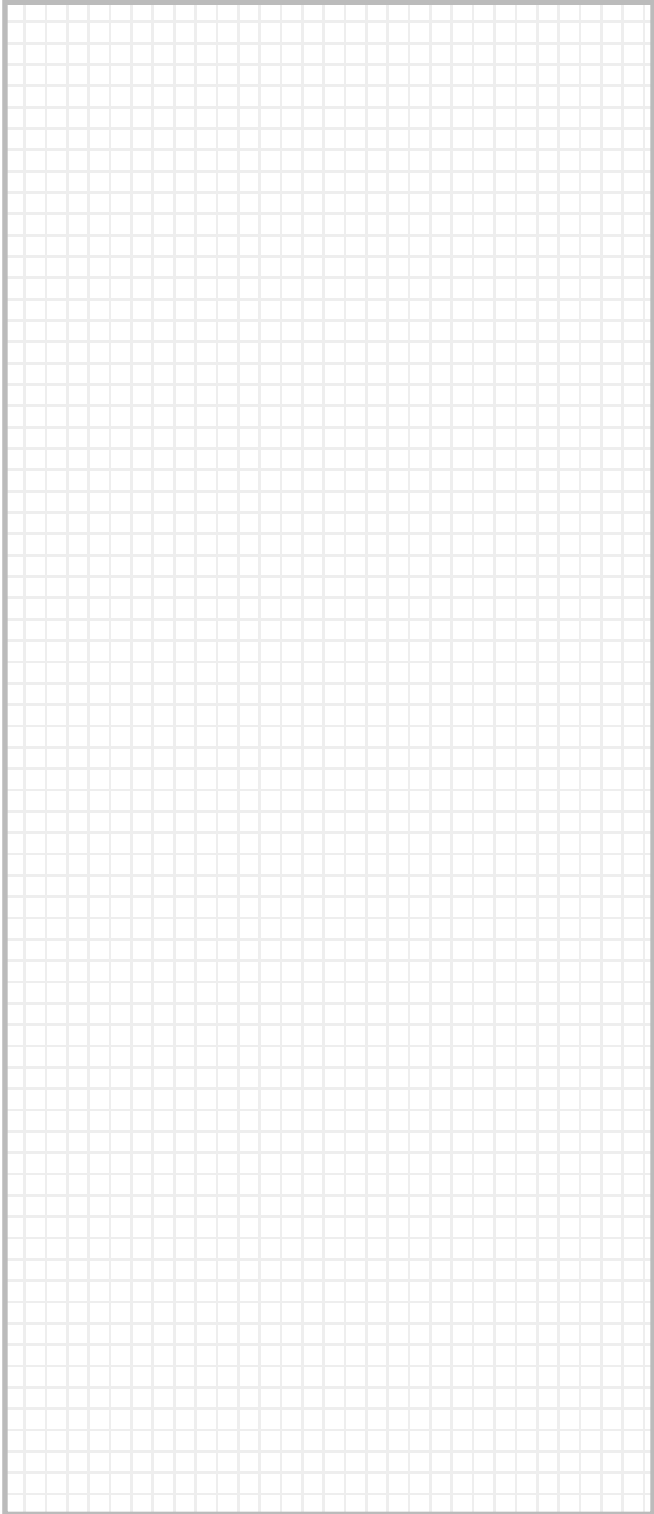
3. Developing Faith Requires an Encounter with the One Who Controls the "Storms". (4:39)

Bible Study Worksheets

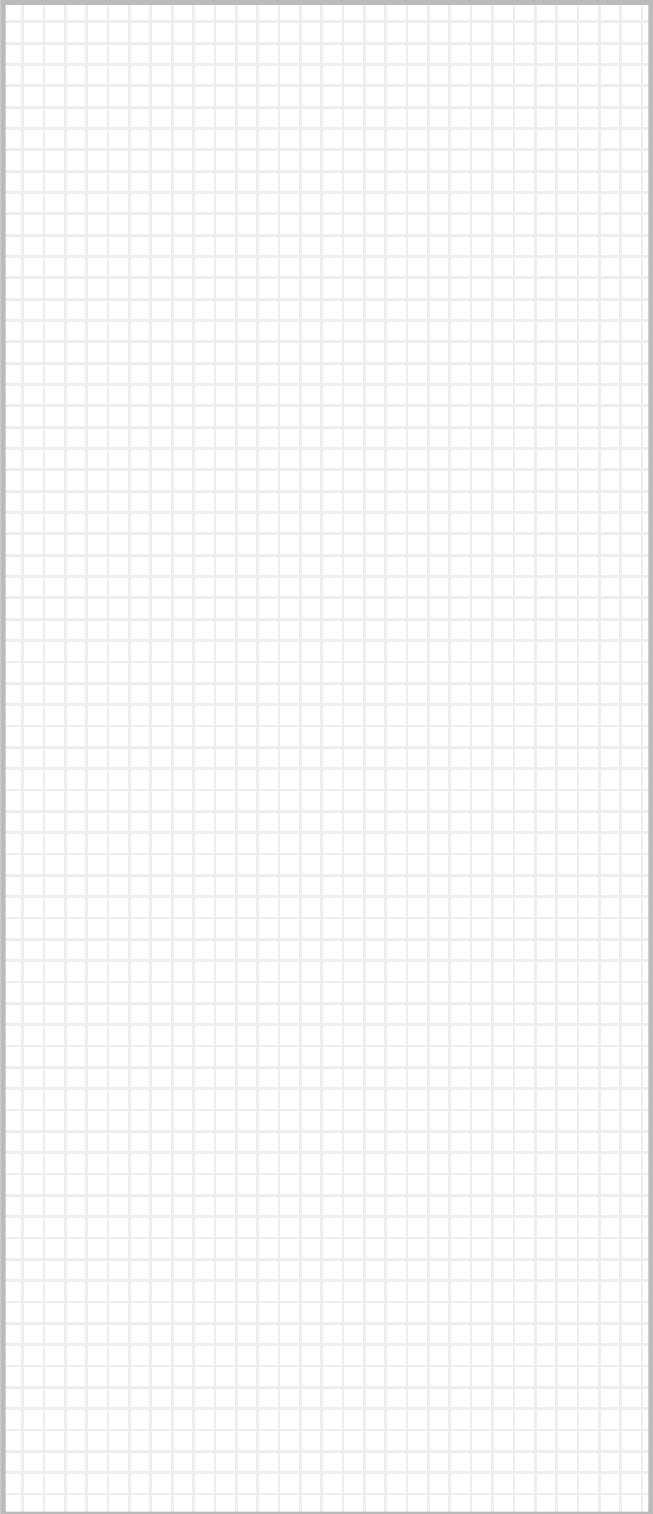
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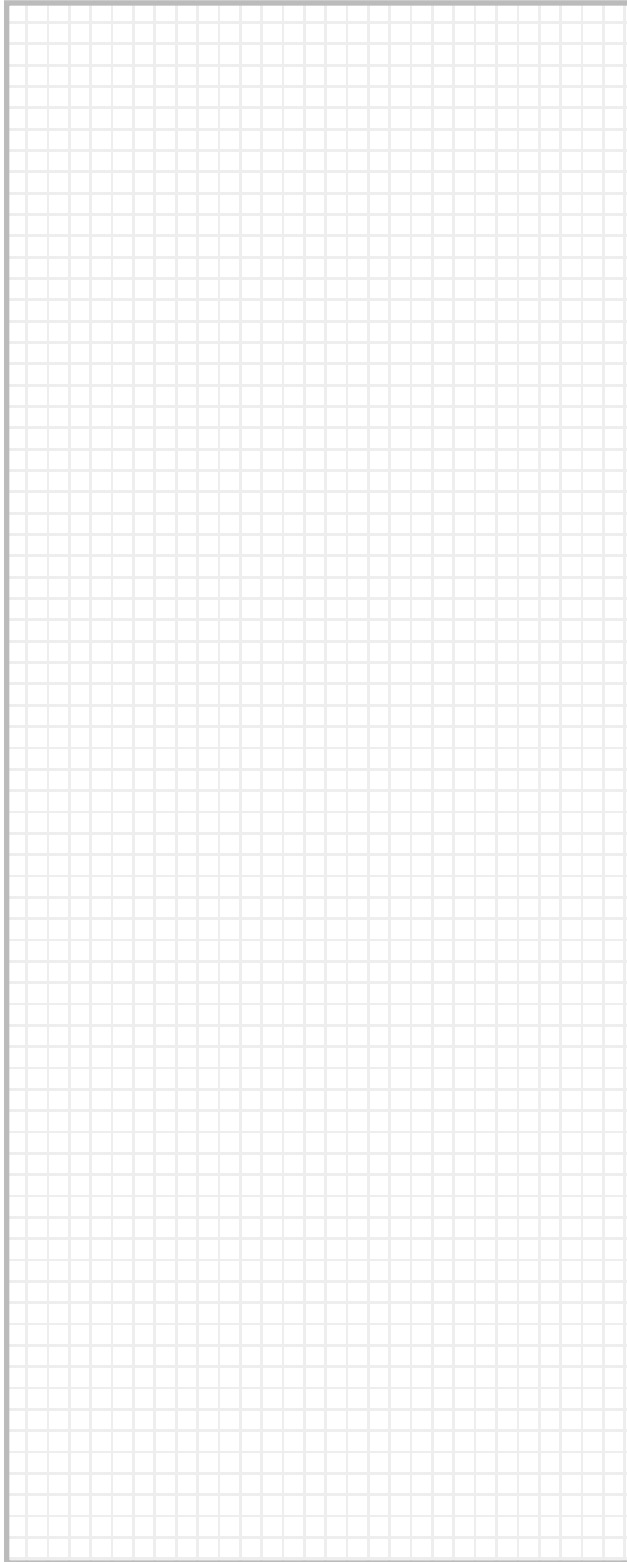
Observations



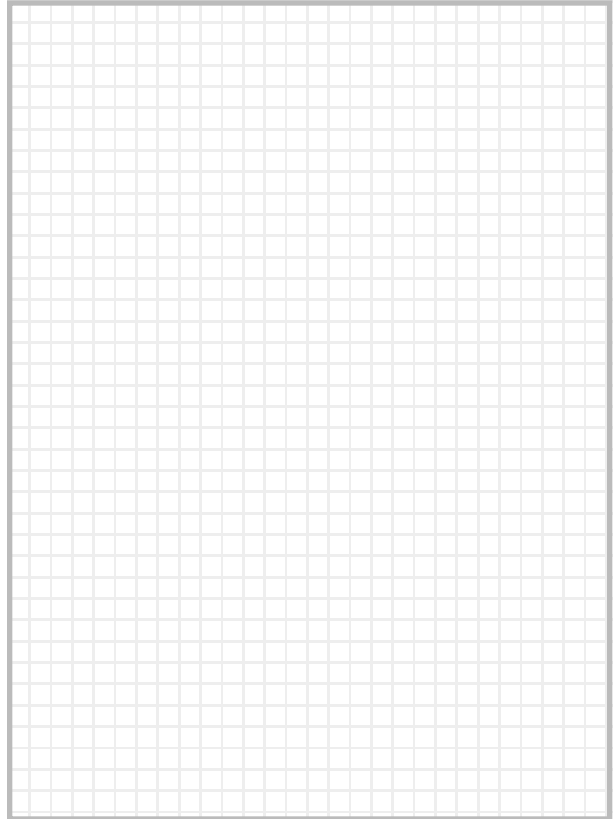
Structural Diagram



Interpretations



Applications



Principles

