

# BIBLE STUDY TIPS

*Thoughts and tips on how to Study the Bible taken from Church of the Savior's sermon series on Galatians, Summer 2013*

## • **The Inductive Method**

- This is a method of reading through one section of Scripture numerous times and each time with a different emphasis. The tips listed can be used while doing each of these steps. Consider it a “framework” for how to study the Bible. Whether casually or with great depth.

### • *Observation*

- What does it say?
  - What is the passage you're reading saying on face-value. Read to understand simply what it says.

### • *Interpretation*

- What does it mean?
  - Once you have a clear understanding of what it says read to understand what it means?

### • *Application*

- How does it apply to me?
  - Finally, once you understand what the text means...work with the Holy Spirit to understand how you need to respond to what it means.

## • **Rule # 1**

- What was the original author trying to say to their original audience?

## • **Rule #2**

- What does this tell you about God?

## • **Answer the 5 W's**

- Know the background behind what you're reading.
  - This information is typically available in a Study Bible at the beginning of each Book.
- *Who...*
  - wrote this book?
  - was it written to / for?
  - are the people mentioned in it?
- *What...*

- type of writing is it?
  - each genre of biblical writing is very different and should therefore be read differently. ex: Law read much differently than Poetry.
  - History - like Genesis, 1 & 2 Samuel & Esther
  - Law - like Leviticus
  - Poetry - like Psalms or Song of Songs
  - Wisdom Literature - like Proverbs & Ecclesiastes
  - Prophecy - like Isaiah or Ezekiel
  - Apocalyptic - like Daniel and Revelation
  - Gospel - like Matthew and Luke
  - Epistles (Letters) - like Roman and Galatians
    - To a specific Church
    - Or a general letter for all Christians
- *When...*
  - Was it written?
  - What was happening culturally in the world at that time? What empire(s) ruled? What kind of legal system existed? What kind of technology, transportation & communications existed?
- *Where...*
  - Where was it written from?
    - Generally - what region of the world, nation, people-group, city?
    - Specifically - a palace? a prison cell? the desert? in exile?
- *Why...*
  - Why did that specific author set out to write that specific message to those specific people?
    - Was there a problem or need being addressed? Were they trying to teach information? Pass on a story? Warn them? Inspire them in some way?
- **Build the Bridge**
  - Once you have determined what the original author was trying to say to the original audience...
  - And what this tells you about God...
  - How might that original message apply to your own life today?

## • **“Back the Camera Up”**

- Move outward from the specific verses, paragraph or chapter your reading and see it in it’s larger context.
  - Follow cross-references to see how it is informed by other related parts of the Bible.
    - When the author is quoting another part of the Bible.
    - When a person or event which occurred somewhere else in the Bible is being referenced.
  - Consider how that portion you’re studying relates to...
    - The rest of the book it’s in and...
    - The overall message of the entire Bible.

## • **Understand Technical Terms**

- Technical terms, in any discipline or vocation, are simply an idea compressed into one word.
- You can become familiar with technical / theological terms such as “justification”, “the flesh”, “atonement”, “works of the law”...
- By using resources (which are typically in your Study Bible) such as...
  - a Bible Dictionary
  - a Concordance - an alphabetical list of words and what verses they can be found in
  - Commentary - the “footnotes” for a verse or group of verses typically at the bottom of the page in a Study Bible
  - Articles - sometimes a Study Bible will devote a page or section to one idea or term

## • **Manuscript Study**

- The “colored pencil method.”
- Marking the words of the text to note comparisons, contrasts, repeated ideas and commands.
  - For helpful examples...
    - Ask Fr. Joel for a copy of our Galatians 5 Manuscript
    - Also visit: [http://precept.org/about\\_inductive\\_bible\\_study](http://precept.org/about_inductive_bible_study)
    - <http://manuscriptbiblestudy.com/>

# Some of Fr. Joel's Favorite Bible-Learning Resources

## • ***A Good Study Bible!***

- The ESV Study Bible & Life Application Study Bibles are great.

## • ***The New Living Translation***

- Simplifies things without “dumbing down” and reads smoothly. I use it especially when I want to read big chunks at one time.

## • ***The Bible Experience***

- A fantastic audio Bible. Great for listening to big chunks at one time. It's dramatized & performed excellently by an all-star cast of African-American celebrities.

## • ***What's In The Bible***

- Their curriculum is what we use in Children's Chapel on Sunday. They're intelligent, theologically rich, biblically thorough, creative and funny. Even as an adult you'll learn tons, enjoy & be inspired by these. They make great gifts.

## • **Movies That Help Understand Biblical Culture**

### • *The Nativity Story (2006)*

- Great historical accuracy. It does an excellent job explaining why the hope of a promised Messiah was, and is, so powerful.

### • *The Miracle Maker (2000)*

- A beautifully told and artistic stop-motion animation of the Life of Jesus as seen through the eyes of Jairus' daughter, a little girl whom Jesus heals (Mark 5, Matthew 9 & Luke 8).

### • *The Gospel of John (2003)*

- The script is the Gospel word-for-word and very well-done.

### • *The Passion of the Christ (2004)*

- Great historical accuracy, especially the flashback scenes such as the Last Supper. Done in the original languages of the time (Aramaic, Greek & Latin) with subtitles. NOTE: The scene of Jesus' flogging is very graphic & difficult to watch (Please use discretion in watching this. Not suitable for children). However, this not an over-exaggeration of Roman flogging.

### • *Peter and Paul (1981)*

- Follows *the Acts of the Apostles* and does a great job showing the issues the early Church was dealing with regarding the nature of Jews and Gentiles becoming Christians. Especially helpful for understanding to *the Acts of Apostles* and *Galatians*.