

## GUIDE FOR PERSONAL INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

### PREPARATION (Lord, open my eyes!)

- First, pray for understanding. We can only understand Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- If possible, try to read the entire book at one sitting without interruption. As you read, look for: identity of the writer, possible reasons for writing, major themes, flow of thought, etc.
- As you focus more on the specific passage:
  - Think about how the passage you are studying might relate to the major themes & purpose/s of the book (which you just tried to identify).
  - Read the passages before and after the text you are studying in order to identify its context.
  - You may find it helpful to print out the passage in a format that has space around the passage and between lines for notes, highlighting, circling, questions, etc. See next page for an example.

### OBSERVATION (What does it say?)

Ask some general questions as you study the text (these do not apply equally well to every passage):

Question	Examples
<b>Who?</b>	Who wrote this, who are main characters, who is acting, speaking, listening, present, absent?
<b>What?</b>	What is written, what happens, what is said or done, what is the response?
<b>Where?</b>	Where geographically (e.g., Israel, Galilee) or locally (e.g., in a house) is the setting of the text? Are there any indicators of place? Motion?
<b>When?</b>	What time of day, when in relation to other events or part of the story, when in the history of Israel or in Jesus' earthly ministry (e.g., before/after the "Great Confession")?
<b>Why?</b>	What events/actions consequences are mentioned, what is the relationship between words, events, actions, reactions, etc.?
<b>How?</b>	Does the text say how is something accomplished? How does it fit in larger biblical narratives?
<b>Other things to look for:</b>	
<b>Word patterns</b>	Are words repeated? Do you see comparisons? Are there obvious figures of speech?
<b>Connecting words</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "and, or, nor, likewise, also" usually indicate some kind of continuation.</li> <li>• "but, nevertheless, however" express contrast.</li> <li>• "better/worse/more than, as/so, like" usually imply some kind of comparison</li> <li>• "then, when, before, after" connect events in time</li> <li>• "because, therefore, thus, for, so, so that, in order that" usually indicate cause &amp; effect or consequences, etc.</li> </ul>

### INTERPRETATION (What does it mean?)

- Keep in mind what you learned as you read the entire book.
- Interpret Scripture with Scripture.
- Interpret obscure & difficult statements in light of clear statements.
- The most natural ("face value") interpretation is usually the best, but remember that figures of speech, allegories, and other literary devices are found in Scripture.
- You do not have to understand everything about a passage to have enough application to keep you busy.

### QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION (What do I need to do in response?)

- **Loving God:** Is there something here about the *nature, character, or activity* of God, Christ, or the Spirit, or my relationship with him, for me (or our group) to learn and/or believe?
- **Living Truth:**
  - Is there an attitude or action to imitate? to avoid?
  - Is there a command to obey? A challenge to heed?
  - Is there a principle to apply to my life in some way—to my thoughts, desires, decisions, habits, relationships, time, possessions, etc.?
  - Is there a promise given?
  - How do all these things relate to the core truth of the gospel?
- **Giving grace:** How can I pass on what I have learned to someone else? Whom do I know that might need what I have learned? How could I share it with him/her in a winsome way?

**1 John 1:1-4**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup>We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We write this to make our joy complete.

<b>Observation</b> <i>What does it say?</i>	<b>Interpretation</b> <i>What does it mean?</i>	<b>Application</b> <i>What should I do?</i> <i>How can I love God, live truth, give grace, walk in the Spirit?</i>