

VOXCHURCH COMMUNITY GROUP BIBLE STUDY METHODS

Acts 2:42 says people “devoted” themselves to the apostles’ teachings, fellowship, and prayer. Community Groups at Vox are the embodiment of this lifestyle. As a Community Group Leader, your commitment to the Word of God directs your group.

Whether you are a brand-new Community Group Leader or have been a devoted one for years, this guide is for you to utilize during Community Group gatherings as you dig deeper into God’s Word and its application to daily life.

Dwight L. Moody, a great evangelist and Christian educator of the late nineteenth century, said, “The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.” Once you experience the joy of revelation that comes from finding spiritual truth and applying it to your life, you will realize that it was well worth the effort. As a group of believers, seek and expect transformation through the Word of God.

**THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE
APOSTLES’ TEACHING AND TO
FELLOWSHIP, TO THE BREAKING OF
BREAD AND TO PRAYER.**

ACTS 2:42

THREE BIBLE STUDY METHODS

Although there are many approaches to Bible study, this guide will focus on three methods: passage study, chapter study, and verse study.

Passage Study

This method will focus on a portion of verses inside of a chapter and will highlight, to a greater degree, the central focus of observation, interpretation, and application. This method can be utilized in studying the Bible in any form, whether it's books, chapters, passages, verses, words, topics, Bible characters, geography, church history, end times, etc.

Chapter Study

This method will break down an entire chapter of the Bible and highlight key points, people, and verses. You will gain a better understanding of the chapter and how it applies to your life.

Verse Study

This Bible study method focuses on studying a few or multiple verses in any given passage or chapter. There are five simple procedures that you will work through for each verse that you study: paraphrasing, questioning and answering, cross-referencing, developing insights, and making conclusions.

PASSAGE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

What is a passage of Scripture? A passage of Scripture is a collection of verses centered on a particular subject. A passage can be a few verses to a few chapters of the Bible. When one is studying a passage of Scripture, a basic pattern to follow is a process of *observation, interpretation, and application*.

OBSERVATION

What does the passage say?

The first step simply observing the passage is saying and jotting down notes—much like an investigator. Use these six questions to articulate your observations:

1. WHO is the speaker? Who is this about? Who was the intended audience?
2. WHAT is the subject of the passage?
3. WHEN did the events occur?
4. WHERE did this happen? Where was it said?
5. WHY is something being mentioned? Why was this to the intended audience?¹
6. HOW will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

Once you make these observations, you will start to get a sense of what this passage is about and what it means for you. As you continue to read through it, keep an eye out for key phrases, keywords, repeated words, contrasts and comparisons, words that can be put in a list, and phrases that point towards a conclusion (“so that,” “for this reason,” “therefore,” and so on).

INTERPRETATION

What does the passage mean?

The second step is to discover the author’s intended meaning. You must look at the overall “context” (the entire story) to do this. Use these questions to springboard your interpretation of the passage:

¹ FOUR SEVENS 28-DAY DEVOTIONAL EXPERIMENT - Cru.

<https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/legacy/2012/02/How-to-Have-QT.pdf>

1. What is the cultural and historical context of this passage?
2. What else do I know about the book, author, and broader context?
3. What other Scripture passages might help me better interpret this one?
4. Have I overlooked anything or made any assumptions?
5. What is the most straightforward meaning of this text?

There are a few essential rules to remember when attempting to interpret a passage:

- Look for the plainest interpretation first. Believe that the text means what it says.² Start with the obvious. Don't manipulate the text or imply hidden meaning.
- Scripture interprets Scripture. Allow the Bible to help you understand other passages. Explore the biblical context where similar wording occurs elsewhere.
- Connect each passage back to the gospel and the broader message of the Bible.³

*Pray for wisdom to interpret. Utilize **trusted** commentaries and consult **trusted** believers.*

APPLICATION

What does the passage mean for me?

Go back to the questions and notes. Consider them according to what you learned and begin to apply what God has revealed to you. Some of the applications will be behavioral and habit changes. Or maybe there are relational changes for your walk with God.

Ask these questions to determine what the passage means for you:

1. In what ways am I looking for satisfaction in anything other than you, Lord?
2. In what ways am I seeking to earn your favor rather than live by grace?
3. What do I wrongly believe about your character, our relationship, and your Word?
4. In what ways do we need to be more intimate in our relationship?
5. In what way is Jesus the answer to my problem?⁴

² How to Do an Inductive Bible Study - Logos Bible Software. <https://www.logos.com/how-to/inductive-bible-study>

³ How To Study the Bible | Cowee Baptist Church | A Baptist
<https://www.cowee.church/2021/02/how-to-study-the-bible/>

⁴ MY QUIET TIME TEMPLATE - Mission Life Magazine. <https://missionlifemagazine.org/my-quiet-time-template/>

PASSAGE STUDY SAMPLE

PASSAGE: James 1:1–18

OBSERVATION:

WHO? James is the author. He wrote to Christians but specifically the twelve tribes spread out over Asia.

WHAT? This passage is all about the tongue and how powerful our words are. Illustrations are used about its power.

WHEN? This happens every day since we talk every day.

WHERE? Everywhere

WHY? James writes because this is something that every Christian must wrestle with.

HOW? The words in this passage penetrate to the heart because the “how” is scary (like a fire that spreads easy).

Other: The key word is “tongue.” There’s a BIG contrast. Blessing and cursing come from the same mouth.

INTERPRETATION:

Proverbs 18:21: “Death and Life are in the power of the tongue.”

Ephesians 4:29: “Don’t let corrupt communication come out of your mouth...”

James 1:26: “If anyone thinks he is religious but doesn’t bridle his tongue deceives himself.”

The tongue is powerful. It can corrupt the whole body even though it’s a small member.

We ought to think of our tongues in relation to our service to God. The very words we say hold such power. Just like a rudder can bring a ship down, and a bit can control a horse, so too can our tongue bring us, our family, or church down.

The clearest meaning of this passage is that the tongue is a dangerous weapon, but it can also be a powerful tool.

APPLICATION:

Sometimes what I say doesn’t match what I know Jesus would’ve said in that moment. That’s convicting!

I’m going to think before I speak, especially in moments where I am frustrated because that’s when I tend to say something that isn’t kind/loving.

“What would Jesus say? How would he respond to my situation?”

If I have said anything unkind or rude to my family, friends, or co-workers I am going to apologize this week.
I’m going to intentionally say kind, encouraging things to others this week.

PASSAGE STUDY WORKSHEET

PASSAGE:

OBSERVATION:

INTERPRETATION:

APPLICATION:

CHAPTER BIBLE STUDY METHOD

Pastor Rick Warren teaches about chapter study in his book *Bible Study Methods*⁵. In this type of study, the reader becomes acquainted with the chapter through several readings. The more you read through a passage of Scripture, the more it will come alive to you.

Read the same chapter up to five times. Reading it in different contemporary translations will give you additional insights. Also, reading it out loud will help you stay focused.

As you reread the chapter, look at these ten specific areas. Write your answers on the chapter summary form or a blank piece of paper.

1. CAPTION (OBSERVATION)

Give a short, descriptive title to the chapter. The shorter and catchier the title, the more memorable. Imagine if you gave every chapter of the Bible a title and memorized them—you would have a general idea of what is in every chapter of the Bible!

Determine the keyword of the chapter and fit it into your title. (Example: 1 Corinthians 13 might be titled “Love.” John 4 might be “Well-Well.”)

2. CONTENTS (OBSERVATION)

Describe, summarize, paraphrase, outline, or make a list of the significant points in a chapter. Don't try to interpret the chapter; just make observations.

3. CHIEF PEOPLE (OBSERVATION)

List the most important people in the chapter. If the chapter contains pronouns (he, she, they, etc.), you may have to look at previous chapters for their identity. Write down your reasons for choosing them as chief people. *Helpful hint: In genealogies, summarize the families, don't write down every name.*

⁵ Warren, *Bible Study Methods: 12 Ways You Can Unlock God's Word*, 189.

4. CHOICE VERSE (OBSERVATION)

Choose a verse that summarizes the whole chapter or speaks to you personally. There may not be a key verse that pops out. In that case, select a verse that leads you toward an application—a verse God would have you apply to your life.

5. CRUCIAL WORD (OBSERVATION)

Write down the keyword or words of the chapter. Many times, but not every time, the keyword will be the one that is used most frequently. (Example: “faith” in Hebrews 11.) A chapter may have more than one crucial word.

6. CHALLENGES (OBSERVATION)

List any statements you don’t understand or any questions you have. While doing a chapter study, you will often get ideas for other types of studies you might want to do in the future.

7. CROSS-REFERENCE (OBSERVATION)

Often Bibles contain cross-reference suggestions. An asterisk usually marks them. Write down those verses and look them up to clarify what a verse means.

8. CHRIST SEEN (OBSERVATION)

The entire Bible is a revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.⁶ As you read the chapter, look for statements that tell you something about Jesus. Ask yourself, *what can I learn about Jesus from this chapter?*

9. CENTRAL LESSON (INTERPRETATION)

Write down major principles, insights, and lessons you learned from this chapter. Why does God want this passage in the Bible? What does he want to teach us in this chapter? What is the central thought the writer is trying to develop?

10. CONCLUSION (APPLICATION)

This is the application portion of your study. It will benefit you to ask yourself two questions: (1) How do these truths apply to me personally? (2) What am I going to do about them?

⁶ Bible Study Methods Contemporary Issues Welcome Make sure. <https://slidetodoc.com/bible-study-methods-contemporary-issues-welcome-make-sure/>

CHAPTER STUDY SAMPLE

CHAPTER: Luke 15

CAPTION: "Lost and Found"

CONTENTS:

Verses 3-7: The Lost Sheep, Verses 8-10: The Lost Coin, Verses 11-32: The Lost Son

CHIEF PEOPLE:

The shepherd with the lost sheep, The woman with the lost coin, the father with the lost son.

CHOICE VERSE:

Luke 15:7: "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

CRUCIAL WORD(S):

Lost (Verses 4,5,9,24,32)
Found (Verses 5,6,9,24,32)

CHALLENGES:

What does this verse mean? "Ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent?"

CROSS-REFERNCES:

Matthew 18:11-4, Isaiah 53:6, John 10:10-14

CHRIST SEEN:

Jesus is the Good Shepherd and looks for lost people to save.

CENTRAL LESSON:

The son went away saying "give me" and he returned saying "make me." God cares for sinners and waits for them to return.

CONCLUSION:

Many of my friends are lost and need Jesus. I need to share Jesus with them. I'll start by asking Jim to coffee this week so I can talk about how Jesus rescued me from my sins.

CHAPTER STUDY WORKSHEET

CHAPTER:

CAPTION:

CONTENTS:

CHIEF PEOPLE:

CHOICE VERSE:

CRUCIAL WORD(S):

CHALLENGES:

CROSS-REFERNCES:

CHRIST SEEN:

CENTRAL LESSON:

CONCLUSION:

VERSES BIBLE STUDY METHOD

This Bible study method involves studying a few or multiple verses in any given passage or chapter. This method allows you to focus on a few verses that you want to explore deeper. There are five simple procedures that you will work through for each verse that you study. Select the verses you would like to study and begin by jotting them down in the Verse Study Form. ⁷

PARAPHRASE (OBSERVATION)

Write out each verse in your own words. Try and condense the verse rather than expand it. This will be helpful in your application of the verse.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (OBSERVATION)

List any questions you have relating to specific words, phrases, people, topics, doctrines, etc. Also, write down any answers to those questions you might consider.

CROSS-REFERENCE (OBSERVATION)

Use the cross-reference section in your Bible or from memory to connect to another part of Scripture. Also, identify the word or phrase which connects the two references. Often, other verses will help point you in the right direction of interpretation and application of a verse.

INSIGHTS (INTERPRETATION)

Record any insights from the verse's words, phrases, and concepts you see. Be creative in your thought process here. What could be the possible meanings? This will get you on the right track towards application.

CONCLUSION (APPLICATION)

Write down a brief personal application for each verse. Two or more verses may need to be combined to form one application. That's ok. Be practical, personal, and make sure the application is attainable as you think and write. What does God want me to do, be, or think because of this verse?

⁷ Warren, *Bible Study Methods: 12 Ways You Can Unlock God's Word*, 221.

VERSES STUDY I SAMPLE

VERSES 1 Timothy 1:1-3

VERSE	PARAPHRASE	QUESTION & ANSWER
1 Timothy 1:1	Paul was an apostle placed there by Jesus, our Savior.	<p>Q. What does the word "apostle" mean? A. "Sent forth"</p> <p>Q. What does it mean that he was an apostle by the command of Jesus? A. Simply means "Appointed."</p>
1 Timothy 1:2	This is to you Timothy, my spiritual son. May God give you grace, mercy, and peace.	<p>Q. Why did Paul call him his spiritual son? A. Paul led Timothy in the path toward following Jesus. Timothy didn't have a dad (at least one mentioned).</p>
1 Timothy 1:3	When Paul left, he emphatically told Timothy to stay in Ephesus for the purpose of stopping false teaching.	<p>Q. Why didn't Paul stay? A. God called him to leave. Timothy had to grow as a leader and couldn't with Paul there.</p> <p>Q. What were these men teaching that was "false"? A. Not quite sure, but possibly a different way to heaven than Jesus.</p>

VERSES STUDY II SAMPLE

VERSES 1 Timothy 1:1-3

CROSS-REFERENCES

Apostle
2 Corinthians 1:1

God my Savior
Luke 1:47
Titus 1:3

My son
2 Timothy 1:2

Christ Jesus
1 Timothy 1:5

False Teaching
1 Timothy 6:3
2 Corinthians 11:4

INSIGHTS

The name Paul means "little."
Paul did not need to tell Timothy he was an apostle so maybe this letter was intended to be read by others as well.

Messiah means "the anointed one."
Jesus means "Jehovah Saves."

Paul criticized Christians in Corinth for their weak handling of the false teachers. Timothy was trusted and trained to deal with them.

CONCLUSIONS

I need to look at myself like Paul did, for what Christ has made me/called me to be. I can have confidence in who God "appointed" me to be because he did it!

I want my name to become synonymous with a life that is honoring to God, like Timothy's.

I want to be knowledgeable enough to recognize false teaching and have the authority to confront it like Timothy did.

VERSES STUDY I WORKSHEET

VERSES

VERSE

PARAPHRASE

QUESTION & ANSWER

VERSES STUDY II SAMPLE

VERSES

CROSS-REFERENCES

INSIGHTS

CONCLUSIONS
