

What “hits” you from this passage?

3. What does this passage teach about the *Lord*? What difference does it make to you that he is like this? Take some time to praise him.

STEP FOUR: The Chapter or Part (continued)

1. Choose a short *title* for each paragraph.

2. What *connections* can you find between paragraphs? Look for a few, such as repeated words, similarities, contrasts, cause and effect. What significance or *meaning* do you find in each of these connections? Jot down the meanings.

3. Then, look at the meanings, connections and facts and ask yourself: What is the main thing going on in this passage? In other words, what is the *central truth* this passage is teaching? Write that truth in a sentence.

4. What is the main thing the Lord is saying to you through this passage? Here are some possibilities. Select just one.

a. Something to *obey* or an example to follow or avoid? What is it exactly? How can I soon practice it?

b. A *truth about the Lord* I can rejoice in? In what part of my life

is this truth especially encouraging?

c. A *promise* I can take for a situation I’m in? Are there conditions in the promise which I need to fulfill? What are they? What does the Lord say he’ll do? (Memorizing the promise will help in the days ahead.)

THE NEXT STEP: The Next Chapter or Part

Continue as in step 3, then proceed as in step 4. *Move along at your own pace.*

THE FINAL STEP

When you finish studying the chapters, notice how their main truths connect with each other. As you connect these main truths, you are beginning to put together the *teaching* of the Bible. See if from these you can write the *theme of the book* in a sentence. How does it fit with the theme you saw at first? Share these with a Christian friend or group studying the same book. See how your theme compares with that in a Bible handbook.

Small Group Idea Book. Bunch, Cindy. Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of the U.S.A.



Study of God's Word

Psalm 1

Psalm 1:1–2 | Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

To meditate in God’s word, is to discourse with ourselves concerning the great things contained in it, with close application of mind and fixedness of thought. We must have constant regard to the word of God, as the rule of our actions, and the spring of our comforts; and have it in our thoughts night and day. For this purpose no time is amiss.

Matthew Henry Concise Commentary, Ps.1

Creating an Inductive Study

Luke 16:19–31

Daily Readings:

Day 1—Luke 16:1–18;

Day 2—Luke 16:19–31;
Day 3— Luke 17:1–10;
Day 4—Luke 17:11–19;
Day 5—Luke 17:20–37;
Day 6—Luke 18:1–17;
Day 7—Luke 18:18–30.

Inductive Bible study is a wonderful approach to Scripture. Below is a basic outline that will allow you to derive your own conclusions from the parable Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus.

Read Luke 16:19–31, and fill in the outline below.

Observation: Using only the text of Luke 16:19–31, and acting like a person coming upon an event after it happened, reconstruct the story by first listing the facts contained in the story, under the four categories below. (Remember, only use what you find in this text). Try to make at least 30 objective, fact-based observations. (For example, there was a rich man who lived in luxury.)

Who (all characters in the passage and what the passage allows you to know about them)

Where

When

What (ideas, actions that took place, feelings, themes)

Interpretation: Now you may look at the surrounding context of this story, as well as anywhere in the Bible or Bible helps, to aid you in understanding the “who, where, when and what” of this story. (For example, “Moses and the Prophets” in verse 29 refers to the oral and written Old Testament Scriptures.) Once you have a good understanding, answer the “why” (what message was being conveyed to the original listeners?).

Who

Where

When

What

Why was this story told by Christ?

Application: To determine your response, answer the following questions:

How is my situation and/or attitude like that of the various characters and listeners in the story?

Which character (remember, disciples and Pharisees were listening to the story) do I most identify with?

How is Christ’s message to them relevant to me?

What does this story say to me?

The Big Book on Small Groups

Fellowship With God

All God’s dealings with people rest on the basis that they are sinners in need of salvation (*cf.* Rom. 3:23). To deny that we have sinned is *to make him out to be a liar*. Put negatively this means *his word has no place in our lives*. In many parts of the Bible the ‘word’ has a dynamic character. It effects God’s purpose (*cf.* Is. 55:11). Those who deny that they are sinners thus make out that God is a liar and they show by that fact that God’s effectual word is not in them.

Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition* (4th ed.) (1 Jn 1:10–2:2). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

How to study the Bible

Daily Discovery. This system for personal inductive Bible study helps you find the central truth in a passage and build that truth into your life. Use this approach for a while, then share it with a friend! To get the most from this study you need: (1) a version of the Bible with paragraphs and (2) a notebook for writing down your findings.

When you open God’s Word, expect to meet with him and to learn something

about him. Expect to find more of who he is and what he wants you to be like. In a wonderful way you’ll grow to understand God and his ways if you approach the Bible open to be changed by what you find there.

Each day as you begin, open your heart to the teaching of the Holy Spirit; ask him to give you understanding and to help you think and act in God’s way.

As you conclude a day’s study, apply to your life one truth God has shown you as you relate to him.

Do as much of a step as is comfortable each day.

STEP ONE: Book Overview

1. Read it, if it’s brief. If it’s long, skim it. *If it’s a narrative*, jot down a fact about one or two of the main characters; list a few major events. *If it’s a letter*, note a few facts about the writer and those being addressed. *If it’s another kind of literature*, list some facts that impress you.

2. Write down a few of your major impressions of the book.

3. What helps do you think you’ll get for your life from this book? Write down one or two and ask the Lord to move in your life in these ways.

STEP TWO: The Book (continued)

1. Look through the book to find which chapters can be

most naturally grouped together, either by main characters, events or geography. On a simple chart, show the two or three or four major divisions of the book, the natural groups of chapters. Give each division a short title.

2. What seems to be the main theme of the book? Write it in a short sentence over your chart.

3. How does that theme apply to you personally? In what part of your life do you need to act on that truth? Write down a specific way you can begin to do that and ask the Lord to strengthen you in it.

STEP THREE: Chapter or Part of a Chapter

(If your version of the Bible has many short paragraphs, you can group them into thought-units and treat each unit as you would a paragraph.)

1. Make a list of *facts* that you observe in the chapter (or part). Note who, when, what, where and how. Note also any interesting things about people, places, situations, atmosphere. Include things that are emphasized, like words that are repeated or contrasted. To cover a passage, make just a few observations on each paragraph.

2. Write down your major *impressions* of the passage.