

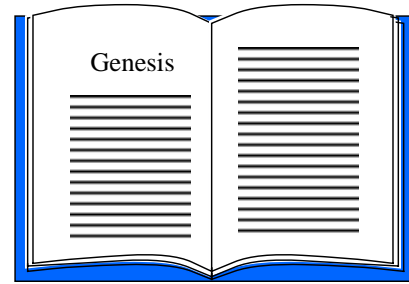
7. Book, Character & Topical Studies

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:

1. 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!