

Part 3, Chapter 3 – Studying Logically

Congratulations! You made it to the ninth week of multiply. You are to be commended for your diligence!! As you have been following this Inductive Study Companion, you'll be glad to know that you have indeed been "Studying Logically." We hope that you have sharpened and learned study skills along the way. This week will ensure that you know both "how" to study and "why" you study so you can explain it to your disciples. When approaching a biblical passage through the inductive study method, take the following steps:

1. Pray (See Day Two of last week's lesson for the "why")
2. Study in Context
3. Observe the text – "What does it say?" 80% of your time is spent here.
4. Interpretation – "What does it mean?" or "What did the author intend to convey to his readers?"
5. Application – "In light of Scripture, how should my life change? In attitude and actions?"

Day One:

Consider the Context -Did you know that the bible says, "*There is no God.*"? It does! Read it for yourself. Write it out.

Psalm 14:1 –

What did you discover? Is the context important? How does the context of "*There is no God*" affect the meaning of that statement? Just to be clear, does the bible really say there is no God?

Although this is an obvious example, context is even more important when looking at complex issues.

When determining context, we start with the big picture like an airplane view from 20,000' observing mountain ranges, rivers and lakes. Then we grow closer and closer continuing until we see the blades of grass surrounding us and even further. You won't get all the details along the way and that's not the purpose. We do *want to see how things relate to one another* so we can better understand the passage we are studying.

1) **Historical Background** – Historical events (e.g. September 11th) impact our understanding of the times and cultures of nations and peoples. To begin, where in the Bible is the passage you are studying? Old or New Testament? Big picture.

A) Within the Old Testament, what period of history? At the beginning (Genesis)? While in Egypt or wandering the wilderness (Exodus – Deuteronomy)? Before Israel had a king (Judges – 1 Samuel) or after (2 Samuel – 2 Chronicles)? Before or after the divided kingdom? Before or after the fall of the Northern or Southern Kingdom? When studying the Prophets, when are they speaking? Who is their audience?

B) Within the New Testament, before Christ is crucified or after? How long after? Where was Paul when he wrote each of his epistles? Any time periods or events mentioned in the passage? Past, present, or future?

2) **Geography** - Geography makes a huge difference. Going on vacation to Paris, WV is very different from Paris, France. Or the Shenandoah Mountains from the Swiss Alps. The same is true of Biblical locations - Fertile Crescent or a desert or a port city on the Mediterranean Sea? When you see a place mentioned, look it up on a map. Add to your understanding by figuring out where this place is in our modern world. Or does it refer to a future place?

3) **Book within the Whole Bible** – Keep in mind that God has progressively revealed Himself to mankind throughout the bible narrative using different types of literature to communicate His plans and purposes.

- A) **Historical:** Genesis – Esther, Gospels and Acts
- B) **Wisdom/Poetry:** Job – Song of Solomon
- C) **Prophecy:** Isaiah – Malachi, Revelation
- D) **Epistles (Letters):** Romans – Jude

- 4) **Chapter** - Section of a book - Chapter and verse divisions were not in the original languages. They were added later for the convenience of finding the same place again. In the book of Romans, Paul spends 11 chapters building the doctrinal basis for Romans 12:1.

A) Read **Romans 12:1**. Write it out. Then put a rectangle around “*therefore*.”

B) In reading just this one verse “out of context” does this seem like a reasonable request of someone? What’s your first impression?

C) If you don’t know what comes before this request for a “*living sacrifice*,” it may seem like an arbitrary request. Perhaps even completely out of line, and frankly something that you do not have any intention of complying with. Yet Paul completes the verse with, “*this is your reasonable act of worship*.” It is a reasonable request because he’s just given us 11 chapters of reasons! Do we know what they are? Context!

- 5) **Immediate** – The preceding and following verses give us the immediate context. The word choices and grammatical tenses used by the writer help to convey his message. Immediate context gives clarity and definition within the framework of the big picture.

A) Read **John 1:1** – Write it out.

B) Who is the Word? What does it say in verse 1?

C) What part of the Godhead is the Word (Father, Son or Holy Spirit)? Does it say? Then how do we find out? Context - continue through the passage, following the pronouns, until you reach verse 14. What do you learn?

D) Continue further to verse 17. Who is the Word?

E) When we connect verse 17 with verse 1, what do we learn about who Jesus is?

F) How did the immediate context inform your study and conclusions?

Read *p.123-126* from **multiply** and answer question #1 in your book.

Read **multiply** from the bottom of *p. 134 – 136* “Study the Historical Context” and answer question #6. (Yes, we know we skipped some pages, but we will come back to them later!)

Day Two:

Observe the Passage – *What does it say?* After determining the context surrounding your passage of interest, it's time to interrogate the text. Throughout this study, you've repeatedly observed passages using the 5Ws and H. The better you get at asking questions of the text, the more you will observe and discover as the Holy Spirit leads you. As a disciple maker, asking your disciples questions will help them discover the word for themselves and not be solely reliant on you for their understanding.

What are the 5Ws and H?

W

W

W

W

W

H

1) **Asking the 5 W's and H** – What are we hoping to gain by asking these questions? Below are just some of the things you may find as you interrogate the text. Use these guidelines for your future study. We are confident that you will never again study the bible the same after you learn these simple tools. You *and* your disciples will benefit from your efforts!

A) **Who:** (*include pronouns*) Who is the passage about? Who is discussed? After observing this, note what you learn about these people. Some possible categories:

God's Names/Persons – e.g. *Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Lamb of God, Counselor*

Author of book – e.g. *Moses, prophet, John, Paul, unknown, etc...*

Recipients – e.g. *church in Thessalonica*

Others: *Jews, Gentiles, Israel, other nations, ungodly men, believers, Satan*

B) **Where, When:**

Setting/Geography – *Wilderness, Temple, battle ground, city, farm, river, sea, etc...*

Time – *The next day, then, early in the morning, etc.*

“In the day of the Lord”

C) **What:**

What is happening? What’s it about? What’s the message? What was said?

D) **Why:**

Why did the author write the book/epistle? Sometimes the author states his purpose clearly as in John 20:31 *“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”* Other times look for statements of purpose or conclusion: Therefore, So that, In order to, etc.

Why did someone do what they did? Why does the author explain his topic in that way?

E) **How:**

How did something happen or come about? E.g. How did Jesus’ death lead to my salvation?

2) **More Observation of the text**

1. **Themes:** Asking the 5 W’s and H will reveal themes.

A) What is the theme of a passage? Major point? Are there sub-themes, other subjects that are mentioned?

B) Key Words and Phrases – Reveals emphasis being made by the author.

2. Connecting Words - Reveals conclusions

Therefore, Finally, Because, If...then

3. Contrasts, Comparisons, Illustrations - Further explanation

e.g. Light/dark, Sheep/goats, Believer/unbeliever

I am the bread of life; I am the true vine.

Review:

As you know, the context and type of literature will determine how we observe the passage or book being studied.

- 1) When you study a *historical book* look for events by asking: What happened? What happened next? Then what happened? You did this earlier in Part 2 – 1 “Life in the Church” on p. 3-4 when studying Acts 2. Go back and look at what you did. If you missed that day, go ahead and do it now. How did these questions help you understand the passage? Why are we looking at the events?

Day Three:

(Review, cont.)

2) When studying an *epistle*, a letter, look for: Who wrote it? To whom? Why? What is the central message or issue(s) being addressed? Review Part 1 – 3 “The Heart of a Disciple Maker” p. 10, question #1. Why are these questions critical to understanding an epistle? When you get a letter how do you read it? Do you skip around, reading a sentence here or there?

3) If you received a “love letter” from your sweetheart would you read it only one time? How often? Would you throw it away and forget about it? The bible is often called God’s “love letter” to us! How does this affect your perspective?

- 4) *Poetry and Wisdom* – In this type of literature, the form and function of the passage will affect the message being conveyed and your understanding of it. Again, you worked through this when studying Psalm 119:57-64 last week in Day Three. How did knowing the psalm's structure impact your understanding of the meaning and intention of the writer? Go back and look. Note your observations.

Day Four:

Keep in mind our inductive study process:

1. Pray
2. Study in Context
3. Observe the text – “*What does it say?*” 80% of your time is spent here.
4. Interpretation – “*What does it mean?*” or “What did the author intend to convey to his readers?”
5. Application – “*In light of Scripture, how should my life change? In attitude and actions?*”

Interpretation – *What does it mean?* NOT “What does it mean to me?” OR “How do I feel about this?” God has an intention and purpose regarding what He says and does in the Scriptures. When interpreting a passage, we seek to know and understand God’s intentions through the writer (author). We base the interpretation on our observations of the passage in its context. **Context is KING!** Context will confirm or rule out our initial thoughts on the interpretation of a passage.

What is the role of the Holy Spirit? How does that relate to us interpreting Scripture?

John 14:26

John 15:26

Ephesians 4:11-13 – Who else can help us confirm and/or correct our interpretation so we can reach maturity? Does this mean we cannot or don't need to study the word for ourselves?

Read *p.127-131* from **multiply** and answer questions 3-4. Note your conclusions below.

Application – *In light of Scripture, how should my life change? In attitude and actions?* How can I be transformed to be like Christ? How does this apply to my specific situation? Application does not and should not wait to the completion of your study to begin. Application is a process that occurs along the way as the Holy Spirit teaches you truth and shows you changes to make. The Holy Spirit also gives you the willingness and power to transform.

Read *p. 127-128* from **multiply**. Note: Francis Chan lumps the process of observation into interpretation on p. 128. For a clearer, linear process of teaching how to study the Scriptures inductively, we separate them into two steps. Answer question #2 in your book.

Day Five:

Putting It All Together. Study 2 Peter 3:10-16 in context:

2 PETER 3:14-16 NASB

- 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.
- 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
- 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!
- 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
- 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,
- 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,
- 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Did you remember the first, most important step? If not, do so now! Then proceed to re-reading the passage 😊.

1) What is the context of this passage? Looking back at Day One of this week, work from Historical to Immediate context.

A) Historical Context - Old or New Testament? Before or after Christ's death? Are any time periods or events mentioned in the passage or surrounding verses?

B) Geography – What is mentioned?

C) Book in the Whole Bible - What book is this in? What does that tell you about the type of literature you are approaching? What questions will you want to ask in observing this literature? Is this the first book Peter has written? Does 1 Peter 1:1 give us additional context for these books?

D) Chapter – Where does this passage fall in relationship to the rest of the book? If you have time, you might want to quickly read through the first two chapters for context.

E) Immediate - What is the main topic of discussion in the rest of chapter 3? Anything else stand out to you?

2) Observe using 5Ws and H. Because of time, concentrate your efforts on verses 14-16. Write and answer your own questions.

A) Who?

B) What?

C) Where?

D) When?

E) Why?

F) How?

Did you include questions something like: Who is Peter addressing? What are they looking for? When will these things come? What does Peter want them to do now? What attitude should they have? Who else has written to them about this? How are Paul's writings described? Who distorts Paul's writings? What else do they distort? What is the result of the distortion?

Interpretation:

Are there any words or phrases that you want to look at more closely? Do a word study on "spotless" (*aspilos* - Strong's #784: ἄσπιλος).

Where else is this word used? What do we learn from the cross-references?

1 Timothy 6:14

1 Peter 1:19

James 1:27 (unstained) –

Taking the meaning of unspotted back to 2 Peter 3:14 - What is the plain meaning of this verse? What is Peter's message? What effort should we put forth?

Application:

In light of 2 Peter 3:14-16, how should my life change? In attitude and actions? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how “*to be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless*” when Christ returns. What else has He shown you? Write it out.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the willingness and power to obey!

Read *p. 132-134* and *p. 136-138* from **multiply** answering questions 5, 7 and 8 in your book.

From the authors and editors of this Inductive Study Companion:

We are privileged to serve the Lord and our MBC congregation by writing and editing this companion to **multiply**. It is our prayer that you have fallen more in love with the Lord and His Scriptures through the study of His word. We also hope that you have been equipped for the Lord's service. Would you please tell us about your experience with this study companion either as a **multiply** leader and/or group member? It would be such an encouragement to us if you followed the admonition of Galatians 6:6 – *“The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.”*

Please send your comments and feedback to: precept@mcleanbible.org

All God's blessings be yours!