

Six Questions to Ask when Studying the Bible in a Group The Swedish Method

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man (or woman) of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

(2 Timothy 3:16–17)

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

THE CONTEXT

Always start with the context. If we know that the Bible is a way God communicates with his people, then we must interpret and apply it in its *original* intent. Studying the Word in its original context keeps people safe from making it say what *they* want. It keeps people safe from applying it wrong and leading others into deception. When studying a passage of the Bible, ask yourself:

WHO wrote the passage?

WHEN & WHERE did they write it?

WHO was the author writing to?

HOW would the original audience have understood this passage?

WHY did the author write this? What is the purpose?

HOW does this passage relate to the passages before and after it?

WHAT else does the Bible say about the topics mentioned in this passage?

1. Light Bulb - What shines from the passage?.....



A light bulb should be something that “shines” from the passage — something new or fresh. *What stood out to you as you read this passage?* What inspires, challenges, or encourages you? Did something strike you as new or fresh?

Every time we read the Bible, God will be reminding us of things we’ve forgotten, and showing us things we haven’t seen before. And when we read the Bible in a group, he’ll be revealing *different* things to *different* people, multiplying the insight and learning. God does not intend for us to see different *meanings*, but to learn the one true multi-dimensional meaning, and then to see some of the limitless implications and applications from that truth.

All of Scripture is profitable, not just the verses that seem immediately profitable to me. Part of the challenge of reading the Bible is asking God to show us the spiritual benefit of every word he’s given us.

2. Question – Did this passage raise any questions?.....



Did these verses raise any questions? Did anything surprise or confuse you? You might stumble over a word or verse, or a connection to another part of the Bible, or a particular theological point.

With every question you ask, try and answer your own question before going to others for help. Some of the deepest, most lasting learning we do comes when we press ourselves to search the Bible for an answer to our own question. The answer might be in the verse we’re studying, or in the surrounding

chapter or book, or God may bring to mind a verse or verses elsewhere in the Bible. Stop, pray, ask, and do your best. Try and discover what else the Bible has to say about this issue. *Then*, turn to others (whether commentaries or other members of your group) for another perspective.

3. Cross – Where do we see Jesus Christ in these verses?.....



All of Scripture points back to Jesus. How does *this* passage point back to Jesus? What in this passage helped you see more of Jesus and his cross, or what moved you to love him more?

4. Arrow – How can I apply what I've learned to my life?.....



An arrow indicates a personal application for our lives. In view of what you have read, what changes do you think God would want you to make in your attitude, words, or actions? Identify and commit to something you sense the Spirit is leading you to do in obedience to this text. Make it specific enough that you can do it this week, and make it personal to you.

When reading the Bible, regularly ask if God might be:

- 1) Teaching you something,
- 2) Telling you to stop doing something,
- 3) Correcting some wrong thinking or behavior, or
- 4) Preparing you to live more effectively for him.

A lot of Bible study, both privately and in a group, falls short of applying the text to our personal lives. One of the great things about studying the Bible in a group is that there's built-in accountability. If you talk out loud with others through steps to take toward greater obedience, you have other people around you to follow up and ask you how those particular things are going.

5. Talking Bubble – Who can I share this with?.....



The talking bubble is something to share. Write down the name of someone who might benefit from hearing what you've seen in the Bible. It could be something that you share with another believer, or it might be a way of sharing the gospel with a not-yet believer in your life. How can you share the joy, peace, and conviction you've been given by God with others?

Identify a specific person you might connect with in the next week, and think about a time you could bring this particular truth up with them.

6. Why? Why are these verses in the Bible?.....



Why are these verses in the Bible? We're trying to summarize God's purpose in putting these particular words in his book. There are a number of ways to ask this question. Why is this passage in this particular book of the Bible? What might the Bible lose if this passage was left out? What's the author's main point? Try to sum up your answer in one sentence.