



At The Field Church we want to help our people to grow and learn how to study God's word for themselves and walk with God the rest of their lives. This booklet contains a few different study tools that will help you to see and treasure God as you study His word. I recommend using the English Standard Version (ESV) Study Bible when using these tools.

Study Tool 1: Observation, Interpretation, Application (OIA)

Observation:

This study is pretty straight forward. The goal in using this study is to first observe what is happening in the passage. To understand the intent and meaning of scripture you must first understand the context that it is being written in. Through the author God has an intentional meaning of what is being said but when read out of context we can miss the meaning or worse, come away with the wrong meaning. Some great questions to ask and seek the answer to in order to understand the context is:

WHO is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters?

WHAT is the subject or event covered in the chapter? What do you learn about the people, event, or teaching? What historical time frame is this being spoken in? What type of literature is being written here (historical narrative, poetic, prophetic, allegorical, wisdom literature)?

WHEN do/will the events occur or did/will something happen to someone?

WHERE did or will this happen? Where was it said?

WHY is something being said or mentioned? Why would/will this happen? Why at that time and/or to this person/people?

HOW will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

Interpretation

Second, once you have gotten a thorough scope of the context of what you are reading it is time to make sense of it all. This is the interpretation phase of the study. You want to ask questions like:



Why is the author writing this particular passage?

What sinful, broken or fallen condition is being addressed or corrected by this passage?

What deeper sin or heart issues are being exposed or corrected?

How does this passage point to God's character and Glory?

How do we see God's redemptive plan (gospel) being worked out in the people's lives?

Application:

Third, the final and last step of the study is to put it all together and understand how it applies to your life right now. Some questions to ask when you are meditating and seeking what God is saying to you are:

In what ways am I looking to find hope and fulfillment in things besides you, Lord?

In what ways am I seeking to earn your favor rather than live by grace?

What do my actions suggest that I'm wrongly believing about your character, our relationship, and what you've said in your Word?

In what am I making my treasure (looking to for my worth, identity and joy) other than Christ?

What old sinful thoughts and beliefs am I trusting in and need to repent of? What new thoughts and beliefs should I trust in and walk in according to my reading today?

Below is a one page cheat sheet that you can print out and keep in your Bible to use for your study time to guide your journaling.



Observation, Interpretation, Application (OIA) Study Tool

(Cheat Sheet)

Observation

1. WHO is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters?
2. WHAT is the subject or event covered in the chapter? What do you learn about the people, event, or teaching? What historical time frame is this being spoken in? What type of literature is being written here (historical narrative, poetic, prophetic, allegorical, wisdom literature)?
3. WHEN do/will the events occur or did/will something happen to someone?
4. WHERE did or will this happen? Where was it said?
5. WHY is something being said or mentioned? Why would/will this happen? Why at that time and/or to this person/people?
6. HOW will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

Interpretation

1. Why is the author writing this particular passage?
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Application

1. In what ways am I looking to find hope and fulfillment in things besides you, Lord?
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Study Tool 2: Hermeneutical Bridge

Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation, especially with the scriptures. For many of us reading the Bible and making sense of it can be intimidating. I mean can anyone really know what it means? Does it even apply to us today? Our culture is nothing like that of Biblical times so how can it apply to us today? The answer to these questions are yes, yes and of course. We need to understand that God, through the author had/has a specific intention with what he was teaching His people at the time that applies to all time periods and cultures. God is outside of time and is eternal so his word is as well. It is up to you and I to take the time to study God's word hermeneutically to bridge the gap from original intent to current application for our lives. This study tool is designed with questions to help you understand God's intention and apply his truths to your life now.

1. What is the authors original intent and meaning of the passage?

In order to find the original intent and meaning of the passage you need to know the answer to the following questions:

1. What is the human authors original intent?
2. What is God trying to teach about himself to the hearers at the time?
3. What did it mean to the original hearers?
4. What is the context?
 - a. Who is involved?
 - b. Where are they?
 - c. What point in the redemptive time line is the passage taking place?
 - i. Creation & Fall (Genesis 1-3)
 - ii. Time of patriarchs (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Isaac/Israel)-Genesis
 - iii. Time of the Mosaic law (Exodus-Malachi)
 - iv. The life of Jesus and the fulfillment of the law (Good news of the gospel). (The gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).
 - v. The establishment of the church and the last days (Acts-Revelation).
5. What literary Genre is being used by the author in the passage that you are reading? The type of literary genre will inform how you understand the



passage that you are reading and the message that the author is trying to convey. For instance, if you are reading a psalm (poetry) the psalmist is using different types of metaphors and similes to express the character of God and elicit an emotional response and connection to the Lord. The author is painting a picture that is true of God but every word is not meant to be taken literally. However, if you are reading a passage that is written as Narrative then we should take the words as literal and digest the passage as a historical event. Below is a chart that you can use for your reference:

The major genres of Scripture include the following: (Biblegateway.com)

1. Narrative

This includes books of the Bible or sections of books which simply tell the story of what happened. Exodus is an expansive, epic narrative. Ruth focusses on the story of one family. Acts tells the spectacular events of the first generation of Christians, as they were led and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Narrative tells us what happened, according to the purposes of the author. Sometimes there are spiritual lessons from events, and sometimes we are just gaining the context of the history of God's people.

2. Poetry

This is all of Psalms and sections of other books. The power of poetry comes through the use of vivid figurative language ("As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." [Ps. 42:1](#).) Also, ideas are repeated, sometimes with the same words, other times with synonyms (synonymous parallelism). The Psalms and other poetic sections of the Bible communicate ideas, but they especially express emotion. They show life in its fullness.

3. Wisdom

Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes are collections of wise sayings meant to shape the moral and ethical lives of their readers. They cover many practical topics. The book of James in the New Testament in many ways is like Proverbs in the Old Testament.

4. Prophecy

The four major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel) and the 12 minor prophets (Hosea through Malachi) are all God's word to his covenant people, warning them and



bolstering them during periods of pronounced spiritual and national danger. They are mostly oracles, later written down. We gain spiritual lessons from them about the disposition of God (e.g., disappointed, indignant, sorrowful, tender, caring), and the condition of the people addressed (e.g., frightened, disobedient, humbled, arrogant). We must read Old Testament prophetic books as God's challenge to the original audiences, and then we apply the lessons to our day.

5. Gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are similar to the genres of narrative or biography, but they are more than these. The Gospels are proclamation. The people who wrote them were true believers relating first-hand accounts about the life and teachings of Jesus. And so we read the genre of Gospel as faith documents, announcing a world-changing event centered in the person of Jesus. (The teachings of Jesus we know as parables are their own genre. These unique stories communicate lessons embedded in extended similes and metaphors.)

6. Epistles

The letters of the New Testament were communications to specific individuals or groups for specific and varied purposes. The apostle Paul meant Romans to be an overarching description of Christian faith, whereas 1 Corinthians was occasioned by problems, including a list of questions they had for Paul ("now concerning the matters you wrote about," [1 Cor. 7:1](#)), and the letters to Timothy were to encourage and guide a younger church leader in a challenging spot. Epistles are "occasioned" texts, and so we need to get at the circumstances that led to them being written.

7. Apocalypse

The book of Revelation and parts of the book of Daniel are revelations. Like other prophecies, they proclaim urgent messages to their original audiences, in particular, warning and comfort. To a greater degree than other prophetic books, they employ much symbolic language, which can be understood by studying preceding similar expressions in Scripture.

When we sit down to study the Bible we recognize what genre we are looking at in order to gain a head start in getting at the meaning. If we don't account for genre we will certainly misunderstand and misapply the truth of God's word. Genres also show how God's word is wide and varied and deep, and worthy of a lifetime of study.



2. What is the universal principle?

Once you have studied the context of the passage you are reading it is time to bridge the gap from the Biblical context to the right here, right now application. We do that through seeing and understanding the universal principle that God is teaching through this passage. Here are some questions to help:

1. What is the difference between the biblical audience and us today?
 - a. What are the similarities?
2. What do we learn about God and his character in this passage?
 - a. What theological principle do you see in this passage? (ex. God's sovereignty, God's goodness, God's power, Man's sinful depravity, etc.)
3. How do we see God's redemptive plan (gospel) being worked out in the people's lives?
4. What are the issues of the heart and character being addressed in this passage?

3. How do we apply the universal principle(s) to our lives today?

Now the real work begins, time to apply what you have learned to your heart and life. God's word is transformational and it is a joy to allow God's word to convict us and mold us into the image of Jesus Christ. Here are some questions to help with your application.

1. What heart issues do you see in the passage that apply to you? How do you see those heart issues being lived out in our world today?
2. What truths about God did you learn in the passage today? How are those truths going to change how you view God?
3. How do the truths that you learned today shape your view of the world around you? How will these truths shape and change how you approach your life?
4. How do the truths you learned today shape how you love people around you?



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