

II-A The inductive method of Bible study

- **All Bible study begins with and depends on the Holy Spirit for illumination into his Word**
- **A prayerful and thoughtful approach to Bible study is indispensable to the process**
- **The inductive method of study will be useful for our purpose in this class**

All Bible study is only helpful to the extent the Holy Spirit reveals God's word to us. Therefore it is imperative that we seek his guidance and understanding as we read, interpret, and apply Scripture to our lives.

There are several methods of studying the Bible. During our time sweet, we will be using a form of inductive study.

The inductive method

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- **Observation: What does the passage say**
 - ▶ Ask basic “who, what, when, where, how, why” questions
 - ▶ Determine whether the passages purpose, eg ask questions such as “Is it meant to be instructive or informative?”
- **Observation is the foundation which must be laid if you want to accurately interpret and properly apply God's Word.**
- **Interpretation: What does the passage mean? And the basis for accurate interpretation is always careful observation. Interpretation is the process of discovering what the passage means.**
- **Application: How does the meaning of this passage apply to me?**
- **Let's look at these three steps in more detail.**

The inductive study method that we will be using in this course has then simplified to three steps. The first one is to read and observe what the passage has to say. We can answer basic questions of what, where, when, how, who and why. We can also determine from the context whether the passage was meant to be instructive or informative. There are other things we can observe about the text, such as whether the passage was contextual to that specific situation, or a universal principle.

The observation phase is critical in accurately interpreting and applying God's word.

Once we have carefully read and observed what the text

has to say, we move to the interpretation phase. We answer questions like what does the passage mean? What is the Holy Spirit saying to us? It's important to remain objective and maintain a contextual perspective. be willing to say "I don't know" And come back to it later. How does this interpretation compare with related scriptures? Is My interpretation too broad or is it too narrow? does it conflict with my understanding of other scriptures? We will make progress in answering these questions through prayerful reflection, keeping the whole of scriptural teaching in mind, and by researching the writings of godly teachers on the subject,.

he third step in the inductive method is to apply the interpretation to life experience. Does the interpretation of scripture apply to a group of people, a theological position, or to ourselves. Perhaps it is a combination of these things. If there is a personal application to my life, what is it? what steps do I need to take to improve my conformance with scripture? Once we understand what it means, we are then responsible to apply it to our lives. Ultimately the goal of inductive study is a transformed life which is pleasing to God.

Observation of the text

- Read the passage and its context
- Who, what, where, how, and when
- Is this information, instruction for Christian living, or theological truth?
- Does the text pertain to God or man?
- How does it compare to similar passages?
- Careful observation is the foundation which must be laid if you want to accurately interpret and properly apply God's Word.

Let' s review these three steps here.
First is observation of the text:

- Read the passage and its context until you have a clear understanding of what it's saying.
- Answer the questions of who, what, where, how, and when as may be applicable

- Does the passage seem to be intended as information, instruction for Christian living, or theological truth?
- **Does the text pertain to God or man?**
- How does it relate to other similar passages?
- Careful observation is the foundation which must be laid if you want to accurately interpret and properly apply God's Word.

Interpretation of the text

- “What is the message or point the author is making about money?”
- What is God trying to say through this passage?
- Is the intent to be an example, information, or instructive for Christian living or theology truth?
- How does it relate to other similar passages?
- Is my interpretation consistent with what I know of God’s character and how he has revealed himself in other parts of Scripture? If it is not and it seems contradictory, then more study will be required.
- Regarding this course and our study of wealth and money, if you believe there is no teaching about money, move on to the next text

Let’s review these three steps here. After observation is interpretation: here are some points about interpretation:

- For each observation, answer the question “What is the message or point the author is making about money?”
- What is God trying to say to us through this passage?
- Is the intent to be an example, information, or instructive for Christian living or theology truth?
- How does it relate to other similar passages?
- Is my interpretation consistent with what I know of God’s character and how he has revealed himself in other parts of Scripture? If it is not and it seems contradictory, then more study will be required.

- Regarding this course and our study of wealth and money, if you believe there is no teaching about money, move on to the next text

Application

- Consider some changes to your life as a result of the principles you have discovered.
- List questions, problems, or topics for further study

The third process in the inductive study is to apply the passage to our lives.

Once you have decided on the application, we enter the hardest part of the application phase: converting head knowledge into heart knowledge. In the most pure sense of our walk with the Lord, we are not only responsible for putting it into practice in our own lives what we believe to be God's will, but accountable to him if we don't! But that is the essences of the Christian life– to be Ultimately, to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ, and to experience a deep and abiding relationship with him.

The application step is sometimes the most difficult part,

especially if it seems to require a change in the way we go about our lives. If the passage does seem difficult for us to obey, we can begin praying that God would change our lives to conform to his plan for us. Please recognize that God wants our heart, and a heart change can take time.

If we are not sure about its application to our personal lives, we can continue to reflect on the passage and let the mind of God take root in our own lives over a period of time. Let's avoid the temptation to misapply the text, corrupt the meaning, or ignore its teaching simply because it seems too difficult for us to do. The grace of God is there to help us conform to the image of Christ. But, again, it may be a long process.

Category

- Our resulting list of random principles derived from our study is not a very useful body of knowledge in its present form
- Into order to make our list more useful, we will decide on one or more **categories** for each principle
- This body of knowledge can be used for developing a biblical world view towards money and wealth
- It will also provide a systematic way of teaching others about this subject

It is helpful to categorize the various applications for the sake of creating a framework for living out biblical financial principles. These categories are somewhat arbitrary, but our study has the following categories:

- God's ownership of everything new and our responsibilities as stewards
- God as the object of our trust and worship
- The love of money
- The management of our finances
- Faithfulness in our giving
- Generous giving and sacrificial living
- Remembering the poor
- Instructions to the rich
- The true riches

Don't be too concerned with allocating your applications to the right categories. You may properly belong in several. there is no right or wrong but it is helpful for you to give this this some thought The purpose of this exercise is to develop a systematic method of communicating to others about the Bible's teaching regarding money and wealth.

Consolidate the categories

- Group all passages in a given category together and give the list a topical heading
- Make a list of the dominate or primary themes for each topic.
- Extract key principles for each. You are now systematizing Biblical teaching about money or wealth into a body of knowledge.

If you want to distill your findings further, you can group categories together into super categories, or you may combine subcategories in two larger ones.

Consistency check

- Are the principles consistent with what you know about God, his character, and his plan for our lives?
- Are there examples in scripture that support or contradict your hypotheses?
- Are the principles consistent with each other?

Finally, it would be helpful to do another consistency check. Is your overall body of knowledge consistent with each other and with other parts of scripture? Don't be too dismayed if things don't seem quite right after first period. It may take many passes over a period of months or years to come to a and biblically faithful understanding of this subject. Even then the poppy subject is so vast that if you are like me, mastering the subject will be a lifelong learning process.