

Philippians Bible Study

Before we begin studying the Bible we must understand why we study God's word. The Bible is not a self help book that simply helps us to become better people. The Bible is a book about God. It is God's revelation of himself to us!

So often we draw our own conclusions of what God is like. We want God to behave a specific way so we craft an false image of God in our minds. However, God is beyond our ability to understand. He is transcendent. But thankfully, God wants to show Himself to us. What an exciting thought! We need to know who God truly is and guard against trying to paint our own fanciful picture of Him. And the only way to begin to know God is by reading and studying His word.

There are many ways to dig into the word of God but for this study we will be studying Paul's letter to the Philippian Church in an inductive way. This means we will read the passage in context and ask questions to discover the what the author originally meant when he wrote the passage.

How to Do Inductive Bible Study

- 1 — Begin with Prayer (Psalm 119:18)
- 2 — Read the Text
- 3 — Observe: the goal of this step is to figure our what the text is saying. Ask questions like: Who wrote it? When was it written? Where was it written? What was said? But all of the answers to these questions should come from the passage itself.
- 4 — Interpretation: the goal of this step is to figure out what the text meant to the original hearers. This is a very important step because a wrong interpretation leads to incorrect application. Make sure you can base your interpretations from observations.
- 5 — Application: Prayerfully apply the passage to your own life.
Ask questions like:
 - * Did I learn something new about God? If so, how should I live in light of Him?
 - * Is there a behavior I need to adopt or stop?
 - * How should I pray based on this passage?
 - * Should I be praising God for something in this passage?
 - * Do I see a sin for which I need to repent?
 - * Is there an encouragement or promise on which I need to dwell?

This is why we study the Bible: so that we can know God. All of Scripture speaks of God's great plan. Keep this in mind as you dive into reading God's personal letter to us!

[Note: This "How to" has been adapted from Adrienne Lawrence's pamphlet on Inductive Bible Study.]

Day One

Paul is the author of Philippians. He was an apostle, which means he was an eyewitness of Jesus and was specially sent by Christ. We need to get understand Paul's background before we begin the study of one of His letter's.

Begin with prayer. *Lord, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."* (Psalm 119:18)

Read Acts 8:1-3 and 9:1-22

Observation: When was this written? Before or after Christ's death? What happened?

Interpretation: What is the main point of the passage?

Application: What did you learn about God, his ways, his character, his plans, and his priorities? How should you be living in light of that truth?

Day Two

Yesterday, we read about how Paul met the risen Lord Jesus in an extraordinary way. After Paul's conversion, he traveled widely in Asia and Europe, preaching the Gospel. Philippians is one of the thirteen letters he wrote.

Paul had actually planted the church at Philippi. After Receiving vision of a man urging him to come to Macedonia, Paul set sail to spread the Good news.

Begin with prayer. *Lord, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."* (Psalm 119:18)

Read Acts 16:6-40 for the account of Paul's first visit to Philippi.

Observation: What happened?

Interpretation: What is the main point of the passage?

Application: What did you learn about God, his ways, his character, his plans, and his priorities? How should you be living in light of that truth?

Day Three

When the Philippians church received this letter from Paul it would have been read aloud to the entire congregation. It would have been their "preaching" for their worship service. Reading through the entire book in a short amount of time is valuable to us. We need to see the overview of what the letter is about so we can notice certain themes repeated through the letter. Don't freak out! It's a short book so it won't take you long.

Begin with prayer. *Lord, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."* (Psalm 119:18)

Read Philippians chapters 1:1-2:11

Write down any repeated words, phrases, or ideas you notice.

What characteristics of God do you see?

How should you live in-lite of these characteristics?

Day Four

We will continue by surveying Paul's Philippian letter again.

Begin with prayer. *Lord, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."* (Psalm 119:18)

Read Philippians chapters 2:12-3:21

Write down any repeated words, phrases, or ideas you notice.

What characteristics of God do you see?

How should you live in-lite of these characteristics?

Day Five

We will read the Philippian letter one more time. This time answering specific questions.

Begin with prayer. *Lord, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."* (Psalm 119:18)

Read Philippians chapter 4

Answer the following questions:

- *What are the circumstances in Paul's life when he writes the letter?
- *What is going on in the lives of the people in the church when Paul writes the letter?
- *What is the overall tone of the letter?
- *Why did Paul write this letter to the church of Philippi?

Write down any repeated words, phrases, or ideas you notice.

What characteristics of God do you see?

How should you live in-lite of these characteristics?