



# EQUIPPED *to* DISCIPLE

*A Leadership Formation Pathway at* **WELLSPRING CHURCH**

## SESSION 5

TEACHING & LEADING BIBLE-CENTERED DISCUSSIONS

MARCH 2, 6PM–8PM

# How to Read the Bible

An Introduction to Inductive Bible Study

## **BIG IDEA**

The goal is not to read our ideas into Scripture, but to draw God's meaning out of it.

How to Read the Bible  
An Introduction to Inductive Bible Study

# **Why Interpretation Matters**

How to Read the Bible  
Why Interpretation Matters

**Why do Christians  
disagree about the Bible?**

# How to Read the Bible

## Why Interpretation Matters

### **Common Mistakes**

- Reading isolated verses without context.
- Jumping straight to application.
- Making everything about themselves.
- Confusing feelings with meaning.

# How to Read the Bible

## Why Interpretation Matters

### **The Goal**

Not “What does it mean to me?”

# How to Read the Bible

## Why Interpretation Matters

### **The Goal**

“What did this mean in its original context?”

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## Why Interpretation Matters

### **The Goal**

*Then, “How does it apply to me?”*

# How to Read the Bible

Why Interpretation Matters

## **Key Principle**

*A text can never mean what it  
never meant*

How to Read the Bible  
An Introduction to Inductive Bible Study

# **What Is Inductive Bible Study?**

# How to Read the Bible

## What Is Inductive Bible Study?

**Inductive = moving from  
specifics to conclusions**

# How to Read the Bible

## What Is Inductive Bible Study?

### **Three Steps**

1. **Observation:** What does the text say?
2. **Interpretation:** What does the text mean?
3. **Application:** How should I respond

# How to Read the Bible

## What Is Inductive Bible Study?

**Most interpretive errors  
happen because we  
neglect to observe**

# How to Read the Bible

## What Is Inductive Bible Study?

# **Step 1: Observation**

# How to Read the Bible

Step 1: Observation

## **Ask questions**

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 1: Observation

### **Things to look for:**

- Repeated words
- Commands
- Contrast words (but, therefore, however)
- Cause-and-effect language
- Tone
- Genre (narrative, poetry, epistle, prophecy)

# How to Read the Bible

Step 1: Observation

## **Helpful tools:**

- Read the passage
- Read it out loud
- Compare translations
- Mark key words

# How to Read the Bible

Step 1: Observation

**Exercise**

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 1: Observation

### Psalm 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 1: Observation

- Underline repeated words
- Circle verbs
- List observations without interpreting yet.

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 1: Observation

NO theology yet, just see what is  
actually there(!)

# How to Read the Bible

## What Is Inductive Bible Study?

# **Step 2: Interpretation**

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

### **Now ask:**

- What did this mean to the original audience?
- What problem is being addressed?
- What does this teach about God?
- What does this teach about humanity?

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

### **Five Guardrails**

- Context determines meaning
  - *Immediate context*
  - *Book context*
  - *Whole Bible context*
- Scripture Interprets Scripture
- Words matter but sentences matter more
- The Bible was written for us, but not to us.

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

“I can do all things through  
Christ who strengthens  
me.” — Philippians 4:13

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

Paul is talking about enduring hardship in the form of poverty, hunger, and suffering. “All things” refer to enduring every circumstance faithfully.

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

“Judge not, that you be not  
judged.” — Matt. 7:1

# How to Read the Bible

Step 2: Interpretation

**How it's often interpreted:**

*Never make moral evaluations.*

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

### **Context:**

*Jesus condemns hypocritical judgment. Later in the same chapter he says to identify false prophets by their fruit.*

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

“Where two or three are gathered...” — Matt. 18:20

# How to Read the Bible

Step 2: Interpretation

## **How it's often interpreted:**

*This is about small group  
worship being powerful.*

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

### **Context:**

*The passage is about church discipline and restoring a sinning brother.*

# How to Read the Bible

Step 2: Interpretation

Satan quotes Psalm 91 to  
Jesus.

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 2: Interpretation

**This is the ultimate example.  
Even correct Bible verses  
can be misused when ripped  
from context.**

# How to Read the Bible

## What Is Inductive Bible Study?

### **Step 3: Application**

# How to Read the Bible

## Step 3: Application

Truth applied to real life.

# How to Read the Bible

Step 3: Application

Thinking  
Affections  
Behavior