



INDUCTIVE

BIBLE

STUDY

INTRODUCTION

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What is Inductive Bible Study?

Deductive vs. Inductive Methods

The Inductive Bible Study Method is so named because of the way you interact with the text. In the inductive method, you are making observations and then drawing conclusions from the passage, or finding the big idea.

Some of these observations might be:

- Key words
- Repeated ideas
- Compare/contrast
- Logic/argument

You're starting from observation about the text (what does the text say?), then progressing to interpretation (what does the text mean?), and finally application (how should this change me?).

In contrast, a **deductive approach to Bible study usually means that you are starting with a topic, a big idea, or a conclusion.** Then, you're studying the Bible to find passages that support this premise.

A deductive approach can work, if the premise is true. But, if you're starting with a faulty premise, then the whole framework isn't trustworthy.

Topical Bible studies are a common approach that use the deductive method. They can be helpful, but shouldn't be all you use to study the Bible. This is because in a deductive method, you're not really letting the text speak for itself. Instead, you are starting with a general statement, then looking for details to support it.

Here's an example of the difference.



What is Inductive Bible Study?

First, let's talk about the deductive approach so we can see the differences more clearly.

A **deductive Bible study** starts with a big idea or topic. For example, a big idea might be that "God is powerful." This is completely true. A deductive approach would then find as many verses as possible to support that big idea. You might not necessarily see the verse in context, and the validity of your whole study lies in whether or not your big idea is true (in this case, it is!). One of the verses you might use as support of your topic could be Ephesians 3:20:

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think..."

In contrast, an **inductive Bible study** would start with a passage of Scripture, let's say the book of Ephesians. Once you study through each chapter and get to chapter 3, you'll use the context, key words, and Paul's logical flow to interpret the passage and find the big idea that – yes, God is powerful – but this verse is mainly talking about God's ability to produce spiritual growth and strength in us, far beyond our comprehension, in order to bring glory to Himself through the church.

The context gives so much more depth to this topic when you start with the text and **lets the text bring out the big idea.**

Why the Inductive Method Works

The Inductive Method works so well because you're in the text and **letting the text speak for itself.** It's a wonderful method if you want your Bible to be the primary textbook.

The Inductive Method is also fabulous for **hitting all the learning styles.**

- + Your **kinesthetic** learner will be helped with all the circling and underlining of the text.
- + The **visual** kids will be helped by the marking of the text (and the video component of the course).
- + **Auditory** learners will be working in their strengths when they can summarize a section out loud and also discuss with others the meaning of the text.
- + **Logical** learners will also be working in their strength to follow the logical flow of argument in a passage.



3 Key Steps To Inductive Bible Study

Inductive Bible Study typically works through a whole passage of Scripture at a time, and hopefully a whole book at a time! There are 3 key steps to Inductive Bible Study:

Observation/Comprehension: "What does the text say?"

Many people want to jump to the application of a passage right away. But you might not come up with the proper application if you haven't done these foundational steps of observation and interpretation first.

In Observation, you spend time reading and re-reading the text. First, do this several times without even marking anything. You want to let it sink in and read for context.

Then, you will get the most out of the Observation step if you will mark up your text. Make it colorful and meaningful!

You'll mark key words, repetition, transition words, lists 1-2-3, compare & contrast and much, much more.

Interpretation: "What does the text mean?"

Once you've marked up the text, now you will want to use the key words and phrases to help you figure out the meaning. Remember, it will never mean something that it didn't mean to its original audience.

In this step, you will want to try to summarize the section or paraphrase it into your own words. If you can summarize something, then you probably understand it.

Application: "How should it change me?"

Finally, once you've let the text explain the main points, you can now apply it to your life and context.

Answer these additional questions in the application step:

- + What do I learn about God?
- + What do I learn about myself?
- + What should be my response?



Practical Considerations

Supplies

The supplies needed for Inductive Bible Study are pretty simple:

- + clean copy of the text
- + pens or colored pencils for marking the text

I highly recommend that you either print out your own double-spaced copy of the text or buy an Illuminated Study Journal from Amazon. These are all in the ESV version. You can find a huge selection of these here: (referral) <https://www.4onemore.com/journal>

If you'd rather go the free route, that's no problem! Just go to <https://www.BibleGateway.com> where you can enter the passage and your preferred Bible version. Next, copy and paste the text into a Word document, format it as double-spaced, and print it out.

Using it as a family versus independent study

The Inductive Bible Study method used in these courses is perfect for a group setting or independent use. When completing an Inductive Bible Study with others, you can do a lot of the discussion out loud.

However, if a child, teen, or adult is completing this study independently, then they may want to have a "response journal" where they write their analysis, thoughts, insights, and passage summaries. This can also be done in an Illuminated Study Journal or a copy of the text if you leave wide enough margins for notes.



How to Complete the Sample Lesson

Each participant should have a copy of the text to mark up. Go to www.BibleGateway.com and copy and paste the text onto a Word document which you can then print out double-spaced and with a wide margin for notes.

Or, go to (referral) www.4onemore.com/journal to select an ESV Illuminated Scripture Journal from Amazon.

Have your colored **pens or pencils** ready to mark the text. These are my favorite: (referral) www.4onemore.com/pens

Watch the lesson video and follow instructions. Sometimes you will be instructed to pause the video and mark the text in a certain way. Make sure you do the work before you turn the video on again.

Have appropriate age-level expectations for your kids. If you're using this lesson with multiple ages, the younger kids might not necessarily understand or see all the connections and interpretations of a text. That's okay! They will eventually see and understand more and more. It's a learning process. **And the process is priceless.**

If your older kids need even more depth, we plan on including a higher level discussion of the text in our whole book studies as well as additional assignments for making this a full credit Bible class.

How to mark the text

I cannot emphasize enough *how important* it is to mark the text - **in color!** You will get so much more out of the study if you put the work in on this foundational level. It's so much harder to summarize a key idea when you're looking at black and white text that hasn't been marked up.

Here are some examples of how marking the text will make the meaning jump right out of the Scripture:

