

The Ultimate Bible Study Guide

1. PRAY FOR RELIANCE

- Admit your need for God's word in your life and the Holy Spirit to help you understand

2. OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

As you work through the text, note any questions you have.

- Read the entire passage for comprehension
- Read a second time, marking
 - Key words
 - Times, locations and people
 - Repeated words, ideas and phrases
 - Transition words (but, therefore, because, likewise, if/then ...)
 - Lists, contrasts and comparisons
 - Commands
- Read a third time, marking major themes such as:
 - Gospel Truths (*statements about God's holiness, man's sin, redemption through Christ, and future hope in the restoration of creation*)
 - New Self / Identity (*What does the text say about who we are in Christ? How is this contrasted with our "old self"? What should we look like as a new creation?*)
 - God's Character (*What does God do or say in this passage? What does this show about God? What does the text say about a specific characteristic of God? How does this affect his actions with his people?*)
 - Redemptive Promises (*What does the text say about God's promises to Israel, his people, and the followers of Jesus? What can we be confident of and hope in?*)

3. INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

- What is the context of the passage? Who is it written to and what are they going through?
- How does the passage fit into the context and theme of the book? How does the passage fit within the greater story of the Bible?
- What would the original hearers have thought about this passage?
- Use the dictionary to look up key words, note appropriate meanings and related words
- Look up related cross-references
- Consult reliable commentaries and different scripture translations

4. MEDITATION: WHAT SHOULD BE DWELT ON FROM THE TEXT?

Think and ponder on these questions:

- What are observations and themes that were noted about the text earlier?

- What does this passage tell you about who God is?
- What does this passage tell you about your sin and need for a savior?
- How can these truths change your life today?
- Does this text reveal something you should...
 - Believe about God?
 - Praise, thank, or trust God for?
 - Pray about for myself or others?
 - Make a decision about?
 - Do for the sake of Christ, others, or myself?

5. APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND TO THE TEXT?

What would God have you do as a result of your encounter with this part of His Word?

- How do these truths transform what you love, worship and value most? *(Remember that all actions begin as thoughts and desires of the heart)*
- How do these truths enhance your understanding of God? How can this change your prayers, worship, and trust in him?
- What things in your life need to be put on to be more like Jesus? How does your thinking need to be changed?
- What **specific** ways do you need to practice to loving God and/or loving others to apply this truth in your life? *Write down concrete specifics—what you are going to do, what people will be involved, and when you will start*

6. PRAY

- Use the passage as a model to pray the scripture back to God. Use words and truths from the passage to shape your prayer.
 - Adoration *(is there something to be thankful for that God has done, a truth about God to rejoice in, etc.)*
 - Confession *(what sin has been brought to light? What ways have you not worshipped God rightly? How have you acted like you are God?)*
 - Thanksgiving *(in the passage, what has God done? What has God done in your life?)*
 - Supplication *(ask God for help for you to obey what this passage has outlined, pray for spiritual and personal needs, pray for other's needs and salvation as well)*

* If possible, talk through all these things with your local church and other believers

Adapted from risenmotherhood.com, Dr. Bob Somerville, and Dr. Stuart Scott