

How Do I Study the Bible?

Option 1-Meditation Method

After reading and interpreting any Bible passage, ask these key questions:

- What does this say about God's character, plan, priorities, promises, desires?
- What does this say about human nature, character, behavior?
- What is the fallen condition on display in this passage?
- What aspects of God's grace are most evident in this passage?
- Are there examples to follow, commands to obey, warnings to hear?
- If these truths were alive in my life, how would I live differently?
- Why is God showing me this today?

Journal your responses and use this as an exercise for begin your prayer time.

Option 2-Observe, Interpret, Apply Method (from *A Visual Theology Guide to the Bible* by Tim Challies and Josh Byers)

Observe-What does the passage say?

-Observe by noticing wording, grammar and tone-Are there repeated words? What is the tone of the author? Are there any prepositions, transition words, interjections or conjunctions?

-Observe by questioning-What questions do you have about the passage? Does anything confuse you? Are you unsure about the meaning of a word or phrase? Do you wonder what an Old Testament allusion or quote is referring to?

Interpret-What does the passage mean?

- Examine the literary context
- Investigate the historical context
- Pay attention to the genre

*A study Bible with good notes is helpful here. (recommend ESV Study Bible)

Apply-How does the passage transform us?

-Head-Allowing the word to shape my mind

What does this passage teach me about God's nature?

What does this passage teach me about myself in relation to God?

What does this passage teach me about doctrine or the Christian life?

-Heart-Allowing the word to shape my affections

What does this passage tell me to feel?

What does this passage tell me to love?

What does this passage tell me to hate?

-Hands-Allowing the word to shape my actions

Do I have sin that needs to be confessed?

Is there an explicit command that I need to follow?

Is there an example that I need to follow?

How can I advance God's kingdom based on this passage?

Option 3-Newspaper Method

-Who? Make a list of all the major characters in the passage.

-What? What are the circumstances? What are the characters doing?

-Where? Where is the action taking place and why is that important?

-When? What is significant about the timing of this passage?

-Why? Why did God think this passage was so important that He included it in His Word?

-How? How does this apply to your life? How are you going to live differently today because of what you read?