



MANUSCRIPT BIBLE STUDY

Manuscript Bible Study is an excellent way to prepare to teach on a particular passage of the Scriptures. We think that this is the best way to study the Bible.

The fact that this kind of in-depth Bible study doesn't require preparation is a huge benefit to Bible study leaders. The best Bible study can be facilitated with the least effort.

Choose five to ten verses. Put the text of the verses in a document. Double or triple-space the text. Remove all headings and paragraphs, but leave the verse numbers. This piece of paper is the "manuscript." Print one copy for each participant, so each participant is dealing with the manuscript.

Participants can create their own manuscripts by searching for the verse online in the Bible version they want to use. They can paste the passage into a word processing app, make the necessary changes, and print. It doesn't matter that the Bible version is different.

Instructions:

Choose five to ten verses. Put the text of the verses in a document. Double or triple-space the text. Remove all headings and paragraphs, but leave the verse numbers. This piece of paper is the "manuscript." Print one copy for each participant, so each participant is dealing with the manuscript.

A group can work together, sitting quietly while working on the forms, and then discussing what they have found. Or, each individual can prepare part or all of the work ahead of time.

The leader of the group should do whatever preparation the participants do and no more. That means the leader may NOT prepare for the study.

Some people like to use colored pencils for the OBSERVATION section of the study. That is certainly fine, but we don't want people to feel like they have to have colored pencils to study the Bible in depth, which is why the key in the OBSERVATION section doesn't use colors.

When it comes to APPLICATION – PAST, it is very important to try to keep the group members in the mindset of living at the time when the text was written. To truly understand a passage, we have to understand what it would have felt like for those experiencing it firsthand.



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OBSERVATION – The instructions are on the first form.

INTERPRETATION – On a separate piece of paper, do these steps:

1. List the people or groups involved. and list anything that describes them or what they did. Think of the passage from each person's viewpoint, and write what they may have thought and felt.
2. Cross-reference only for these reasons. Cross references that go beyond these get into topical studies, which should end in extremely thorough, whole-Bible topical studies.
 1. Recall: Is it possible that a person may have had a passage or event elsewhere in the Bible in mind?
 2. Backstory: Does another part of the Bible refer to or provide more information about this situation?
 3. Parallel: Is there another passage that records this situation or event?
 4. Future Reflection: is there a record that might have reflected back the words in this passage?
3. List all possible interpretations for parts that may not be clear to you. Which is viable and which isn't?
4. Is there any religious, historical, political, cultural, or economic information that would add to the understanding of the passage?
Compare our experience to theirs.
1. Recount the passage in your own words as if you were there or you heard about it first, and were telling someone else. You can include your overall response (e.g., enthusiasm), details, emNote every possible mindset, belief, feeling, and circumstance each person in the historic passage may have experienced.
2. Two weeks, 2 months, 2 years.
3. Use Bible study groups to study the passage for the sake of the message. Have an opportunity for testimonies in the meetings.
5. otions, smells, decision processes, relationships, etc.
6. Identify false beliefs that have undermined the principles from the passage.
- 7.

APPLICATION – PAST

1. **Imagine yourself as having lived when the passage was written.** What would you have been expected to do? What would you have been willing to do?
2. How would the gathering of believers have changed if they applied the wisdom or instructions?



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3. What obstacles would the people of that time have to overcome to take the passage's advice? Imagine the situation as if you were in their mind.

APPLICATION - PRESENT

1. Think of all your (A.) activities, (B.) relationships, and (C.) decisions. Does this passage instruct you?
2. Does this passage apply to others? How?
3. How will you remember and apply what you learned two weeks from now? Two months from now? Two years from now?
4. Who today has similar attitudes, circumstances, or beliefs?

Additional Steps for Teaching:

1. **Stay in the passage.** The exception is when pointing out what a person in the passage thought or experienced before or after the events (see cross-references).
2. **Spend at least 15 minutes on the application.** Write down the principles the passage highlights. Apply them specifically to different cross-sections of the body of believers: Age, life circumstances, sin tendencies, temptations, hopes, fears, concerns, etc.
3. **Don't equate our life with significant people from the Bible.**



Study the Manuscript

You should have the passage double or triple-spaced on a single piece of paper. There shouldn't be headings and paragraph breaks, only the words and the verse numbers. This piece of paper is the "manuscript." You can use colored pencils or pens, but it isn't necessary.

1. WHO – (Circle)
2. WHAT and WHAT HAPPENED – (Box)
3. WHEN – (Underline) Also note the time passed and consider verb tenses in the Greek or Hebrew (BlueLetterBible.com).
4. WHERE – (Double Underline) Locations
5. WHY/HOW – (Dotted Underline) Why did they do it? How did it work?
6. WORDS TO LOOK UP – (?) Mark any words that might clarify the meaning of the passage after studying the Greek or Hebrew words.

Thoroughly look at the Greek to see if there is anything we miss in English. Look up:

1. The meaning
 2. The root word(s) meanings
 3. The other uses in the Bible
7. CONJUNCTIONS (Two-sided arrow above) Consider the ideas they connect.
 8. PARAGRAPH (//) – Mark where you would put thought dividers, or paragraphs.
 9. Draw arrows that connect significant ideas
 10. Is there a "punchline?" (** ... **) Does the author or a person tell us what we are to get out of the passage?



Person	Phrases about the Person	Mindset, Beliefs	Feelings



Context Information

Religious	
Historical	
Political	
Cultural	
Economic	
Other	



Word	Root(s)	Definition	Dictionary	Uses	Other



Cross-Reference List

Cross Reference	Recall, Backstory, Parallel, Future Reference	Summarize



Possible Interpretations List

Issue or Phrase	What are the Possible Interpretations?	Problems/Likelihood



Relay in Your Words

Recount the passage as if you were there. Include details, emotions, senses, decision making, relationships, etc. You are not rewriting Scripture. You are dealing with your interpretation of the passage in a very direct way. The purpose is not to take creative license, but to wrestle with the details of your study honestly. If you don't know, turn it into a question (e.g., Did Paul feel hopeless?)



Original, Today, Tomorrow – Page 1

Principle, Instruction, Expectation, Change, Opportunity, Attitude, Belief	Results of the Original Change	Obstacles to Change Past	Similar Type Today	Objections to Similarity Type Claims



Original, Today, Tomorrow – Page 2

False Beliefs	Demographic Application: Children, Teen, Single, Married, New Mom, Employee, Boss, Retired, Elderly	Two Days, Two Years



Core Beliefs, If We Really Knew...

Who God is and His Interests	
People's Rebellion	
The Purpose of All That God Did	
Spiritual Forces	
Heaven/Hell	
Good News, New Life	
God's Love, True Love	



Change Management

Why is this Urgent?	
Get People on Your Side.	
Create a Vision for What Could Be.	
Remove Obstacles, Find Power	
Identify Short-Term Wins	
Identify the Next Big Change	
Make it “The Way We Do Things.”	
Make Change a Core Competency	