

OBSERVATION
LESSON FIVE – INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Inductive and Deductive Bible Study Methods

http://rti.myfineforum.org/archive/inductive-and-deductive-bible-study_o_t_t_1302.html

Deductive or *synthetic* Bible study gathers propositions from Scripture and arranges them as premises in formal arguments which reason toward necessary doctrinal conclusions which may not otherwise have been stated in the Bible. In this way, it builds Biblical doctrine. On the basic level, the gathering and arranging of Scripture to prove doctrines has already been done for the student. On the advanced level, the student researches these on his own.

Inductive or *analytic* Bible study examines in detail large passages of Scripture in order to understand those passages in context. In this way, it builds a general understanding of the Bible. On the basic level, the student researches on his own. On the advanced level, the student surveys all or large portions of Scripture looking for patterns, and theorizes about the meaning of what he observes. He then goes back and attempts to prove his theory deductively.

So *inductive* and *deductive* study go hand in hand. *Inductive* study supplies the analytical Bible knowledge and understanding necessary to *deductively* build Bible doctrine, and *deductive* study researches and builds doctrine which informs *inductive* study concerning the wider doctrinal context of Scripture which then enables *inductive* study thereby to draw out even more meaning from the text.

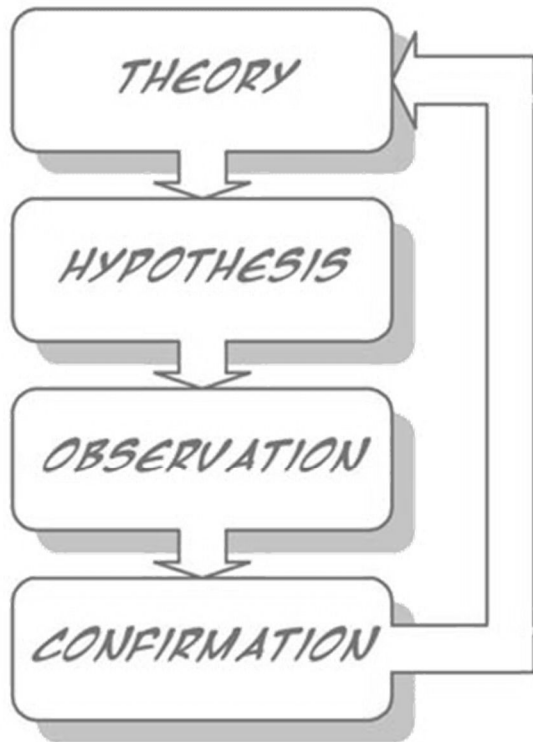
The weakness of *inductive* study is its limitations in building doctrine, and the weakness of *deductive* study is its susceptibility to being infected with dogma.

The abuse of *inductive* study comes when theory is turned into dogma, and the abuse of *deductive* study comes when dogma is mixed with doctrine.

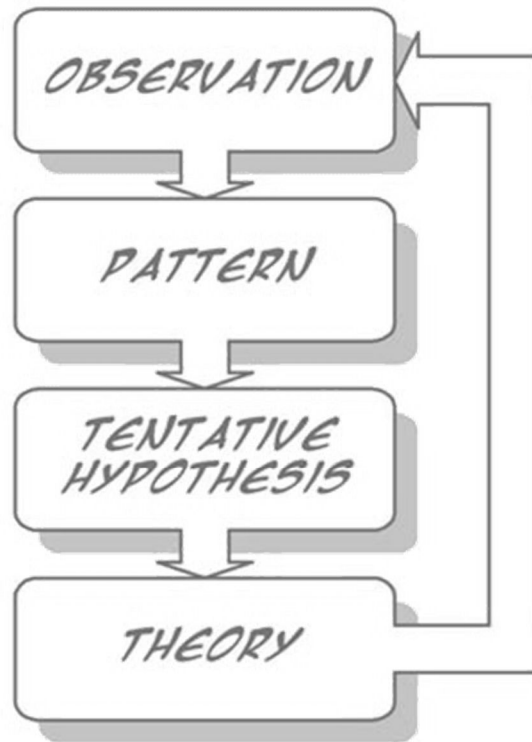
It sounds like inductive Bible study results in biblical theology, while deductive Bible study results in systematic theology.

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DEDUCTION



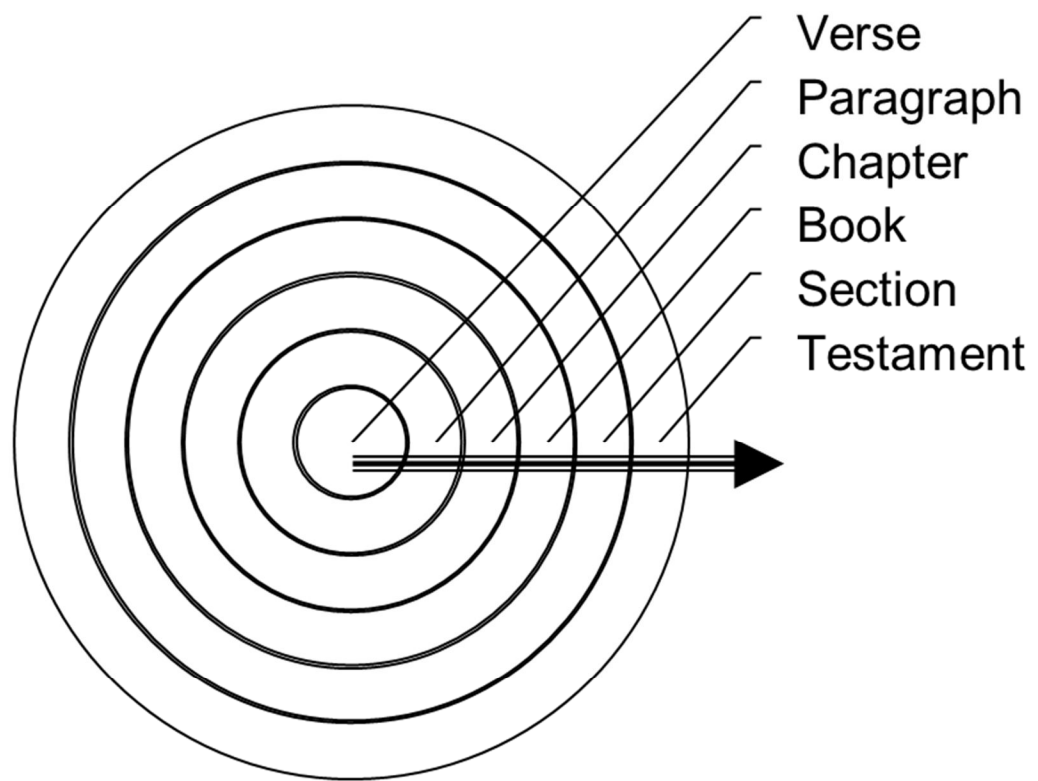
INDUCTION



INTRODUCTION – **OBSERVATION** – INTERPRETATION – APPLICATION

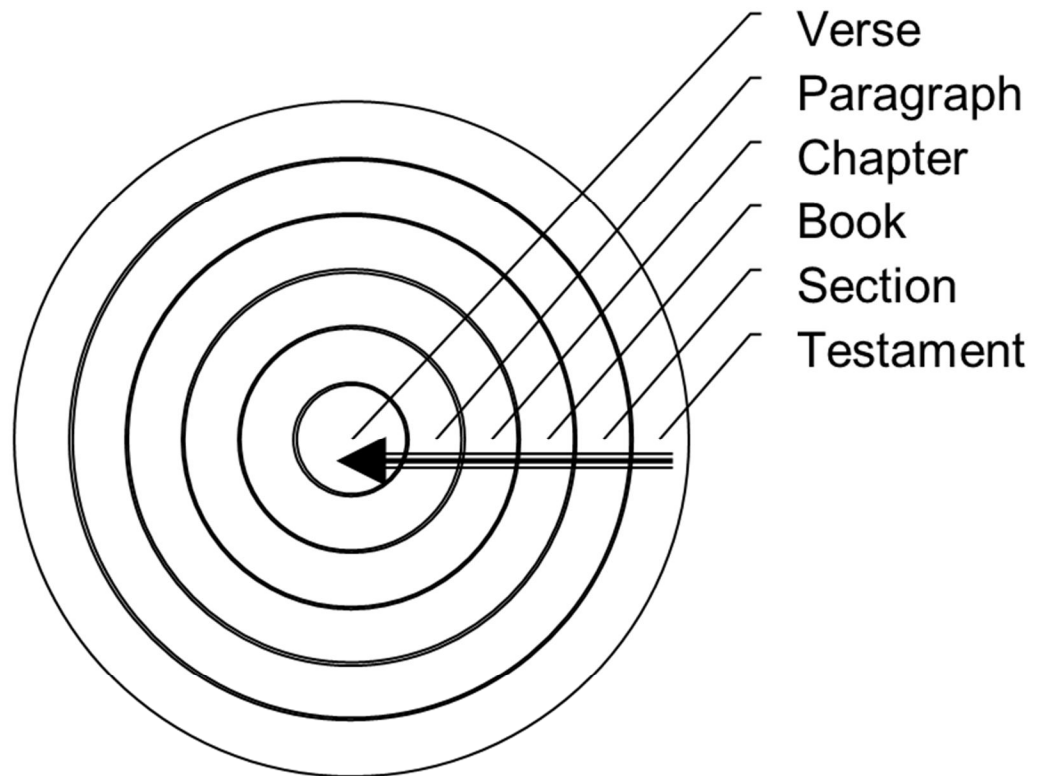
The Hermeneutical Spiral

The Inductive Method of finding the A.I.M.

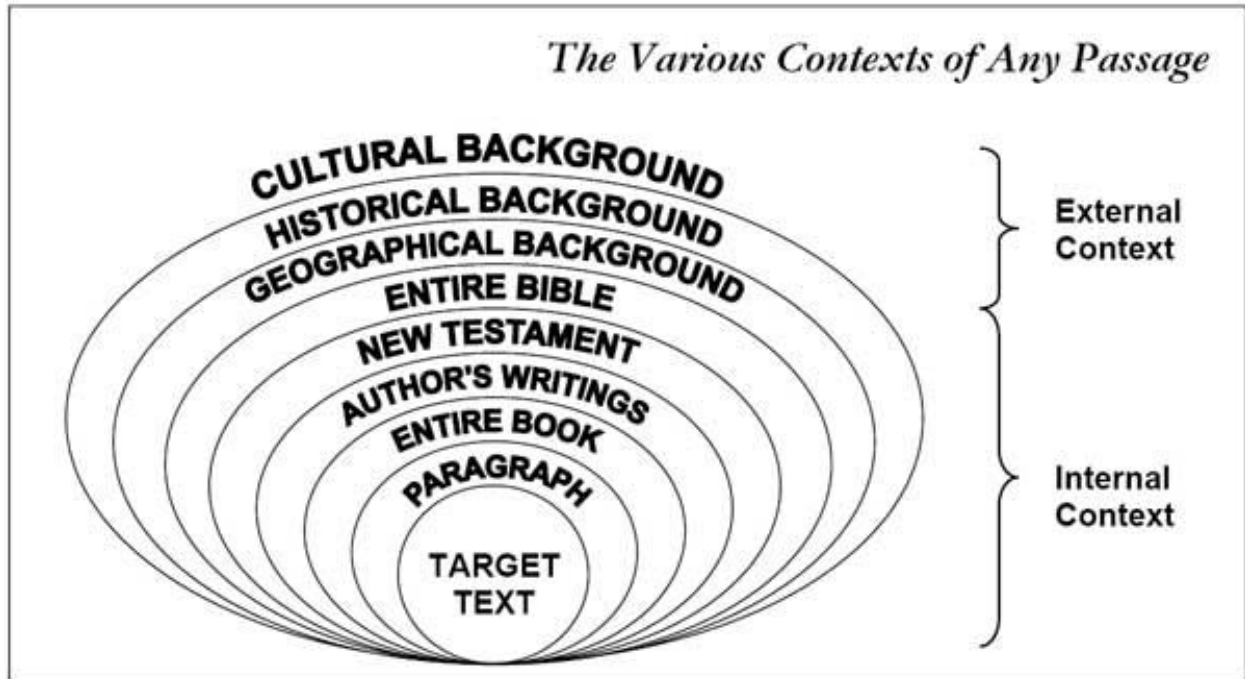


The Hermeneutical Spiral

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3 Simple Steps for Studying the Bible

- Jim George, Th.M. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/tips/3-simple-steps-for-studying-the-bible.html>

One of the noblest pursuits a child of God can embark upon is to get to know and understand God better. The best way we can accomplish this is to look carefully at the book He has written, the Bible, which communicates who He is and His plan for mankind. There are a number of ways we can study the Bible, but one of the most effective and simple approaches to reading and understanding God’s Word involves three simple steps:

Step 1: Observation – What does the passage say?

Step 2: Interpretation – What does the passage mean?

Step 3: Application – What am I going to do about what the passage says and means?

Step #1: Observation

Observation is the first and most important step in the process. As you read the Bible text, you need to look carefully at what is said, and how it is said. Look for:

- *Terms, not words.* Words can have many meanings, but terms are words used in a specific way in a specific context. (For instance, the word *trunk* could apply to a tree, a car, or a storage box. However, when you read, “That tree has a very large trunk,” you know exactly what the word means, which makes it a term.)
- *Structure.* If you look at your Bible, you will see that the text has units called paragraphs (indented or marked ¶). A paragraph is a complete unit of thought. You can discover the content of the author’s message by noting and understanding each paragraph unit.
- *Emphasis.* The amount of space or the number of chapters or verses devoted to a specific topic will reveal the importance of that topic (for example, note the emphasis of Romans 9 and Psalms 119).
- *Repetition.* This is another way an author demonstrates that something is important. One reading of 1 Corinthians 13, where the author uses the word “love” nine times in only 13 verses, communicates to us that love is the focal point of these 13 verses.
- *Relationships between ideas.* Pay close attention, for example, to certain relationships that appear in the text:

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– Cause-and-effect: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things” (Matthew 25:21).

– *If*s and *thens*: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

– Questions and answers: “Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty” (Psalms 24:8).

- *Comparisons and contrasts*. For example, “You have heard that it was said...but Isay to you...” (Matthew 5:21).

- *Literary form*. The Bible is literature, and the three main types of literature in the Bible are discourse (the epistles), prose (Old Testament history), and poetry (the Psalms). Considering the type of literature makes a great deal of difference when you read and interpret the Scriptures.

- *Atmosphere*. The author had a particular reason or burden for writing each passage, chapter, and book. Be sure you notice the mood or tone or urgency of the writing.

After you have considered these things, you then are ready to ask the “Wh” questions

Who? What? Where? When?

Who are the people in this passage? What is happening in this passage? Where is this story taking place? When in time (of day, of the year, in history) is it?

Asking these four “Wh” questions can help you notice terms and identify atmosphere. The answers will also enable you to use your imagination to recreate the scene you’re reading about.

As you answer the “Wh” questions and imagine the event, you’ll probably come up with some questions of your own.

Asking those additional questions for understanding will help to build a bridge between observation (the first step) and interpretation (the second step) of the Bible study process.

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Step #2: Interpretation

Interpretation is discovering the meaning of a passage, the author's main thought or idea. Answering the questions that arise during observation will help you in the process of interpretation. Five clues (called "the five C's") can help you determine the author's main point(s):

- **Context.** You can answer 75 percent of your questions about a passage when you read the text. Reading the text involves looking at the near context (the verse immediately before and after) as well as the far context (the paragraph or the chapter that precedes and/or follows the passage you're studying).
- **Cross-references.** Let Scripture interpret Scripture. That is, let other passages in the Bible shed light on the passage you are looking at. At the same time, be careful not to assume that the same word or phrase in two different passages means the same thing.
- **Culture.** The Bible was written long ago, so when we interpret it, we need to understand it from the writers' cultural context.
- **Conclusion.** Having answered your questions for understanding by means of context, cross-reference, and culture, you can make a preliminary statement of the passage's meaning. Remember that if your passage consists of more than one paragraph, the author may be presenting more than one thought or idea.
- **Consultation.** Reading books known as commentaries, which are written by Bible scholars, can help you interpret Scripture.

Step #3: Application

Application is why we study the Bible. We want our lives to change; we want to be obedient to God and to grow more like Jesus Christ. After we have observed a passage and interpreted or understood it to the best of our ability, we must then apply its truth to our own life.

You'll want to ask the following questions of every passage of Scripture you study:

- How does the truth revealed here affect my relationship with God?
- How does this truth affect my relationship with others?
- How does this truth affect me?
- How does this truth affect my response to the enemy, Satan?

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The application step is not completed by simply answering these questions; the key is putting into practice what God has taught you in your study. Although at any given moment you cannot be consciously applying everything you're learning in Bible study, you can be consciously applying something. And when you work on applying a truth to your life, God will bless your efforts by, as noted earlier, conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ.

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INTRODUCTION – **OBSERVATION** – INTERPRETATION – APPLICATION

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“From Interpretation to Application”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths

- A narrative is not normative, any more than subjective experience takes precedence over objective theology.

Example:

1. Gideon’s Fleece - Judges 6:36-40
2. Ananias - Acts 5:1ff

- The further you move away from interpretation and to application, the further you move away from objectivity and into subjectivity.

Example:

1. New Wine in Old Wineskins and generational discipleship - Mark 2:18-23

- Israel’s constitution is not binding on me as a foreigner. The nation’s constitution is binding only on those over whom it governs.

Example:

1. Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim - Deut. 27:15-26

- Old Testament narratives can illustrate New Testament principles.

Example:

1. Israel’s idolatry - 1 Corinthians 10:1-14

- The New Testament writer’s use of the Old Testament text does not consistently follow a normal pattern for language understanding.

Example:

1. “Adam” (Rom. 5:14)
2. The rock is Christ - 1 Corinthians 10:1-4
3. “Moses” (Heb. 3:16)
4. “High Priest” (Heb. 4:14-5:10)

- God’s character will not change between Testaments.

Example:

1. Jesus Christ - Heb. 13:8

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- Application must be consistent with the author’s intended meaning. Application, by its nature, is inseparably linked to the text of Scripture.

Example:

1. “Well Done” - Matthew 24, 25

- The cross really does matter. Jesus Christ is what the Old Testament is working toward and the New Testament is working from.

Example:

1. “It is finished” - John 19:30

- All of the “Pieces in and from Scripture find their significance only as they are tied into and flow from Jesus Christ.”

Example:

1. From Creation to Revelation - Luke 24: 27, 44; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Col. 1:16

- The learning process goes from intellect to volition to affection (emotion). Focus on understanding. The Spirit of God is going to take the Word of God and do a certain work in the people of God. Do we have the faith to believe that His Word is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12)?

Example:

1. Mind Renewal - Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23