

Chapter Two: Two Bible Study Methods

Just as a good sailor prepares for his journey by gathering materials such as charts, ropes and all kinds of tackle; a wise fisherman gathers his tackle box, his fishing pole and his bait. Both check the weather and look ahead to the ultimate goal. Studying the Bible is much like preparing for a fishing expedition.

First what is the inductive study method? What are the “charts, ropes, tackle, fishing poles, and bait” one will need to learn how to study?

Secondly, how is it different from other kinds of Bible Studies? Sailing on the open ocean and fishing on an open lake are different and yet the same. The open ocean requires following the weather for a long period of time, knowing how to handle storms as well as calm weather. Once out on the open ocean you cannot just turn around and return to port quickly! It takes planning and execution of many skills. With fishing, you can watch the weather and if a storm is brewing you can gather your gear and head home!

And lastly, the most important step that you have been waiting on,

How do I do it and what do I do with it once I have learned it?

A. What is the inductive or modified inductive method of Bible Study?



Figure 1-Bible Study

We will not only take apart the text itself, but determine word meanings, time frames, geographical locations, and people relationships before we draw any conclusions as to the interpretation or meaning of the text for ourselves and others. Think of a reporter on the scene. What is his assignment? He is to gather as much data as possible through observation and questions. This is your task as you do the modified inductive Bible Study. A reporter asks questions; listens to what his source is actually saying, and jots notes lest he forget once he and the source part company. He does all of this before he draws any conclusions. It is the same with the modified inductive Bible Study. We want to “interview” our source who is the person or persons, be it God or another author speaking, to see what is being said before we seek what is meant by what is said. We seek for principles that are applicable in our situation and perhaps future situations. Then, we want to ascertain if there is a lesson we are to learn and apply to our lives. And as always, as we enter the throne room of God, we are reminded as the author of Hebrews tells us: “Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help” (Heb 4:16). We are to come always in reverence and awe without any preconceived ideas, preconceptions or personal agendas. We are to remember that we stand in the presence before the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

B. How is it different from the Deductive Bible Study Technique?

In a deductive Bible Study one begins from a pre-assigned point and then uses the scripture to support the conclusion. A deductive method is useful in providing general principles regarding a specific point. It is probably the most well-known and used technique in pastoral ministry. The contrast between the two can easily be seen in this chart:

Inductive	Deductive
People learn from asking questions, internalizing data and then draw their conclusions	People learn from listening to another's data source while he/she shares their conclusions.
People must think about "something" and its implications, and then can internalize it as the Holy Spirit reveals His truths.	People are told what to think, how to respond, how to internalize the truths and the Holy Spirit is not part of the equation with the exception of the speaker who has been taught by the Holy Spirit and is now teaching.
Inductive Study is done apart from any denominational or cultic persuasion; the student is taught to discern truth from error through the avenue of the Holy Spirit's guidance. It is worthwhile for small groups, individuals.	Deductive Study is worthwhile for teaching large audiences what God's Word says about a particular passage.
Downside: Individual participation and time consuming	Downside: No participation on the listener, no time involved
Who for: energetic learners, lessons gleaned from "digging" stay with student and are internalized and easily shared with another.	Who for: <i>sometimes it seems as if it is for "lazy" thinkers.</i> However, we know that that is not always the case, otherwise why would we have "teachers"! The benefits are this: a deductive method provides spiritual nourishment The downsides of this method is that it (a) encourages those who should be students to become sponges, taking in but not being wrung out and (b) lessons are often forgotten once the teaching time is over. (ex: what did you learn in church/SS? "I don't know" is often the response)

Figure 2-Inductive/Deductive Bible Chart