



grace sacramento

# grace groups

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. [Acts 2:42-47, ESV]



**GRACE**  
SACRAMENTO

[www.weargracesac.org](http://www.weargracesac.org)  
2958 59<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento  
916-737-5190

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
The Purpose (Mission)	3
The Paradigm (Model)	4
The Picture (Vision)	5
The Plan (Structure/Study/Schedule)	6
Leadership Characteristics	7
Group Openers/Icebreaker	8
Confidentiality	9-10
Leadership Actions & Questions	11-12
Inductive Bible Study	13-14



# The Purpose

## 2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

We feel the following statement summarizes the purpose of our *Grace Groups*:

*Connecting people in small groups for the purpose of growing in Christlikeness through the careful study and application of God's Word, the building of meaningful relationships through accountability and affirmation, and the discovery and development of our spiritual gifts for the edification of the body.*

***Bible Study***: Growing in Christlikeness through the Word of God & Prayer



This part of the statement incorporates the first of the three purposes of Grace Groups. We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, authoritative and relevant for all believers in doctrine and practice. We believe the Scriptures are the catalyst for transformation in the life of the believer and in the church. A careful study of God's Word and its application is the final authority and guide for all Christian life and faith. In Grace Groups, we will examine the Word of God in conjunction with the Bible Study aides to assist us in a deeper understanding of His Word so that it would transform the way we live and think. (Josh.1:8; Acts 2:42; 2 Tim.3:16-17)

***Community***: Growing in Christlikeness through Meaningful Relationships



The second purpose of Grace Groups is the building of meaningful relationships. We believe that life change best happens in a small group setting. It facilitates the deepening and strengthening of our vertical relationship with God in the context of our horizontal relationships with one another. And it is in the context of a healthy small group that we believe loving relationships are formed, add to the wellbeing of the life of the church and attract others to us. We believe every believer ought to be involved in the life of others. It is in a safe community of healthy relationships that real growth occurs. (Acts 2:43-44; Heb.10:24-25; 1 Jn.4:7)

***Service***: Growing in Christlikeness through our Spiritual Giftedness



This last purpose of Grace Groups is to discover our divine design and realize the awesome implication of what stewardship of a life can look like. It is the utilization of our unique gifts, talents and passions and the discovery of our place in the greater body of Christ. It is only then that we begin to fully enjoy and experience the joy and satisfaction of authentic ministry. Growth is not for growth sake. The purpose of Grace Groups is not only to integrate people into the church and it's activities, but to further stimulate growth in it's members so that they could reach out to a lost world in need of a Savior. (Mark 6:34; Acts 2:45-47; Eph.4:11-13)



# The Paradigm

## 2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

If there ever was the perfect model of community, I think Acts 2 paints a pretty good picture of how it may have looked in that first century church.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

The church in the book of Acts wasn't superficial in its relationships. It wasn't selfish with material possessions. And it certainly was not static in its spiritual life. God was doing some amazing things in their midst as they selflessly and sacrificially gave of themselves and their possessions so that they could experience the supernatural movement of the Holy Spirit. They were able to witness the Lord adding to the growth of the church both spiritually and numerically.

Look at the first church in the book of Acts and how they lived in authentic community with one another. They were doing several things right. Look at the emotions that they were feeling.



First, they were **devoted**. They were fully dedicated to spiritual growth through 1) the apostles' teaching, 2) fellowship, 3) the breaking of bread, and 4) to prayer. The first church knew what was important and what would cause spiritual growth in their church.

Second, they were in **wonder** and **amazement**. When they were devoted to the right things, God showed them the glory of His majesty and power. They experienced the supernatural movement of the Holy Spirit working among them. Although Jesus had just ascended to be with the Father, God had not stopped working.

Third, they felt a sense of **oneness**. They understood what it meant to be one family in the Lord (They were brothers and sisters in Christ). How did they feel that? Two things from the text: 1) they were together. The regular habit of meeting together (Hebrews 10:24-25) was important for their spiritual growth and 2) they shared as there was need. They realized the value of the soul over the material. And when they detached themselves from material possessions, they were able to fully understand the significance of community.

Fourth, there was **gladness** and **sincerity of heart**. I pointed out that these Christians detached themselves from those things they owned. They must have realized that these were a gift of God to bless those who had greater needs. Martin Luther, the great Reformer, once said, "I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." As they let go, they experienced true freedom, gladness and sincerity of heart.

Fifth, they **praised**. They praised God not for those things they did not have or had yet to receive, but for the things they already possessed. As they devoted themselves to spiritual growth, God used them to bless many others. God added to their number daily. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." Keep first things first and second things second and we'll be able to experience the outpouring of His Spirit on our church.



# The Picture

## 2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

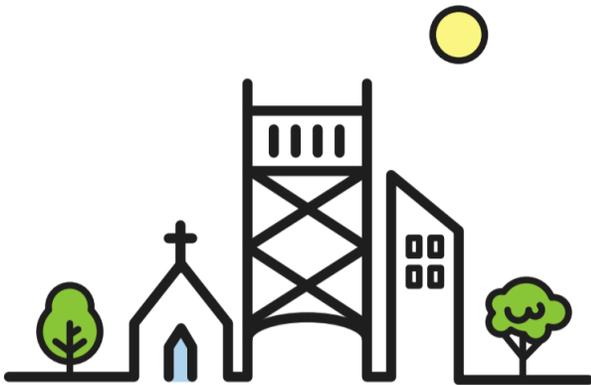
### The Picture (Vision)

As we begin another term of Grace Groups, our desire is that this would lead to greater intimacy with God and with each other. When the Word of God intersects with our lives in the context of a small group setting, we believe real change can occur. And when believers gather together and develop meaningful relationships through accountability and affirmation the church will naturally grow. It's exciting to see what God can do when we gather to grow together, not only one small group, but numbers of small groups for the same purpose.

Grace Groups serves as a platform where the people of God encourage one another to live a life of purpose. And these small groups that meet regularly serves to aid us in becoming more like Christ in character and conduct in the safe harbor of community. God has called us to be in community just as He is in community with the Holy Trinity. This is the reason why we were created: for relationships, to feel the full embrace and grace of our Lord through community. We need community. Community is a must for any disciple who wants to be more like Christ in every area of his/her life.

Larry Crabb, author and counselor writes, "Without a community where we know, explore, discover and touch one another, we experience isolation and despair that drive us in wrong directions, that corrupt our efforts to live meaningfully and love well." (*The Connecting Church*, Larry Crabb)

John Ortberg, author and pastor says, "Luke does not allow us to understand community as a general feeling of goodwill toward people with a few peripheral behaviors. Rather, Luke places community at the core of our being. Community is about how we belong to each other as Christ's followers." (*Build Community*, John Ortberg)



If you would, imagine with me a picture, a picture of true community: a place where individuals come together and find their significance in each other and in their Maker; a place where disciples gather and find their encouragement and joy in each other's company; a place where people connect and call it family; a place where sojourners find comfort during their painful times and laughter during their celebrations; a place where everyone knows everyone's name; a place where there is no feelings of jealousy or envy or hatred; a place where someone knows everyone at the core of their being; a place where everything is shared nothing is hidden.

Imagine a community like that where there are meaningful relationships and a significant sense of belonging. Do you long for a place like that? We do. Our desire is to see men and women, as they grow in their love for God and one another, embark on a journey to impact their communities for Christ. Impacting our community through community. Isn't that what we're called to do? Will you dream with us as we set out to do that which Christ calls us to do? Will you dream with us that we would see beyond ourselves and our programs and our church to see what God has in store for us?



# The Plan

## 2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

### *Structure*

Each small group will meet regularly [every week/every other week] for a time of discussion/study through a book of the Bible, sharing and accountability, and prayer. Our hope is that Grace Groups will serve as a vehicle for discipleship and growth. We will be meeting at the homes of its respective members. The group will be led by a group facilitator(s) who will go through a regular meetings with the pastor to go over the material, plan out any activities/events, and further evaluate and improve the small group ministry.

### *Study*

In our previous session of Grace Groups, each group met to discuss the sermons and answer the discussion questions provided weekly in the bulletin. This Fall, we are starting a new session of Grace Groups to lead people at Grace Sacramento into a deeper study and love of the Scripture. We will be looking at the Epistle of Colossians and the Supremacy and Sufficiency of Christ and what that means for practical, everyday living. The study guide is designed to walk us through Colossians. We will be using a method of studying the Scripture called Inductive Bible Study (**observation, interpretation, and application**). I've attached some helpful guidelines in this packet. Our prayer is that as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, you would continue to walk in him (Colossians 2:6).

### *Schedule [Fall 2018]*

September 16	<b>Leadership Orientation</b>
September 16-22	Invites (Call/Email to Join Group)
September 23-October 6	<b>GG: Meet/Greet</b>
September 30	<b>Leadership Training</b>
October 7-20	<b>GG: Colossians Survey (Session 1)</b>
October 20	<b>Leadership Training</b>
October 21-November 3	<b>GG: Colossians 1:1-8 (Session 2)</b>
November 4-17	<b>GG: Colossians 1:9-14 (Session 3)</b>
November 18	<b>Leadership Training</b>
November 18-December 8	<b>GG: Colossians 1:15-23 (Session 4)</b>
November 22	Thanksgiving
December 2-24	Advent
December 25	Christmas



# Leadership Characteristics

2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

You're probably saying to yourself, "What in the world have I gotten myself into? I have no idea what I'm doing." Let me assure you that you're in the right place. Small group ministry is one of the greatest challenges, but also one of the most rewarding. Many people who could be dynamic and effective small group leaders believe they aren't qualified. Unfortunately, many of those who would make great leaders pass up the opportunity to be used by God in this capacity.

To be a Christian is to be a part of the greater body of Christ where Jesus is the head. To live in isolation or independence is to be in contradiction to the Word of God. And since building relationships is a primary function of the church, it must provide a setting and structure where these things can happen. Experience has demonstrated that the small group is one of the best vehicles for the church to become what God intends it to be - people sharing Christ, meeting each others needs and reaching out in love to the world.

Effective, lively small groups are usually the result of three key components: leader, group, and study materials. Here are a few characteristics I've observed in effective small group leaders. I've made it simple. The six L's of leadership.

## lean

One of the first, but also the most important thing a leader can do is pray. Pray for wisdom. Pray for the members of your group before the study. If the Bible is to have an impact on their lives, the Holy Spirit must be at work in their hearts before, during, and after the study. That's what makes a Bible study different from any other type of discussion. Lean not on your own understanding, but in all your ways, acknowledge and trust in Him.

## learn

Come to the study prepared. Ask God to help you understand and apply the passage to your own life. Unless that happens, you will not be ready to lead others. It takes "time" in preparation to be ready when those unexpected questions arise. You may not know all the answers, but you want to be prepared as much as possible. Spend time with God and ask Him what He wants to teach you.

## listen

Be quick to listen and slow to speak. Explain to the group that the studies are meant to be discussions, not lectures. They are facilitators whose primary job is to get people to interact with each other and discover the truth of Scripture. Encourage everyone to participate. Don't be so quick to answer all the questions or to give all the advice.

## laugh

Human beings love to laugh. Laughter is a great thing. We've all heard the saying, "Laughter is the best medicine." It breaks the ice and makes life, "not so serious" all the time. Humor can cause us to break down walls that can keep us from really getting to know one another and ultimately with God Himself. So, don't be afraid to laugh, and even at yourself.

## live

Another important thing for the leader is to live a life of consistency. "The man/woman is the message." Your influence will only be as good as the consistency of your Christian walk. "Nothing will penetrate our words more than that which is true in us." Let's try to live in light of our exalted position in Christ.

## love

Lastly, it is so important that we learn to sincerely love those we serve. The old saying is true, "People don't care how much you know until they know that you care." Ask yourself, "Do I truly love those to whom God has entrusted to my care?" See how much God fills your heart with His love to be able to love those around you.



# Group Openers/Icebreakers

2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

Using group openers is a basic, yet essential, small group skill. Icebreaker ideas and share questions are designed to facilitate discussion about members' personal lives and to help them open up more freely (where they grew up, where they went to school, how they came to our church, where they work, what they think about certain events in our culture, etc.). They are not designed for simple yes and no answers.

What is your favorite movie and why?

Write down your two most favorite summer activities?

One of my biggest pet peeves is \_\_\_\_\_.

Who led you to Christ?

What is your favorite way to waste time?

What is the biggest lie you've ever told?

What do you miss most about childhood?

I was (would have been) voted "most likely to" \_\_\_\_\_ in high school?

What would your number two career choice would be?

I am most like my mom in that I \_\_\_\_\_.

I am most like my dad in that I \_\_\_\_\_.

I wish before I got married someone had told me \_\_\_\_\_.

What is the nicest thing anybody ever said about you?

If your house was on fire, what three things would you take?

What was your first job?

In what area of your life would you like to have greater peace? Why?

The most useless thing in my house is \_\_\_\_\_ but it's still there because \_\_\_\_\_.

Who has had the greatest influence on your life? (Other than Jesus)

What is your favorite city? Why?

What one word best describes who you are?

What is your most used emoji?

If you could bring back any fashion trend what would it be?

What's the most embarrassing fashion trend you used to rock?

If you were famous, what would you be famous for?

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

What is your favorite item you've bought this year?

If you had to delete all but 3 apps from your smartphone, which ones would you keep?

What would your superpower be and why?

Coffee or tea?

What is your favorite TV show?

What was the country you last visited outside of United States?

What's the weirdest food you've ever eaten?

What's is one thing we don't know about you?



# Confidentiality

2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

## Conferral versus Gossip

When is it ever ok to share a person's problem or news about him/her with a third party? It's tricky because every circumstance is different and those to whom it is initially told vary in maturity and the ability to deal with the issue at hand. To answer the question simply, it is both sometimes and sometimes not. With every issue, we have to ask ourselves what are our motives and reasons for telling somebody else (We'll get to more of this later). To test whether our motives are right we can simply ask, "Is it for the sake of building up or tearing down?"

There are two extremes. In our culture, where sometimes everything is shared and "in the open", oftentimes something is shared that should not have been and people get hurt. The Bible clearly condemns gossip and we must use discernment when it comes to what should or should not be shared with another. On the other extreme, in Western culture, where autonomous individualism is prized as a virtue, the "right of individual privacy" is stressed at the expense of individual responsibility to and need for the community. We hold "confidentiality" in such high regards, we don't say anything to anyone. And what often happens is someone gets hurt when something that should have been shared isn't.

Believers are called to share their lives with one another. Paul writes, "Bear one another's burdens." This is one of twenty-seven 'one anothers' found in the New Testament. It is one of the most profound thoughts of Scripture that we learn what it means to be in true community with one another. If our burdens cannot be bore together in the context of Christian community, then where?

James warned about the deadly effects of gossip and the power of the tongue. It is the control of the tongue or lack of it that can have such corrosive effects on the church. The tongue can either break a church apart or bring healing and encouragement to it. Gossip, like a tornado, can have a devastating effect on whatever it hits: feelings are hurt, relationships are ruined, and an air of mistrust pervades which destroys the sense of true community. Gossip, slander, a critical spirit is to be avoided at all costs. These do nothing to build up the body of Christ and should have no place in the life of the believer. More often than not, when we share "confidential" information, our motives aren't right and so must re-evaluate why we're discussing another's problem in the first place.

There are times when confidentiality must be broken. However, it should never be 'just to get it off our chest' or 'in the name of ministry'. It should really be done as we think about the benefit and welfare of the struggling individual. One writer suggest that we must carefully think this through and discern when it is important to bring it to the attention of others and when it is important to keep it to ourselves. Look at this chart on the differences between gossip and conferral\*:

Conferral	Gossip
Motivated by the desire to help the person and the local church	Motivated by lack of concern or even the desire to hurt the person and exalt yourself
Confers only with responsible people who can help	Talks to whomever you please without regard for its effect on the other person
Confers only about live issues	Talks past, dead, purely personal issues
Does so in addition to talking to the person if needed	Does so instead of talking to the person if needed
Carefully explains the context of the problem to the conferee	Neglects or distorts the context of the problem
Promotes more trust, openness and less gossip in the local church	Promotes fear of openness and more gossip in the local church

\*chart taken from <http://www.xenos.org>



# Confidentiality

## 2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

So, when is it ok or necessary to divulge information given to you? When it comes to some disciplinary situations, it requires that we confer with other leaders to resolve this issue at hand. For example in Matthew 18, Jesus speaks about this in great detail. Paul says the same thing about restoring the one "caught in trespass" by "those who are spiritual". This implies that they were told by the one(s) who caught them!

The idea that "my life is my business alone and only those I wish to tell" denies the individual Christian's effect on the rest of the community. The result is something every bit as ugly as a church riddled by gossip:

No true community

No church discipline

People wrestling with their sin problems alone instead being helped by the body of Christ.

To confer or to keep confidential requires much wisdom, maturity, and is part of authentic Christian community.

We believe that most things divulged to us should not be considered confidential in the strict sense of the word. The principle: *Christians are to relate to each other on the basis of responsible trust.*

If you trust another brother or sister enough to confide in them, you should also trust them enough to do with the information what they think is most helpful for you. You should receive others' sharing in the same way. The issue usually is not "Is the information confidential?" but rather "What is the most responsible and helpful way to respond?"

When considering whether or not to confer with another, prayerfully consider the following questions:

*Is another person or the witness of the church being injured by your silence?* Many issues are of such a purely personal nature, or have taken place so long ago that there is no good reason why they should be shared with others. With these matters, we should show the person acceptance and let him share this with others as he gets to know them.

But many issues directly affect another party (e.g., the adulterer's spouse) or the witness of the church (e.g., a brother swindling in business, or a youth worker who has been involved in molesting children) that they should be divulged for that reason. Not to do so is to enter into a "conspiracy of silence" which is hurting others and the witness of Christ.

*What is the person's role in the church?* Those with more authority are also more accountable. If you know that a deacon or an elder who fell to temptation and got high, you should bring this to the attention a leader. On the other hand, a similar fall by a new Christian may not need any other input if you are the person working with him. However, the person who is working most closely with them should probably know so they can help. Encourage the person to share their fall with this person, and it may be best to check to see if he did this.

*What concrete thing do you want to confer about?* You should be clear on what and why you want to confer, and you should confer only with those who can help. If you can't answer these questions clearly, more thought is probably needed before you confer.

*What is your own tendency in this area?* If you tend to "smooth things over" that should be brought out, ask yourself why you shouldn't confer about it. If you tend to be a big-mouth, ask yourself if it is necessary to talk with others about it.\*

---

\*chart taken from <http://www.xenos.org>



# Leadership Actions & Questions

2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

## Four Facilitator Actions (A.C.T.S.)

A leader ACTS to facilitate discussions by:

- A** **Acknowledge** everyone who speaks during a discussion  
Even if several people speak at once, make sure to recognize each one. Also, respond to laughter or a groan or a deep sigh— remember, 90 percent of communication is non-verbal.
- C** **Clarify** what is being said and felt  
Say, “Let me see if I understand what you are saying.”
- T** **Turn** it back to the group as a means of generating discussion  
Don’t be the answer person. Ask, “What do others of you think about what was just said?”
- S** **Summarize** what has been said.  
Offer statements like, “So far, it seems like we have been saying . . .” or “Nancy, could you try to summarize the key components of the discussion so far?”

## Asking the Right Questions

Another key to facilitating dynamic discussions is generating the right kinds of questions and offering appropriate responses. Here are some guidelines for the kinds of questions and responses that would help your group engage in meaningful, challenging discussions.

### Opening Questions

Use an opening question to help the group warm up to each other, get to know one another better, and to let them hear their own voices. Opening questions are speculative and thought-engaging, preparing group members’ minds and hearts for the topic to be discussed.

You may want to broach the topic of discussion with a short, creative illustration or story that will answer the question, “Why do I want to discuss this topic tonight?”

### Examples

“What do you look forward to as you grow older?”

“What is it that often drives us to fear intimacy with one another? What can we do as a group to diminish this anxiety?”



# Leadership Actions & Questions

2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

## Launching Questions

Knowing the goal of the discussion, the group leader prepares launching questions designed to generate group interaction and feedback. These questions are typically designed to answer the question, “What do I know, what do I feel, what should I do?”

### Examples

“What do we learn from seeing the obstacles Joseph faced and how we overcome them?”

“After hearing tonight’s discussion, we all agree that we are somewhat ‘stuck.’ What steps can we take to develop greater trust levels with each other?”

“What do you think was going through Peter’s mind at this time?”

“Would you be tempted in this situation?”

“Do you agree or disagree with this statement?”

“What three commands do we find in this passage?”

“What two things does Paul say we must do?”

## Guiding Questions

Even the most well-prepared leader will need to spontaneously guide discussion at times.

### Examples

Rephrase the question: “You seem to be asking, ‘How can we develop trust as a group?’”

Personalize the question: “How would you respond to Jesus if He asked you that question?” Test for consensus or decision: “Are we saying that everyone must obey this command?”

## Summarizing Questions

Summarizing after a series of questions allows the leader to acknowledge group members’ contributions while maintaining biblical integrity and direction.

### Examples

An affirming comment can be made with good eye contact and a smile by saying, “Thanks for sharing that” or “That’s a good point” or “Okay, that is a response worth considering; are there other thoughts as well?”

A summarizing response might be, “So, what we see in this passage is . . .”

## Application Questions

The goal of small group study is not just information but transformation. The leader can help members apply what they have learned by asking application questions.

### Examples

“What changes will you make this week as a result of our discussion tonight?” “What difference does this make to you and me?”



# Inductive Bible Study

2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

*The Main Goal of Inductive Bible Study*  
*Careful observation that leads to real-life application!*

## STEP I: PRAY (ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT)

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to understand His Word. Don't read it in the flesh.

- ✧ Attitude is critical in understanding His Word. It can either hinder us or help us in studying the Word.
- ✧ Always pray before, during and after your study.

## THREE WAYS WE UNDERMINE THE BIBLE'S POWER IN OUR LIVES (Dehaan, *If You Don't Eat*):

1. Neglecting to read it
2. Reading it without relying on the Spirit's power to help us understand it
3. Reading it, but not obeying what we read

## FAULTY ATTITUDES

1. *The Defeated*: I won't be able to understand anything anyway, so why try to study the Bible?
2. *The Negative*: I would like to learn how to study the Bible better, but I doubt if anything I discover would be good or right.
3. *The Closed Heart*: I don't believe everything the Bible teaches. How can it have any value today? So, why study it?
4. *The Lazy*: I suppose if I tried I could understand, but what I read seems dull and hard. I don't know if I want to invest the energy to learn how to study.

## POSITIVE ATTITUDES

1. *The Positive*: I want to learn how to study the Bible. I am sure there will be things in the Bible I'll not understand, but through the help of the HS, I can learn to gain insight into God's Word.
2. *The Receptive*: God asks of me only an open heart and an open mind so that He can reveal Himself and His truths to me.
3. *The Expectant*: I'm coming to God's Word to let Him speak to me. I don't have to inject ideas into my reading or try to squeeze truths out of it. As I study and pray, I believe that the Scripture passage will unfold itself to me.
4. *The Faithful*: I cannot expect much from Bible study unless I'm willing to invest energy and discipline in the study. If I only scratch the surface, my reward is a few crumbs. If I dig deeply, my reward will be rich treasures. (Wald, *The Joy of Discovery*)

## STEP II: READ ("SEE THE BIG PICTURE")

**READ THROUGH THE WHOLE BOOK** at least three times to get the big picture. It's important to get main ideas and themes down before you get into the specifics of smaller sections. Find the author, recipients, purpose of the book, the circumstances surrounding its' writing, etc.

A good exercise could be to do a book summary. Find key verses, major themes, major principles from the book. Outline the book with key headings of its major sections. Again, it's good to get a sense for the overall structure of the book that you are studying.

## STEP III: OBSERVE (WHAT DOES IT SAY?)

Before you ask, 'what does it mean?', 'what truth is it trying to teach?', or even 'how it applies to me?', you have to first ask the question "What does it say?"

Give the book the "looks": purpose; repeated phrases; the point; who is involved; the time & sequence of events (once, then, now, will be, etc); persons, places, ideas; logical connectives (therefore, but, since, so, thus, because, for, that, etc.); what is actually being said?

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ✧ Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How?
- ✧ Verbs and tenses (commands, promises, etc.)
- ✧ Consider repeated words & phrases
- ✧ Cause and effect, contrasts, comparisons
- ✧ "Scripture interprets Scripture": If you don't understand something, look elsewhere in Scripture to see if it sheds any light.
- ✧ Genre of the book? (history, law, poetry, narrative, parable, letter, prophesy, etc.)
- ✧ Look at different translations (ESV, NASB, NIV)

## STEP IV: INTERPRET (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

Ask the question after you have observed the text, "What does it mean?" "The primary purpose of interpretation is to discover what the author meant by what he said, to discover his purpose and message. When trying to interpret, we are not to think what the passage means to us, but what it seemed to mean to the author." (Wald, *The Joy of Discovery*)

- ✧ What does the author mean by this?
- ✧ Why did the author say that?
- ✧ How does this idea relate to that one?



# Inductive Bible Study

2018 Fall-Winter Grace Groups

## SEVEN GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETATION

1. Goal of discovering the author's original meaning for his original audience
2. Identify literary form/genre
3. Interpret it in harmony with the context
4. Interpret unclear passages in light of the clear
5. Openness and guidance of the Holy Spirit
6. Understand difference between prescriptive versus descriptive statements
7. Interpret in light of God's central self-revelation in Jesus Christ

## SOME HELPFUL TOOLS & RESOURCES

*Study Bible*- Although study Bibles are not extensive in nature, they will help you get some basic information to help you get started in the process of digging deeper into your study.

*Concordance*- a concordance can help you find Bible passages on particular subjects. You can find other parts of Scripture where a certain word might be used. It is also helpful in finding cross-references. ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))

*Bible Dictionary*- You can find the definition of key words used in Scripture that might give you insight into its meaning. ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))

*Commentaries*- A good rule of thumb is to stay away from it as long as possible. You should use one after you have finished your study. These should be used last to gain insight into difficult passages.

---

## STEP V: PRINCIPLE (WHAT'S THE TRUTH?)

A principle asks the question, "What principle then does it teach?" A principle is a "broad, general, or fundamental truth that a particular passage teaches. It is a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption." (Wald, *The Joy of Discovery*)

These principles that we draw from Scripture is what bridges the context of its original audience to our situation today. And these principles are the basis in which we begin to apply the Word to our very lives. Principles are timeless truths that speak to the veracity of God's Word.

---

## STEP VI: APPLICATION (NOW WHAT DO I DO?)

A professor once said, "Observation plus interpretation without application equals abortion. In other words, every time you observe and interpret but fail to apply, you perform an abortion on the Scriptures in terms of their purpose." (Howard Hendricks, Dallas Theological Seminary)

In this step, we ask, "What am I going to do about what I have just read? What is God telling me?" We began by saying that one of the ways we undermine the Bible's power in our lives is when we read it and then not obey what we read. The sad fact is that for many students of the Word is that it stops at interpretation and never gets to application. Bible study was never intended to be just information, but for transformation. When it falls short of application, it has only become a mental exercise and not much more.

"We all need to ask ourselves are we studying the Word that we might be more like Jesus or more like the Pharisees? Don't be deceived! Every time we hear the Word of God, we are either a little closer to heaven or a little further away. We are either a little more sweetened or a little more hardened. But we are never just the same. Once we know what a passage means we are responsible to live it out." ([www.preceptaustin.org](http://www.preceptaustin.org))

## POTENTIAL DANGERS IN APPLICATION

1. Substituting interpretation for application as did the Pharisees
2. Substituting superficial obedience for substantial life-change
3. Substituting rationalization for repentance ([www.preceptaustin.org](http://www.preceptaustin.org))

## SEVEN HELPFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ☒ Are you a changed person as a result of receiving the Word? Am I different now after hearing?
- ☒ Have you yielded your will and desires to Him?
- ☒ What has God said to you today?
- ☒ Do you love God more today than yesterday?
- ☒ Is there a sin in your life that needs to be confessed and repented?
- ☒ What promises do I need to claim?
- ☒ What can I model and teach? What does God want me to share with someone?

---

## STEP VII: ACCOUNTABILITY (WHO CAN HOLD ME TO THESE TRUTHS?)

Life is better learned in the context of community. Our vertical relationship with God is actualized in the horizontal relationship with people. When believers gather together for accountability and affirmation, our spiritual life will naturally soar. Accountability is that important. Accountability helps me achieve that purpose that God has intended for me to be.