
Unfolding the Word of God

by
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Published by



Confessional Press:

The Publishing Ministry of Faith Community Baptist Church

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Inductive Bible Study Method

Introduction

“True Biblical preaching ought to be a life-changing endeavor. The conscientious preacher does not merely seek to impart abstract doctrine or plain facts to his people; he also pleads with them for heartfelt and earnest obedience.”



So says John MacArthur in the forward to the publication on preaching by Michael Fabarez entitled Preaching That Changes Lives.

Truly MacArthur's comments are on target. Furthermore, they are applicable to the study of the Bible (out of which all true preaching arises), and not simply to the act of preaching alone. The individual who attempts to study the Scripture in a way that is not connected with life, will simply join himself to the pool of Pharisaical exegetes of which we already have enough. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for searching "the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me!" Jesus said, "and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life" (NAB John 5:39-40). We need in the church today people who will come to Jesus as a result of studying the word of God. In other words, as James states, we need people who will prove themselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves" (NAB Jam 1:22).

True, God-honoring, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit- taught study of the word of God changes lives. In the words of Howard Hendricks, noted Bible teacher from Dallas Theological Seminary, "The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity, but to make you conform to Christ's image. Not to make you a smarter sinner, but to make you like the Savior. Not to fill your head with a collection of Biblical facts, but to transform your life."

"Truth as set forth in the Christian Scriptures is a moral thing;" says A. W. Tozer, "it is not addressed to the intellect only, but to the will also. It addresses itself to the total man, and its obligations cannot be discharged by grasping it mentally. Truth engages the citadel of the human heart and is not satisfied until it has conquered everything there."

If this is true, and we believe it is, we should recommit ourselves (or commit ourselves for the first time) to the thorough study of

the word of God with the intention of seeing a change in the way we think and go about our business every day. We are going to have to be like the man Paul charged young Timothy to be in 2Tim 2:15 - “diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

In these next few pages we are going to attempt to present you with a method of studying the Scripture that will guide you to become “diligent,” as the Word requires, and to draw from the Scripture life-changing truth.

It is a method that in the words of Howard Hendricks, “involves taking certain steps in a certain order to guarantee a certain result. Not just any steps; not just any order; not just any result.”

The three step process to which we are going to introduce you is commonly referred to as the “Inductive Bible Study Method” (IBSM). Many methods over the years have been employed to varying degrees of success, but none can compare with the inductive study method.

For example:

The “Get an idea then go to the Bible for support method.”

The preacher was preaching on the subject of “Why women’s hair should remain up in a bun.” He used as his text Matt 24:17. There we read in the KJV:

“Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house.”

The “Disregard for context method.”

Only two people showed up for Wednesday night prayer service and the pastor consoled the man and his wife with the words of the Scripture:

NAB Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

The “Open and point method for gaining wisdom during times of discouragement.”

The man first opened the Bible to John 13:27

NAB John 13:27 Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

Then he read:

NAB Matthew 27:5 and he went away and hanged himself.

This was sadly followed by:

NAB James 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

These methods and others like them simply will not do, and though they sound silly, if you listen closely to studies and sermons today, they occur all too often. The “Inductive Bible

Study Method” will help us avoid these and other errors. Remember the words of Hendricks: Inductive study involves - “taking certain steps in a certain order to guarantee a certain result. Not just any steps; not just any order; not just any result.”

What are those steps?

- Step 1: Observation
- Step 2: Interpretation
- Step 3: Application

What is involved in each of these steps? Here we will provide a brief overview:

In Observation we are assuming the role of what has been described as a Biblical detective. Like the inspector on the old TV show *Dragnet* we simply want the facts, just the facts. Here we are asking the question: “What does the Bible say?”

In Interpretation we are digging deeper. We have discovered what it says, now we want to ask the question: “What does it mean?” Here we will pull together all the material we have gained from our examination of the text and seek sound material we find from other sources outside the Scriptures and pull these together to get at the meaning of the text.

In the final step of our process - Application - we ask the question: “How does it work?” I know what it says, and what it means; I want to know now what to do because of it. Here is where the rubber meets the road! We are getting to the end for which we began the process in the first place. Application is

where thoughts are altered, the will is confronted, and lives are changed!

Howard Hendricks makes the following insightful remark as to the relationship of the three steps in the inductive process:

“The more time you spend in observation, the less time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. Furthermore, the less time you spend in observation, the more time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”

Inductive Bible Study Method

Observation

Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.
NAB Psalm 119:18



With that in mind let's look at the process of "Observation."
How can I be a good Biblical detective? What do I need to do?

Step 1: Pray - Pray - Pray

The Psalmist writes: “Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law” (NAB Psalm 119:18). The Psalmist knew that the understanding of the word of God was first and foremost a spiritual exercise. He would not be able to understand the depths of the word of God apart from spiritual insight. This is affirmed throughout the word of God. Remember the words of the Apostle Paul to the believers in Corinth:

NAB 1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

The man without the Spirit of God living within will fail to perceive the truth of the Word. Dependence on God for insight into the Scripture is fundamental to the study of the Scripture. (See also 1John 2:20-21, 27)

Step 2: Read - Read - Read

There is a danger in becoming familiar with the Bible. The things about which we are most familiar tend to be the things about which we become very casual. The Bible is an in-exhaustible store of rich treasure. As we pray and read repeatedly, “wonderful things” are disclosed from the word of God. You will never reach the point of saturation when it comes to Bible reading. You can never

read enough. You will never exhaust its contents. The discipline of repeatedly reading the text is essential.

Step 3: Question - Question - Question

Many might be tempted to think that asking questions of the Bible is a sign of irreverence. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Bible can withstand any question you may put to it. It is not afraid of your questions, and you should not be afraid to ask them. Ask in reverence; ask for understanding. Here is a series of simple questions you can ask of any text:

5"W's" and the "H" Questions:

- Who: Who is speaking or being spoken to?
 - What: What exactly is being said?
 - When: When is the event taking place?
 - Where: Where is the event occurring?
 - Why: Why is the conversation/event happening?
 - How: How is the conversation/event unfolding?
- *Record your answers to these questions.

Step 4: Mark - Mark - Mark

Another trap people fall into is being afraid of marking in their Bibles. Some feel, like with asking the Bible questions, that marking in their Bibles is a sign of irreverence for the Word of God. This is simply false!

The Bible is given for you to learn - not put on the coffee table and never touch. Marking can be a great tool to aid in the learning of the contents of the Scripture. Make your markings significant and memorable. In other words, don't just arbitrarily mark throughout the text. The following suggestions have proven helpful:

Mark all:

- References to Time

*Use a clock face in the margin 🕒

- Key/significant words or phrases

*Indicate by colors

- Lists

*Make a list in the margin or within the text

- Comparisons and Contrasts: Like, As, But, However

*Mark with c/c in the margin

- Terms of Conclusion: Therefore, So then, Finally, For this reason

*Mark with a box or something to set them off from the text

- Geographical and Historical references

*These you can read about later in Bible Handbooks, Dictionaries, and Encyclopedias

Step 5: Record - Record - Record

Keep a list of all thoughts or questions you come up with during your observation. No thought or question is insignificant at this point in your study. Write them all down!

Step 6: Summarize - Summarize - Summarize

At this point you need to put all your conclusions from your observation study into chart form. This will help you pull your thoughts together in a central location from which you will begin to make your interpretive decisions later. Include here information gained from observing only the text regarding the author, recipients, purpose of writing, date of writing, key words, and stated purpose(s) of the book. You can make your own chart on one sheet of 8½ x 11 paper.

Remember the words of Howard Hendricks:

“The more time you spend in observation, the less time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. Furthermore, the

less time you spend in observation, the more time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”

Inductive Bible Study Method

Interpretation

*The unfolding of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.*

NAB Psalm 119:130



The Psalmist declared that as the word of God was opened and made clear, light would dawn on the clouded mind. The Scriptures and their clarity would provide discernment to those

with simple/open minds who could not discriminate between truth and falsehood.

It is this “unfolding” of the word of God that we are going to look into as we examine “how to” interpret the Scriptures. We are going to learn how, in the words of Howard Hendricks, as we saw last time with the process of observation, that the study of the word of God and the ascertainment of its truth involves “taking certain steps in a certain order to guarantee a certain result. Not just any steps; not just any order; not just any result.”

Let’s briefly review the steps again and be reminded as to what is involved in each one:

Step 1 - Observation: In Observation we are assuming the role of the Biblical detective. Like the inspector on the old TV show Dragnet we simply want the facts, just the facts. Here we are asking the question: “What does the Bible say?”

Step 2 - Interpretation: In Interpretation we are digging deeper. We have discovered what it says, now we want to ask the question: “What does it mean?” Here we will pull together all the material we have gained from our examination of the text and seek sound material we find from other sources outside the Scriptures and pull these together to get at the meaning of the text.

Step 3 - Application: In the final step of our process - Application - we ask the question: “How does it work?” I now know what it says, and what it means, I want to

know now what to do because of it. Here we are getting to the end for which we began the process in the first place. Here is where thoughts are altered, the will is confronted, and lives are changed!

Hendricks makes the following insightful remark as to the relationship of the three steps in the inductive process:

“The more time you spend in observation, the less time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. Furthermore, the less time you spend in observation, the more time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”

Briefly, let us review the process of Observation:

1. Pray - Pray - Pray
2. Read - Read - Read
3. Question - Question - Question
4. Mark - Mark - Mark
5. Record - Record - Record
6. Summarize - Summarize - Summarize

Once this process is “initially” done, you are ready to begin the process of interpretation. Just a footnote at this point:

The word “initially” in the preceding statement is essential to remember. You are never finished with the process of observation. When you come to the text with an “I’ve seen this one before!” attitude, it’s over! No more learning will occur!

Pack up your pencils and read the funnies! You get the idea. Never stop observing: praying, reading, questioning, marking, recording, and summarizing. This is a lifelong process in your discovery of the truth of the word of God. Hear Hendricks on this point:

In Bible study, as in life, pride goes before a fall. The minute you think that you've mastered a portion of Scripture, you are setting yourself up for a tumble. Why? Because knowledge puffs up. It can make you arrogant and unteachable. Some of the worst abuses of doctrine occur when someone sets himself up as the ultimate authority on the text.

Let's take a close look at the process of Interpretation:

*For major steps 1-5, I am indebted to Hendricks.

Step 1: Content

This initial step in the interpretive process is where you simply gather all the information you have uncovered in the process of Observation. You need this information readily accessible for you will use it (along with information you gain in the following interpretive steps) to make your interpretive decisions. You will find it helpful if you kept all your information in one place - ie. spiral notebook. It will also be helpful for later when you want to refer back to some of your observations.

All your study will now come to bear fruit, and

the depth of your observational skills will soon be realized.

Step 2: Context

Here is where your interpretive work really begins. The phrase to remember here is that “Context is king!” This is the primary and foundational element in interpretation and you will never get away from it. Context comes from observing the given passage under consideration and noting how it fits with what surrounds it, both immediately and far off.

A. Context of Immediate Passage:

Begin by studying the immediate text you have been observing. Here you will dig into the passage under consideration to determine word meanings and the various relationships of the words and phrases in the text.

1) **Words:** Here the student should focus attention on the words he has determined in his observation are “key” words. Also phrases in the text that are significant should be examined.

Etymological Study: Etymology is the study of the “historically verifiable sources of the formation of a word and the development

of its meaning.” Use a simple dictionary for this word study. Often at the end of the definition the etymology of the word will be listed.

Comparative Study: Compare how the word(s) you are studying is used in various contexts throughout the book in which your verse is found and the whole of the Bible. Your notes from your key word study will be helpful here.

Historical Study: Seek to discover how the word(s) you are studying has been used differently throughout history.

2) Grammar: You need to be able to take the passage apart grammatically:

What is the subject of the verse or the main focus of the passage?

What is the verb of the verse? Is it a verb of “action” or “being?”

What is the direct object/indirect object?

Where are the prepositional phrases?

Where are the participles? How do they affect the action of the verb?

Are there any infinitives?

Other nouns, pronouns, etc. . .

3) Literature: Determine the text's literary genre.

Historical?
Narrative?
Poetic?
Didactic?
Apocalyptic?
Etc. . .

Footnote: Look for overlap and an intermixing of genres in any given text.

B. Context of Surrounding Verses

“The Bible is no mere collection of good texts or verses put together without any relation to one another, but careful study very soon shows that each verse or passage has a very real relation to that which immediately precedes as well as what follows.” [Ramm, p.135]

Examine the verses that precede and follow the text under consideration - as much as a paragraph or more.

Note: In the NASB paragraphs are marked by “bold” verse numbers.

C. Context of Present Chapter/Section

Consider the chapter/section in which your text is located. Chapters do not always form

the most logical and consistent breaks for a section of the author's thought. You will have to carefully note the parameters of the section of thought within which you are reading. Your observation notes should help you here.

D. Context of Present Book

As a whole, what is the relationship that your present text has within its book? Ask the question: If I were to take this verse or these verses out of the book I am reading, what difference would it make? If you don't know - more observation is needed. God does not waste words - they are all inspired and profitable! So if your answer was "No difference." Think again!

E. Context of Present Testament

How does the present text fit with in its Testament (ie. Old or New)? If you are not in one of those, get a different Bible!

F. Context of Whole Bible

What is the relationship and impact your present text has to the whole of the Bible?

Step 3: Comparison

The Reformation principle of letting Scripture interpret Scripture applies here. It has been said that “You rarely need to go out of the Bible to understand it.” Amen! The key words and phrases you examined in your observation need to be more fully understood. Understanding will be gained here by comparing the words and phrases with similar words and phrases found in other parts of the Scripture.

A good study Bible with a cross reference system and an exhaustive concordance are necessary here. Another great tool to aid in cross referencing is R. A. Torrey’s The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. Also, to pursue more information on key words, topics, concepts and phrases refer to a “Topical Bible” like John MacArthur’s The MacArthur Topical Bible.

Step 4: Culture

Here we seek to understand the historical background and setting within which the author is writing. Bible background commentaries and books on Bible culture are helpful here.

Step 5: Consultation

Up to this point, the majority of your study has been confined to the parameters of the text. Now is the time to crack those other books and get the help for which you've been crying. These are the tools of the trade for interpretation. The better the tools, the better the product in the end. Good tools are indispensable to the process. The man who claims to interpret using nothing but the Bible sounds spiritual at first, until his answers are compared to the wiser student! The tools in your arsenal will be utilized for going further into your study of the text than you could have on your own. Words, Biblical backgrounds, and the theological concepts drawn from the text will begin to mature as you dig into solid resources. The following is a list of tools to which you will want to have access for your study:

A. Study Bible

Characteristics of a good Study Bible:

- No Notes
- Literal Translation (KJV, NAS, ESV)
- Wide Margins
- Cross Reference System
- Concordance
- Maps with Map Chart
- Book Introductions

Recommended Bible: New Inductive Study Bible

B. Exhaustive Concordance

- An exhaustive listing of all words in the

translation you are using for study.
Recommended Concordance: Strong's

C. Bible Encyclopedia or Dictionary
Recommended: The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia and The New Bible Dictionary

D. Bible Handbook
Recommended Handbook: The Holman Bible Handbook and Unger's Bible Handbook

E. Bible Atlas
Recommended Atlas: The Baker Atlas of Christian History

F. Commentaries: Whole and Individual

Recommended Commentaries:

Matthew Henry - A little dated but generally sound

Tyndale New Testament Commentaries

NICOT/NT: The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testaments

A great source to find out about commentaries is the book by Jim Rosscup - Commentaries for Bible Expositors.

G. Word-Study Helps

Recommended Word-Study Helps: Vines Complete

Expository Dictionary, Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, and The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology.

Step 6: Conclusions

Just like in the final step of Observation, you need to draw your study to a close at this point by recording your conclusions on an "Interpretation Chart." You can do this on an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper as before. On it you will want to record concise chapter or section themes if you are studying an entire book.

Inductive Bible Study Method

Application

*But prove yourselves doers of the word,
and not merely hearers who delude themselves.
NAB James 1:22*



At this point we come to the third and final of our three steps in the IBSM: Application. Having “observed” and “interpreted” the text, we now must put the Word to work. In the process of application we are asking the question: “How does it work?” I

now know what it says, and what it means, I want to know now what to do because of it. Here we are getting to the end for which we began the process in the first place. As we noted earlier, it is here that thoughts are altered, the will is confronted, and lives are changed!

Recall Hendricks' insightful remark as to the relationship of the three steps in the inductive process:

“The more time you spend in observation, the less time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. Furthermore, the less time you spend in observation, the more time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”

In examining the process of observation we noted six things that must be done in our initial study of the Scripture:

1. Pray
2. Read
3. Question
4. Mark
5. Record
6. Summarize

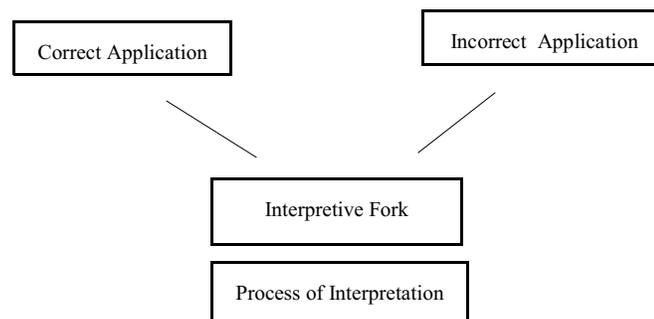
The process of observation is never fully finished because we never reach the point of being fully aware of the truth a particular passage contains. However, when we have initially completed our step of observation, we are ready to proceed with the second step of interpretation. In the process of interpretation we examined the following five step process:

1. Content

-
2. Context
 3. Comparison
 4. Culture
 5. Consultation
 6. Conclusions

Once this process has been sufficiently completed, one is prepared to begin to determine the application of the text under consideration, but no sooner. Hendricks, in his work Living By the Book, describes a situation that often arises during application that has damaging consequences, which he refers to as “The Error of the Fork.” When one comes to the fork in the road between a right and wrong interpretation and fails to be diligent, he can easily end up taking the wrong side of the fork. The further he proceeds down this path of an incorrect interpretation in pursuit of the application of the error he has concluded, the further his application will stray from the proper path he should have taken.

“The Error of the Fork”



This diagram drives home the Inductive Study Mantra:

The more time you spend in observation, the less time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. Furthermore, the less time you spend in observation, the more time you will have to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.

The results are the application. That is what we are working toward, that is the goal, that is where our lives will adorn the doctrine of our great God and bring Him glory. It should be apparent to all, proper application is critical.

The Necessity of Application:

But this is to argue from the end backwards. We are to apply the Scripture not simply because of the results that it will bring. We are to apply the Scripture because the Scriptures themselves demand that they be applied. We might say they are screaming to be used! We have no right or excuse to ever hear the word of God and not respond to it. Perhaps no place in Scripture is clearer regarding the necessity of responding positively to the word of God than the book of James. In his brief letter, James confronts those who claim that they can have faith in Jesus, hear the word of God, do what they want with it, and still “make it in the end.” James makes it clear - these kind of people are deceived!

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the

anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Those who feel that they can hear the word of God and not put it into practice are described as “deluded.” To be deluded is to be self-deceived. The word means “to reason to the side of the point that is being made.” In other words, they miss the whole point and purpose of the Scripture. James 1:25 makes clear that the word of God has as its goal the transformation of our lives: “one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

The Path to Application: Meditation

Meditation is not emptying the mind in the Lotus position, but rather filling the mind with truth and setting the mind down upon that truth so that it can provide a new framework from which you can begin to understand the heart of God. Meditation allows us to think God’s thoughts after Him.

NAB Joshua 1:8a "This book of the law shall not depart from

your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

NAB Psalm 119:15 I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways.

NAB Psalm 119:148 My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.

NAB Psalm 1:1a-2 How blessed is the man who... delight(s)...in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night

NAB Psalm 119:97 O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

In order for us have our minds renewed and become fully equipped for the tasks God has for us to do, the Scripture must become a part of our mental framework. The Scripture itself claims to be the very “breathed out words of God” that are “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (NAB 2 Timothy 3:16). Meditation must be engaged in for the Scripture to yield this profit in your life. Here are some questions you can ask yourself regarding the particular passage you have been considering in your study of God’s word, as it relates to the four areas 2Timothy 3:16 states that Scripture is designed to address. The first two of these areas relate to proper doctrine for the believer.

Teaching: Is there a particular teaching/dctrine the passage is intending to teach me? Does it teach me about God, Jesus, salvation, the church, Christian living, etc...?

Reproof: Is there some teaching which I have held that this text challenges? Is there a belief structure that I have built or allowed to be constructed in my thinking for which I need to be reproofed? Have I been faithfully and humbly allowing the word of God to frame my thinking, or am I guilty of pressing my thoughts into the text of Scripture?

The Scripture not only teaches me what to believe and not believe, it further instructs me in what is and is not proper behavior for one who follows Christ. In your meditation, consider the following questions as they relate to your daily walk before the Lord.

Correction: How does this text address my life as a disciple of Jesus? What habits or patterns in my life does it confront either directly or indirectly? What changes do I need to make in my daily life in order to be in line with the word of God? Is this text addressing a "heart" attitude or a "hand" habit for which I need to repent? Is this text addressing an area of unbelief which I need to forsake?

Training: How does this text tell me I should live? What are some practical things I can take from this passage and put into practice at home, on the job or at play today?

The Importance of Application

NAB Matthew 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. **26**

"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell -- and great was its fall."

Appendix 1

Quick Review of ISM

Observation:

1. Pray - Pray - Pray
2. Read - Read - Read
3. Question - Question - Question
4. Mark - Mark - Mark
5. Record - Record - Record
6. Summarize - Summarize - Summarize

Interpretation:

- Step 1: Content
- Step 2: Context
- Step 3: Comparison
- Step 4: Culture
- Step 5: Consultation
- Step 6: Conclusions

Application:

1. Teaching
2. Reproof
3. Correction
4. Training

Appendix 2

Voices Past and Present

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

David, King of Israel

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Paul, Apostle of Jesus Christ

If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough [to] know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!

William Tyndale to a Priest

For if we reflect how prone the human mind is to lapse into forgetfulness of God, how readily inclined to every kind of error, how bent every now and then on devising new and fictitious religions, it will be easy to understand how necessary it was to make such a depository of doctrine as would secure it from either perishing by the neglect, vanishing away amid the errors, or being corrupted by the presumptuous audacity of men. It being thus manifest that God, foreseeing the inefficiency of His

image imprinted on the fair form of the universe, has given the assistance of His word to all whom He has ever been pleased to instruct effectually, we, too, must pursue this straight path, if we aspire in earnest to a genuine contemplation of God; - we must go, I say, to the word, where the character of God, drawn from his works is described accurately and to the life; these works being estimated, not by our depraved judgement, but by the standard of eternal truth. If, as I lately said, we turn aside from it, how great soever the speed with which we move, we shall never reach the goal, because we are off the course. We should consider that the brightness of the divine countenance, which even an apostle declares to be inaccessible, (1Tim 6:16) is a kind of labyrinth, - a labyrinth to us inextricable, if the word do not serve us as a thread to guide our path; and that it is better to limp in the way, than run with the greatest swiftness out of it. Hence the psalmist, after repeatedly declaring (Psalm 93, 96, 97, 99, &c.) that superstition should be banished from the world in order that pure religion may flourish, introduces God as reigning; meaning by the term, not the power which He possesses and which He exerts in the government of universal nature, but the doctrine by which He maintains His due supremacy: because error never can be eradicated from the heart of man until the true knowledge of God has been implanted in it.

John Calvin

Doth the Scriptures belong to all men? Yes, all men are not only allowed, but exhorted and commanded, to read, hear, and understand the Scripture.

John Ball

We ought to “love, reverence, read, study, obey and stick close to the Scripture.”

Richard Baxter

Think in every line you read that God is speaking to you.

Thomas Watson

The devil never would attempt to beget in persons a regard to that divine word which God has given to be the great and standing rule...Would the spirit of error, in order to deceive men, beget in them a high opinion of the infallible rule, and incline them to think much of it, and be very conversant with it?...The devil has ever shown a mortal spite and hatred towards that holy book the Bible: he has done all in his power to extinguish that light...He is engaged against the Bible, and hates every word in it.

Jonathan Edwards

If I were the devil...one of my first aims would be to stop folk from digging into the Bible. Knowing that it is the Word of God, teaching men to know and love and serve the God of the word, I should do all I could to surround it with the spiritual equivalent of pits, thorn hedges and man traps, to frighten people off.”

J. I. Packer

You are either in the Word and the Word is conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ, or you are in the world and the world is squeezing you into its mold.

Howard Hendricks

Effective study of the Word of God is basic to the Christian life. For the Christian, at the core of everything is knowledge of God's Word.

John MacArthur

Appendix 3

List of Sources

Hermeneutics, by Henry Virkler

How to Get the Most from God's Word, by John MacArthur

Institutes of the Christian Religion, by John Calvin

Living by the Book, by Howard Hendricks

New Inductive Study Bible Introduction, Precept Ministries

Preaching That Changes Lives, by Michael Fabarez

Protestant Biblical Interpretation, by Bernard Ramm