

HOW TO STUDY

- A BIBLE PASSAGE -

This worksheet can guide you in an in-depth exploration of a Bible passage. Try it and see if you want to add it to your tool kit of ways to interact with God's Word. You can complete this worksheet individually or as part of a group study. We hope these ten questions help you experience the life-changing message of the Bible.

PRAY

Begin your time with prayer. Take a moment to clear your mind and focus your attention. Ask God to be with you as you study and reflect on this passage.

READ THE PASSAGE

Get familiar with your passage by reading it several times. Try reading it in different translations: at least one that is more word-for-word (like NRSV, NKJV, or NASB) as well as a translation that is more thought-for-thought (like GNT, NLT, or the Message). What words and images stand out to you?

WHO IS SPEAKING?

TO WHOM ARE THEY SPEAKING?

Sometimes the speaker and audience are disclosed in the passage; other times you have to go back several verses or chapters. Do a little digging then write down who is speaking and who they are speaking to.

WHO ARE THE KEY CHARACTERS?

Name the characters and find out who they are. Do they appear anywhere else in Scripture? Do they have a backstory? Do they have a title or role?

WHAT IS THE GENRE OF LITERATURE?

Biblical genres include narrative, law, prophecy, letters, wisdom, and apocalyptic literature, among others. Identify the genre of your passage and think about how the genre affects how you should understand the passage. Is it meant to be literal or figurative? Is it teaching, telling, or mandating something? Is it expressing appreciation? Lament? Other features?

WHAT DOES THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE SAY?

Use an online tool or a print concordance to research the Greek and Hebrew words behind the English translation of your passage. Pick a word and write out its various translations, as well as any nuances you see. Where else in the Bible has this word been used?

WHAT COMES BEFORE AND AFTER THE PASSAGE?

What is happening before and after your verses? Is your passage a continuation of what came before? Is it setting up something that comes later?

WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WHOLE BOOK?

What can you find out about the whole book? Flip back to the first chapter: does the author identify himself or herself, address their audience, or state their purpose? Consult a commentary, online Bible resource, or notes included with your Bible or study Bible. What is the historical or cultural context? What are the book's themes?

WHAT IS THE PASSAGE'S MESSAGE TO ITS INTENDED AUDIENCE?

Piecing all your research together, now you get to make some initial conclusions. Consider who is listening to the message, who the book was written to, who this writing spoke to on a wider scale. What do you think this passage's message is to its audience? To the wider community of faith? Does this passage illuminate other parts of Scripture that you have read recently?

REFLECT ON THE PASSAGE'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR YOU

The last step is to take all your gleanings and contemplate what this passage may be saying to you. Each person will find that different aspects or truths stand out. God may be showing you something specific about your own journey and spiritual growth. Take time to reflect and listen.



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