

Observe.  
Interpret.  
Discover.  
Apply.



A BIBLE STUDY METHOD  
*ENRICH YOUR STUDY TOOL*

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# OBSERVE, INTERPRET, DISCOVER, APPLY

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Remember Jesus said, "but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). **This means that it is the Holy Spirit who teaches us when we seek to understand God's Word.**

Therefore, as you go to God's Word, the Bible, to read, study, or listen to what it has to say, **we encourage you to first pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand** what He has to teach you.

Use the study step explanations to help you practice the **OIDA** method of studying your Bible. In this method, you will make **observations** about the text, which will lead you to **interpret** the text, and then **discover** additional details about the context, which will enrich your ability to **apply** the text to your life.

**What new observation, interpretation, discovery, or application** will stand out to you as you engage with God's word?

## STEP 1 READ THE TEXT

This step is focused on reading the text for clarity and understanding. Pay attention to who is speaking, who they are speaking to, and why they are speaking. We encourage you to read and listen to the focus chapter or passage without trying to take any notes or follow any other steps several times before you keep going in your studying.

We encourage you to read your Bible with the perspective that the Bible holds a complete story of God's redemptive plan of salvation. You can start with a topic or start with an entire passage, our hope is that you'll start and see those snapshots within God's bigger picture.

## STEP 2 OBSERVE THE TEXT

This step is where you will investigate and explore the text. It's OK to write in your Bible and it's OK to make notes in a separate place, either way, you're going to want to track your observations.

Observe the text by circling, highlighting, and/or underlining the things you see in the passage. You might identify such things as:

- Lists
- Instructions
- Repeated words or phrases
- References to time, people, or places
- Characters
- Connections ("therefore", "and", "thus", etc.)

## STEP 3 INTERPRET THE TEXT

The goal of interpreting the passages we read throughout the Bible is understanding what the author's original meaning and intention was. We aren't trying to make the text say something it doesn't. We are trying to understand what it already says. Interpretation starts with your observations.

Go back to your notes and begin to ask and answer the questions you have about the observations you made. What do these observations help you see or understand about what God is saying in His Word?

## STEP 4 DISCOVER THE TEXT

Discover the answers to your questions:

- Read the backstory (if you don't have a study Bible, now is a great time to consider getting one!)
- Utilize our *Enrich Your Study* tools to expand on your understanding of the scripture in context.
- Read the cross referenced verses (these are the little letters and numbers within the text that have a matching verse in the margin, look up those verses)
- Look up the definitions of the words you've circled, highlighted, underlined, etc.
- And as a final step in your discovery process, consider reading a commentary or different translation of the passage (The Message, Amplified Version, etc.)

## STEP 5 APPLY THE TEXT

Finally, the step you will be most tempted to skip to or spend the most time on and is usually fueled by the question, "How does this apply to my life?!" That's a great question and one we want to answer with Truth in Love.

The focus in seeking to apply scripture to your life is really seeking to understand the principles being taught and revealed in the text to the original audience that can be applied to our lives today. We won't always see what we're supposed to "do" in the text. However, we will always see "how" we're supposed to live as followers of Christ. The principle truths we see in the text stand the test of time, they are applicable to our lives beyond our season or circumstance, and rest within God's broader story of redemption. Find the principles that help you apply God's Word to your everyday life:

what does this teach me about God?

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In light of that, what does this teach me about myself?

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what does this teach me about the life that God desires for me?

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