

# **Introduction to the Bible**

## **Study Templates**

Use these templates to study different parts of the Bible on your own or with someone else.

- **One size does NOT fit all:** The questions in these templates won't work for every passage, but they'll help you get started.
- **Study WITH someone else.**
- **Stumped? Get help:** If you choose a difficult passage, ask someone you know for help

## **Old Testament – History: Genesis - Esther**

1. Pick a story that you want to study.

2. Read a short overview of the book that the story is in. Use the introduction in your Bible or in *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*, by Fee and Stewart. Note any useful information.

2. Locate the book in the flow of biblical history. When did the events in your story occur?

3. If possible, read the entire book that your story is in. You should at least read several chapters before and after your story.

4. Read the story 2-3 times.

- Write your own outline of the story.

- List and describe the main characters:

- Note any repeated words or concepts:

5. Note any direct statements by God or about God.
6. Is this story related to God's promise to Abraham or David? If so, how?
7. What does the story teach me about God and way He operates?

**Application**

8. Are there *principles* about the way God operates in this passage that have relevance for my life today? Where are those principles reiterated in the New Testament?

9. How should my faith in God be affected by the way he deals with the people in this story?

10. What have I learned and how can I put it into practice this week? Think about **what** you can do to act on the truths you studied, **who** it will involve, and **when** you will do it.

To help with this, consider whether the passage reveals something you should thank God for, or something you should begin to pray about, or a new attitude you should adopt, or a scary step of faith that God is prompting you to take or a decision you should make, or a talk you should have with someone.

11. What questions did this study raise in my mind? Write them down.

## Old Testament – The Law: Exodus – Deuteronomy

1. Select a law to study. Choose a law that focuses on a single issue: eating things that live in the water – Deuteronomy 14:9,10; forgiving debtors – Deuteronomy 15:1-5; appointing judges – Deuteronomy 16:18-20; etc.

2. Read a few chapters before and after the chapter your law is in. Read the chapter containing the law as well.

3. Read the law itself 2-3 times.

4. WHO does this law apply to?

5. WHAT SITUATIONS does this Law apply to?

6. Look for principles:

What motivation, if any, is provided for obeying this law?

Whose interests is this law designed to protect?

What does this law reveal about what God values?

7. What questions does this law raise that you can study later?

When reading the Law, remember:

“Do see the Old Testament Law as God’s fully inspired Word *for* you.

Don’t see the Old Testament Law as God’s direct command *to* you.”

- *How to Read the Bible for All it’s Worth*, Fee and Stewart, p. 180.

## **Old Testament – Prophecy: Isaiah through Malachi**

1. Select a prophecy that you want to study.
2. Read a short overview of the book that your prophecy is in. Use the one in your Bible or in *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*, by Fee and Stewart. Note any useful information:
  2. If possible, read the book that contains your prophecy. You should at least read several chapters before and after it.
  3. Understand the historical context of the book:
    - What was occurring in the history of Israel and Judah when this book was written?
  
    - Who is the prophet writing to?
  
    - What were they like? Were they loyal to God or faithless? What did they do that was good or bad?
  4. Read your prophecy 2-3 times.
  5. Understand the historical context of the prophecy you are studying:
    - Who is the prophecy addressed to? Read a few chapters before and after your prophecy for clues.
  
    - What are the people like that God is speaking to? What have they done that is good or bad?
  6. Study the content of the prophecy.
    - What is God saying? Try to capture the essence of the message in one or two sentences.

- What blessing/curse is being promised?
  
- Why has God decided to bless or curse?
  
- What attitudes/changes in behavior are needed to avoid the curse or ensure the blessing?
  
- Is this prophecy related to God's promise to Abraham or David? If so, how?

### **Application**

7. Are there *principles* about the way God operates in this passage that have relevance for my life today? Where are those principles reiterated in the New Testament? For example, what does the passage reveal about what God values? Another way to reflect on this is to ask, what sins are mentioned that are still sins today? Look for sins that are spoken against in the New Testament.
  
8. What have you learned and how can you put it into practice this week? Think about **what** you can do to act on the truths you studied, **who** it will involve, and **when** you will do it.  
To help with this, consider whether the passage reveals something you should thank God for, or something you should begin to pray about, or a new attitude you should adopt, or a decision you should make, or a talk you should have with someone.
  
9. What questions does this prophecy raise that you can study later?

## **New Testament – Parables in the Gospels**

1. Select a parable to study.

2. Read a short overview of the Gospel that your parable is in. Use your Bible or *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*, by Fee and Stewart. Note any relevant information.

2. Read your parable 2-3 times, including the surrounding context (a few chapters before and after should be adequate).

Who was the parable addressed to (the disciples, the crowds, Jesus' critics, etc.)?

Are there certain attitudes in their lives that Jesus is speaking to? If so, what are they?

3. Learn the cultural background of the parable and note any relevant information.

You may find it helpful to read comments on this parable in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, by Craig S. Keener (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994).

4. What is the main point of the parable?

What part of the parable would have shocked this audience?

What is the point of the parable?

State the main point in your own words.





OPTIONAL 5. Outline the letter by writing a short title for each paragraph.

Paragraph	Title

OPTIONAL 6. Identify main themes in the letter.

Note any repeated words and ideas.

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Note themes that tie several paragraphs together?

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7. Read your paragraph 2-3 times.

8. Ask the following questions:

WHAT is the author trying to get his reader(s) to do?

HOW should they obey? How does the author illustrate or explain what they should do?

WHY is the author calling for this action? What reasons or motivation does he provide for obeying?

How would ignoring this command show a lack of love towards other people?

What does this paragraph say about God, man, sin, salvation, the church, Satan, Christian ministry, etc.?

9. Ask: What does this passage have to say about who I am as a Christian and what God wants for me?

10. Ask: What have I learned and how can I put it into practice this week?

11. What questions does this paragraph raise that you can study later?