



# Unlocking the Scriptures using Inductive Bible Study

*In order to study the book of Colossians we will use a method called Inductive Bible Study. Inductive study observes the facts in the text and proceeds to a conclusion. It is compared with deductive study which starts with a conclusion and seeks to discover facts that support the conclusion. Inductive study has three main parts: Observation, Interpretation and Application.*



## **OBSERVATION** • Be a Detective

*Ask the question: What does it say?*

Observing the whole involves discovering the facts in the passage. The facts can be gathered by answering key questions. Observation is simply knowing what to look for. It is bombarding the text with questions.

***Record the Major Facts by Asking these Questions***

• **Who? (the characters)**

- The writer
- The recipients
- The characters involved in the action
- The characters not directly involved in the action
- Special people addressed in the passage

• **What? (the key truths or events)**

- Key ideas
- Theological terms
- Important words
- Figures of speech
- Atmosphere

• **Where? (the geography and location)**

- Places mentioned
- Buildings
- Cities
- Nations
- Landmarks

• **When? (the time factors)**

- Date of authorship
- Duration of the action
- When in biblical history
- Past, present or future?

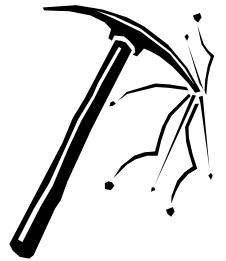


## OBSERVATION • Be a Detective

### *Observe the Principles of Structure*

- **Comparison:** the association of like things
- **Contrast:** the association of things that are opposite
- **Repetition:** the reiteration of the same terms, phrases, clauses or concepts.
- **Cause to effect:** the statement of a cause and then its effects
- **Effect to cause:** the opposite of cause to effect; the statement or description of the effect(s) and then their cause(s).
- **Explanation:** the introduction of an idea which is then expanded or explained
- **Illustration:** the introduction of an idea, followed by an illustration (example) of it.
- **Climax:** the arrangement of the text in such a way that it progresses from the lesser to the greater (i.e. the story or discourse builds to a climax).

## INTERPRETATION • Be an Archaeologist



### *Ask the question: What does it mean?*

- Interpretation brings meaning to the facts**
- Hermeneutics-the science of interpretation**
- Four Foundational Principles**
  1. Let Scripture interpret Scripture
  2. Interpret the Bible literally
  3. Interpret the Bible grammatically
    - A word has only one literal meaning when spoken in a sentence.
    - A word's meaning is tied to the sentence by rules of grammar.
    - The meaning of the word must be derived from its context.
  4. Interpret the Bible in its historical setting.
- The Questions of Interpretation**

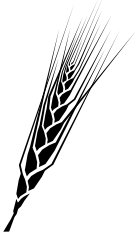
Use the same questions as under Record the Major Facts (previous page) and answer them plus the question:

**Why? (the purpose of the passage or book)**

  - The reader's need
  - The writer's message
- How to Interpret**

The five C's of Interpretation

  1. State an initial proposal based on the **Content**. What do you think is the answer to your question?
  2. Search the **Context**. What can the surrounding context of the passage add to your understanding of it?
  3. Seek **Comparison**. The Bible itself sheds light on its own meaning. Use cross references to seek further answers to your questions.
  4. Survey/**Consult** secondary sources. What do other study tools (commentaries, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, etc.) say about the passage?
  5. State your **Conclusions**. After considering all these sources what final conclusions do you have about the passage?



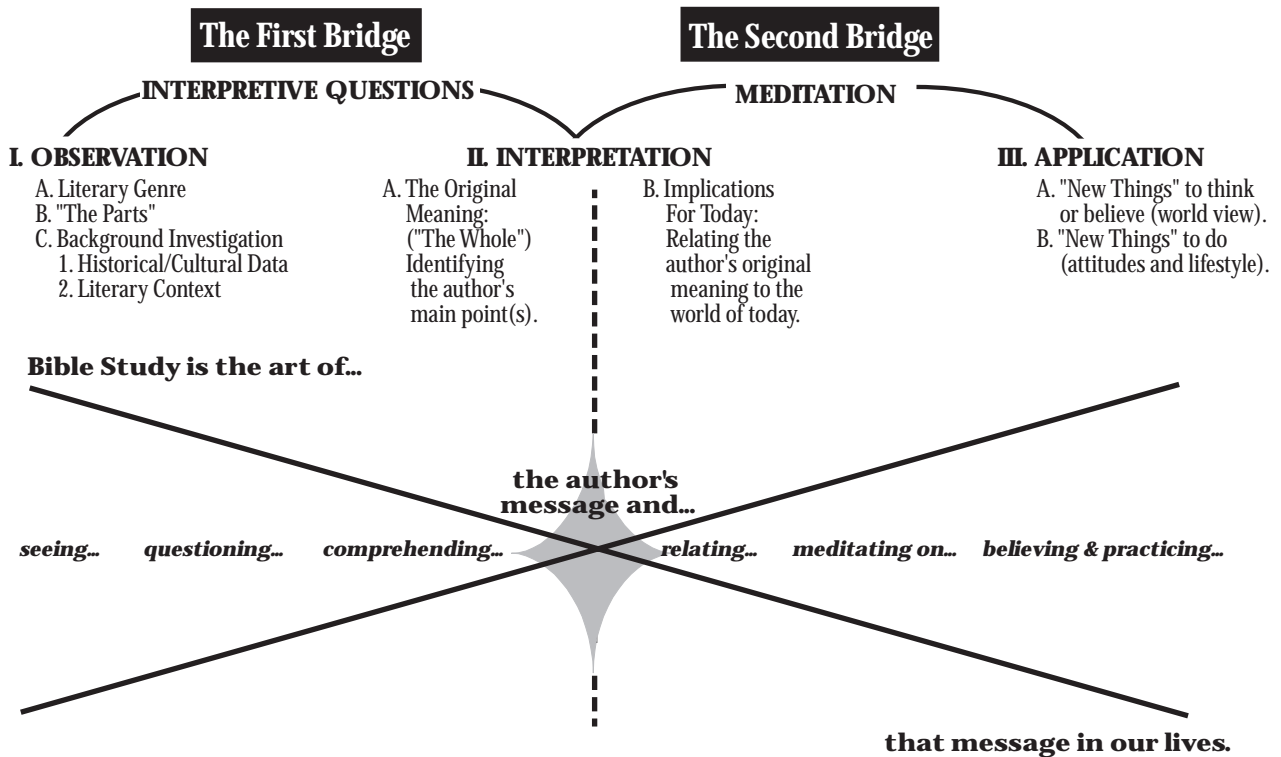
# APPLICATION • Be a Farmer

*Ask the question: What does it mean to me?*

We all, unless there is confusion or disagreement, should come to essentially the same interpretation of a particular passage. How one person specifically applies that interpretation, however, will undoubtedly be different than how another person applies it.

The diagram below visualizes both Part I and Part II of the Bible study process. It begins with a great amount of observation data, comes to a crossroad at interpretation -- "the diamond" -- and finally branches out to the broad range of potential applications.

The principle: **ONE INTERPRETATION • MANY APPLICATIONS**



## The Second Bridge Step: MEDITATION

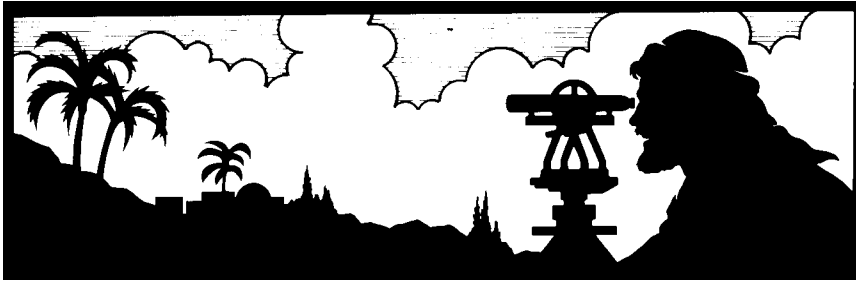
**A. Reflecting on "new ways" to Think and Believe:** *What is the main thing the Lord would want me to know from this passage?*

1. Is there a new or stimulating thought concerning:
  - a. Theology: The nature of God, man, sin, forgiveness, etc.
  - b. Society: Its assumptions, values, goals, etc.
  - c. The Church: Its nature, call, ethic, mission, etc.
  - d. Practical issues: Principles for living.
2. Is there something that strengthens/redirects a previously held belief?
3. Is there a promise to claim? What conditions am I to fulfill? What will the Lord do?
4. Is there something to thank God for or rejoice in?
5. Is there a new thought about the greatness of God or His ways? What do I appreciate about Him? What can I praise Him for?

**B. Reflecting on "new things" to Do:** *What is the main thing the Lord would have me do as a result of studying this passage?*

1. Priorities: What difference does the Lord want to make in the way I use my time, my abilities and my money?
2. Attitudes: What attitudes of mine does the Lord want to change?
3. Lifestyle: In what ways does the Lord want to change my life?
  - a. Is there a command to obey?
  - b. Is there an indirect appeal to heed? (Much of Scripture consists of indirect appeals: (e.g. "Love is patient.")
  - c. Is there a sin to avoid or a warning to take heed of?
  - d. Is there an example of godliness or way of life to emulate?
  - e. Is there new guidance or direction for an area of my life?
4. Relationships: What difference does the Lord want to make in my relationships? (With Himself, other Christians, non-Christians, spouse, family, friends, co-workers, self)
  - a. Is there someone with whom I need to make restitution?
  - b. Is there some way I need to love, encourage, support this person?
  - c. Is there a matter I need to confront or exhort this person about?

*(taken from Bible Study Roadshow.)*



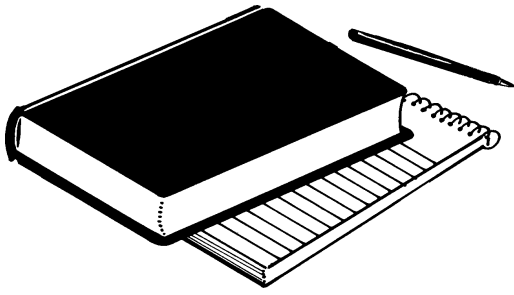
# H o w t o d o a B o o k S u r v e y

1. Read the book as many times as you can.
  - A. Read it in different versions.
  - B. Do this in at least 3 different settings.
  - C. Go through the same book in Quiet Time.
2. List the major themes and highlights of the book.
  - A. Look for key words and phrases.
3. Make a loose tentative outline.
  - A. Look for major divisions in the book- also transitions on words.
  - B. Choose a title that is unique to the book.
4. Summarize the historical background of the book:
  - A. Sources to use:
    - Bible Handbook
    - Study Bible
    - Bible Dictionary
    - Commentaries
    - Concordance
  - B. Information to include:
    - To whom was it written
    - By whom was it written (Do life investigation.)
    - When was it written
    - Why was it written
5. Make a chart to summarize what you have discovered in your survey. Make it on one sheet of paper. Use the chart on the following page or design your own. The value of such a chart is that it enables you to picture visually the contents and divisions of a book.
6. Read the book again.
7. Make an application. Consult the application page in this handout for help on making applications.

## OPTIONAL

8. Write a paragraph answering this question: "What is the importance of this book to Christian knowledge, life and service?"
9. Look up key people in the book in a concordance and/or Bible dictionary.
10. Look up key cities. (Use a Bible atlas or a Bible dictionary.)

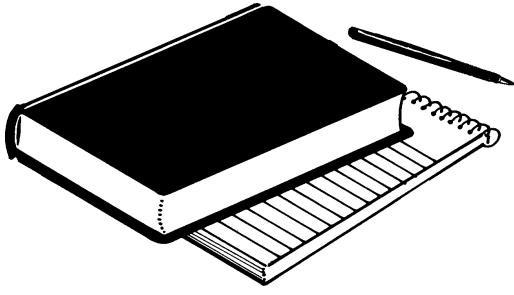




## H o w t o d o a C h a p t e r A n a l y s i s

You can use the charts on the following pages or your own paper to record your insights on the chapter analysis.

1. Pray.
2. Read through the passage several times—until you are familiar with its flow. You may want to read it in more than one translation.
3. Write out a chapter summary. You may choose to summarize it in one or more of the following three ways.
  - Title and outline the passage, integrating the theme of the passage into your outline. Pick a verse or verses from the chapter that best summarizes the passage.
4. List your observations.
  - List every observation you can possibly make from the passage. (You may want to categorize your observations into categories you can identify.)
  - Listed here in brief form are 26 items you could look for in your observation of the passage.
    - a. Ask the six vital observation questions: What? Who? Where? When? Why? and How?
    - b. Look for key words.
    - c. Look for repeated words and phrases.
    - d. Look for questions being asked.
    - e. Look for answers being given.
    - f. Look for commands.
    - g. Look for warnings.
    - h. Look for comparisons—things that are alike.
    - i. Look for contrasts—things that are different.
    - j. Look for illustrations.
    - k. Look for causes and effects and reasons for doing things.
    - l. Look for promises and their conditions for fulfillment.
    - m. Look for lists of things.
    - n. Look for results.
    - o. Look for advice, admonitions, and attitudes.
    - p. Look for the tone of the passage—emotional atmosphere.
    - q. Look for explanations.
    - r. Look for Old Testament quotes in the New Testament.
    - s. Look for the paradoxes.
    - t. Look for exaggeration.
    - u. Look at the grammatical construction of the sentences.
    - v. Look at the use of current events of the times.
    - w. Look for connectives (and, or, but, therefore etc.)
    - x. Look for the force of the verbs
    - y. Look for words and phrases to reveal feelings.
    - z. Look for anything unusual or unexpected.



## H o w t o d o a C h a p t e r A n a l y s i s

### 5. Ask Interpretative Questions.

- a. Usually, interpretative questions include asking what or why. Some examples of these are:
  - Why did the writer say this?
  - What is the meaning of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What is the significance of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What is the implication of \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Why is this important?
- b. Find the right meaning of the text.
  - Check the context.

Who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? When is it being spoken? Where is it being spoken? What is the occasion or circumstance? What is the main subject of the message? Is the aim of what is being said revealed?
  - Define the words and phrases used.
  - Study the grammar and structure of the sentences.
  - Compare several translations of the text with each other.
  - Study the background of the text
  - Compare your text with other passages of Scripture.
  - Consult a commentary as a last resort.

### 6. Correlate the Chapter with Other Scriptures. You can find cross-references in a study Bible, a reference Bible, or by looking up similar words in a concordance.

- First look for cross-references within the same book you are studying. This is internal correlation.
- Second, compare statements in the writings of the same author. This is external correlation.
- Then, compare with other books in the same testament.
- Finally, compare references in all of Scripture.

### 7. Write out some possible applications from the chapter especially from the verses that you studied in depth.

### 8. Write out one application that you will make from this passage.

Include these elements:

Principle: What is the truth of God's word? Write down the verse reference.

Problem- In what ways have you not lived according to God's truth?

Plan- What will you do to live according to God's truth?

Make your plan: Personal (specific), Practical (measurable) and Possible (attainable).

Proof- What evidence is there that I have applied this truth? Who will keep you accountable on this?

# Chapter Analysis

Chapter Analysis	Chapter:	Chapter Title:		
	Key Verse (write out):			
Outline				
Verses				
Passage Analysis	Observation	Interpretative Questions/Answers	Correlation (cross references)	Possible Applications

Application

1. Principle- What is the truth of God's Word?	3. Plan- What will I do to live according to God's truth?
2. Problem- In what ways have I not lived according to God's truth?	4. Proof- What evidence is there that I have applied this truth? Who will keep me accountable to this?

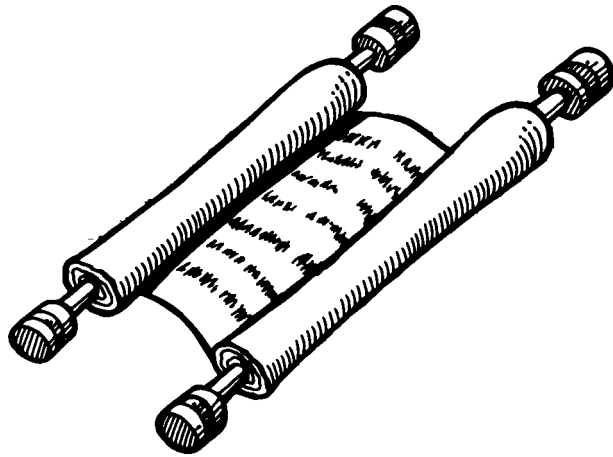


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## H o w t o d o a B o o k S u m m a r y

You can use the chart on the following page or your own paper to record your insights on the book summary.

1. Review your Book Survey.
2. Reread the book one to three times.
3. List chapter titles and key verse for book. Revise if necessary.
4. Write out what you believe to be the theme of the book and its significance for today.
5. Outline or summarize the book using your chapter outline as a guide. Do not necessarily limit yourself to chapter divisions.  
A good outline has 2-4 main divisions.
6. List your applications.
7. Reread the book, comparing your chapter titles and your outline.
8. Consider your book title. Have you chosen one that uniquely describes the book you have studied?
9. List major lessons and challenges from the book.

### OPTIONAL

10. Memorize book title, chapter titles, and key verse(s).
11. Mark sections that would be especially helpful in teaching or helping someone else. You can make a diagram, an outline, or an illustration to help communicate the truth of these key passages.
12. Collect all your studies, summary and survey in a notebook or file for future reference.

# Book Summary

Summary	Book Title:	Author of Book:	Key Verse:
	Theme of Book:		Significance of Book:
Titles			
Chapters			
Key Verses			
Book Outline and/or Summary			
Applications			
Major Lessons and Challenges			
Key Sections for Teaching			