

IMPACT Training

Institute of Ministerial Pastoral And Congregational Training
Equipping and Empowering for Excellence in Ministry

JB Johnson Beaven III Ministries LLC

The INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

The Big Three and how they relate: investigation, interpretation, and implication lead to *implementation* and *transformation*; accurate interpretation (understanding) and correct implication (application) rest on careful and detail investigation (observation).

I. **INVESTIGATION** (OBSERVATION/INTERROGATION): *What Does It Say? What Do I See?* — Seeing What's in the Text **SEE WHAT?**

Goal: identify what the author actually said to the original recipients of the text. Get the Facts: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How

Psalm 119:18 *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*

A. Setting Questions

1. Who is the author or speaker?
2. Why was this book written? What was the occasion for the book?
3. What historic events surround the book?
4. Where was it written/ Who were the original recipients?

B. Context Questions

1. What literary form is being employed in this passage?
2. What is the overall message of this book, and how does this passage fit into the message?
3. What precedes this passage? What follows?

C. Structural Questions

1. Are there any repeated words? Repeated phrases?

Key Words

▽

Subjects

▽

Theme

Key words reveal the subjects. Subjects reveal the theme.
The more a word is repeated, the more obvious it becomes

that the word represents a subject. The more that subject is repeated, the more obvious it becomes that the subject represents a theme.

2. Does the author make any comparisons? Draw any contrasts?
3. Does the author raise any questions? Provide any answers?
4. Does the author point out any cause and effect relationships?
5. Is there any progression to the passage? In time? Action? Geography?
6. Does the passage have a climax?
7. Does the author use any figures of speech?
8. Is there a pivotal statement or word?
9. What linking words are used? What ideas do they link?
10. What verbs are used to describe action in the passage?

LOOK for things that are: Emphasized...Repeated...Related...Alike...Unlike...
True to Life

II. **INTERPRETATION: *What Did It Mean?*** – Understanding **SAY WHAT?**

Goal: Discover the original intended meaning. What was the Spirit of God teaching the recipients. Scripture may have many different applications, but first we must get the correct interpretation. Interpretation precedes application.

Acts 8:30 *So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"*

Psalms 119:34 *Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.*

CONTENT A. Grammatical [**Studying the Text and the Words**] – Are there any **words** in

the passage we need to study to better grasp the meaning?

1. Compare several versions and study their differences
2. Conduct a word study for the meaning or use of a word in the sentence because of semantic range
3. Select the meaning which best fits the specific context in which the term is being used

The goal: what does the word contribute to the message of the passage

Conceptual Mistakes

- a. Reading contemporary meanings into the biblical word (i.e. "conversation" or "stumble")

- b. Illegitimate totality transfer – wrongly transferring into a term all the meaning it possess in the Bible (i.e. “justify”)
- c. One-meaning fallacy – that a term always means the same thing (i.e. “serve” or “servant”)

CULTURE B. Historical [**Studying the Historical Culture**] – Do we need to explore the

cultural setting in greater detail to find the meaning?

- 4. Areas to consider – geography, politics, military, family, homes, education, village life, religion (Canaanite, Hellenistic)
- 5. The key – what customs are pointed out in the biblical text?

The goal: to see the story behind the text, for example the hot, lukewarm, and cold in Rev. 3:14-16.

CONTEXT C. Contextual [**Studying the Setting**] – Do we need to look at the text in its

meaning? **scriptural setting/logical context** to better understand the

- 6. Literary Context: context of a verse is the paragraph, etc.
- 7. Theological Context: what was author/readers relationship with God?

What to use for A-C above: Exhaustive Concordances (i.e. Strong’s, Young’s, Cruden’s, NAS/NIV versions with Heb/Grk dictionaries), Lexicons, Word Study books, Bible Dictionaries, Bible Encyclopedias, Commentaries, Background and Archaeological Studies, Handbooks of Bible Customs, Study Bibles

D. Interpretive Questions—dealing with the writer’s intention

- 1. Definition – What does this word mean?
- 2. Reason – Why did the author use this term?
- 3. Implication – What does this statement imply?
- 4. Relationship – How are these ideas related?
- 5. Progression – Where is this thought going?
- 6. Assumption – What is the assumption behind this statement?

E. Things to apply

1. Continuity of the Message

use the larger teaching of the Bible on a subject to help understand the meaning of a particular passage. To maintain the law of non-contradiction, **use Scripture to interpret Scripture.**

The law of non-contradiction states that if two or more statements contradict each other, they both cannot be true; either “A” is true, “B” is false or vice-versa or both “A” and “B” are false, but they both cannot be true. If there is no contradiction between “A” and “B”, then both can be right.

Example 1: in arithmetic there is only one answer to a sum, all others are wrong. If “A” is $10 \times 10 = 150$ and “B” is $10 \times 10 = 100$, then the law applies because there is a real contradiction, both cannot be right.

Example 2: Hinduism (“A”) states that God is the world and vice versa, meaning that God is dependent on the world or that he would be diminished or less without the world (God = world; world = God), but Judaism/Christianity (“B”) states that God is independent from his creation, that is, God is not equal to the world, meaning that God would remain all that he is even if the world did not exist. Both of these views contradict and therefore both cannot be true.

2. Context of the Material

Avoid “Scripture twisting,” taking a text out of its context in order to make it say something we want it to say. Avoid “proof texting,” the process of “proving” a doctrine or practice by using a text without consideration of its original intended meaning. ***Context is everything in the task of interpretation.*** “A text without a context is just a pretext.”

- Context means “that which surrounds or goes with the text.”
- Context is the environment in which something dwells, the setting in which something exists or occurs.

Fish live in a pond. The pond is the context. Fish die out of the pond.

All meaning is context-bound. Thus, context is the source of meaning. **REMEMBER THE RULE OF CONTEXT:** the rule of context is context rules.

3. Customary Meaning

The very words of the Bible are to be taken for what they communicate. ***When the natural, normal sense of the Scripture makes sense, seek no other sense.***

F. Things to remember

1. Realize the passage was written ***first*** for an ancient audience, so try to determine that meaning.

2. Read ***out*** of the text what it means (exegesis), not ***into*** the text what you

want it to mean (eisegesis).

G. Pitfalls of Interpretation - Hazards to Avoid when reading/studying the Bible

1. Misreading the text: "I am the way" or "I am a way" (John 14:6)
2. Distorting the text: making the text say what you want it to say, not what it actually said.
3. Contradicting the text: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"..."You will not surely die." (Gen 3)
4. Subjectivism: the meaning of the text is in the text, not in our subjective response to the text.
5. Relativism: assuming that the Bible meaning is relative, changes meaning over time; it means something different today than when first written.
6. Overconfidence: mastering a portion of Scripture does not make one the ultimate authority; remain humble and teachable

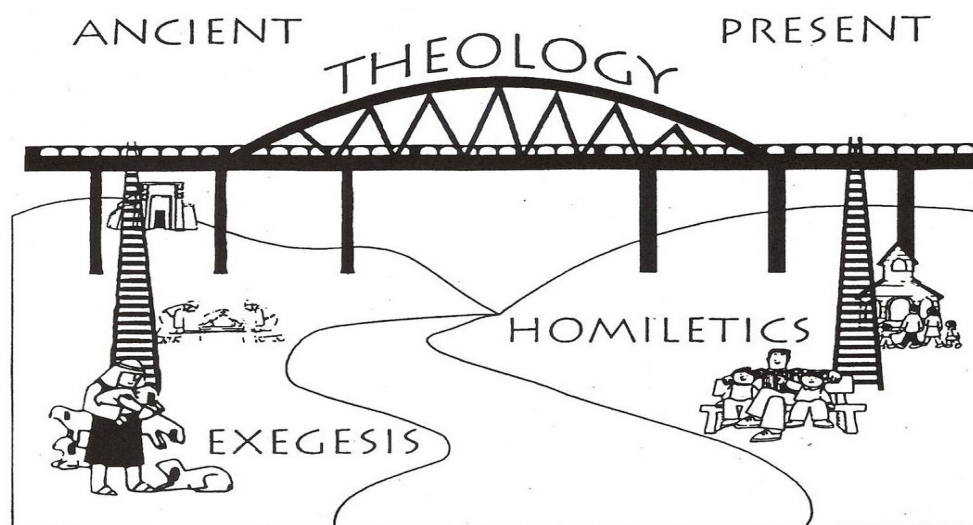
III. **IDEA (GENERALIZATION/PRINCIPLE):** *What's the Big Idea? What's God's Thought? – Timeless Transferable Theological Truth* **AHA – THAT'S WHAT!**

Goal: formulate a single sentence statement of the main point, the transferable principle, or exegetical idea of the text. Crystallize the central truth by bringing the answers to the subject and complement questions into a single sentence that encompasses the major teaching or principle of the passage.

Isaiah 55:8-9 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

A. What is the big (God) idea of the text?

1. It is the timeless transferable theological truth in the text.
2. It sums up the text in a way that makes it universally applicable.
3. It is the central focus, concept, main idea, intended message of the writer.
4. It bridges the gap between the context of the text and contemporary life.



B. How to discover the textual idea?

1. This idea is discovered in a careful study of the biblical text in its historical, literary, and theological context.
2. The textual idea is designated by **two** words carefully selected as subject and complement. The two themes in combination identify as precisely as possible to the preacher/teacher the idea presented in the text.
 - a. The one-word **subject** answers the question, “What is the writer talking about?” It is the dominant theme/topic-subject of the text.
 - b. The one-word **complement** is a second theme/thrust-scope from the text which *limits* and *focuses* the subject. It answers the question, “How does the writer limit the scope of what he is

talking about or what is the author saying about what he is talking about?"

For example, in 1 Corinthians 13, the topic is love. A big idea for the whole chapter may be the following: *Biblical love is essential to the Christian Life or The excellence of biblical love.*

IV. **IMPLICATION (APPLICATION/RELATION):** *What Difference Does It Make? How does it relate to me? How Does It Work?—What does this mean for me? SO*
WHAT?

Goal: apply the Bible as God intended -- II Tim. 3:17

Acts 2:12 *And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"*

Joshua 1:8 *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 [not know] according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (underline/[] added)*

- A. Doctrine – Is there any teaching here to be learned or followed? Any false concepts to adjust or truth to embrace?
- B. Reproof – Does this passage communicate a rebuke to be heard and heeded? Areas in thinking and behavior that do not align with the Word?
- C. Correction – Is there any correction to be noted or attended to?
- D. Instruction – In what ways does the passage train us to be righteous?

Arenas of Application

Personal life, Home life, Work life, Church life, and Community life

Avenues of Application

Relationships, Conflicts, Personal Burdens, Difficult Situations, Character Weaknesses, Resources, Responsibilities, Opportunities, Attitudes, Behavior, Motives, Values, and Priorities

When applying Scripture beware of the following:

- applying cultural standards rather than biblical standards
- attempting to strengthen a legitimate truth by using a Scripture incorrectly

- applying Scripture out of prejudice from past training or teaching

V. **IMPLEMENTATION (ACTION/RESPONSE):** *What Must I Change? What Do I Do With It ?* — How does it affect my living? **NOW WHAT?**

Goal: determine specific response and action for change in one's personal life and implement those changes

Acts 2:37 *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter*

and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

James 1:21 *...receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

James 1:22-25 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves...But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

AVOID SUBSTITUES FOR APPLICATION / IMPLEMENTATION

When we fail to apply and act on biblical truth, we travel down one of four dead-end streets.

1. We substitute interpretation (knowledge and understanding of Scripture) for applying and acting on it, thus it does not become our actual experience.
2. We substitute superficial obedience (feeling good about the areas where we already apply a truth of Scripture, a partial application) for substantive life-change, thus not allowing that same truth to penetrate in areas where we are not applying and acting on it.
3. We substitute rationalization of sin instead of repenting of it, thus we do not confront sin but court it and never change.
4. We substitute an emotional experience (i.e. emotional response to a sermon, altar call, or "prophetic word from the Lord") for a volitional decision (a willful response to biblical truth), thus never moving towards a genuine change.

One commits scriptural abortion if all he/she does is **investigates** (observes), **interprets** (understands) and acknowledges the **implications** (relation) of biblical truth to life but stops short of **implementing** (responding to) it.

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