**How to Study the Bible**

*We have done a few studies this way but if this is new to you, please do not be discouraged. With time, you will see how God is guiding and you will learn how this can strengthen your study of God’s Word****. There is so much joy in doing this kind of study and seeing God’s Word open up to you.***

The method we will use this for the Bible study is called the “Inductive” Method. This means that instead of someone (sermon, commentary) telling us what the passage says, we study it first ourselves to get an overall understanding of the scripture. We also want to know how to apply it to our lives.

*Start with Prayer- ask God-the Holy Spirit, to help you understand the text. What would He have you learn from this. We are not to come up with our own ideas… but what the scripture is there to teach us.*

**1. First**, we need to know the background of the text: This can be found in any good study Bible (hope all have one or an app that gives you this information in a study Bible) as we would not know this ourselves.

a. Who wrote it and when did he write it

b. Who did he write it to….the original audience/receivers are very important

c. What was the background or historical of the location, people, times they were living

d. Why did he write it… called Authorial intent… purpose for the letter and what did HE… the author wish to say not what we THINK he said or should have said.

e. What are the themes we see repeated.

2. Then we read through the text slowly to see **“What does it say?” (also called observation)**Circle words, draw lines to connecting ideas, put question marks for what is confusing, write in definitions to words you don’t know- it can look messy but part of the process.

 We pay attention to repeated words or phrases, watch for words that we may need to look up, (yes, a dictionary is fine and very helpful) commas that separate ideas or explain them, watch for pronouns (he, it, they, them, you… ) what or whom are these words talking about. This can be confusing but sooo important. (little rule…if you use a pronoun-the word it refers to should be close before it)

 The boy often goes to the store to visit **his= the boy** grandfather. **H**e**= grandfather** lives nearby.

3. The next question is **“What does it mean?”(also called interpretation)**This is the time to go through again and think through the words and what does the author want us to know about this. This is the time to look up cross-references- these are verses that explain other verses. Study Bibles have this often in the middle of the page with numbers or online study Bibles have them under the text. This is not easy and we must be careful as we go through this and not read more into the text than is there.

 We will not be taking just one verse at a time but to see it in the context (verses before and after) as we read. By going slowly but carefully, we can begin to understand what is in the text.

**Also- Feel free to use other translations as you figure out words and phrases- Bible gateway is very helpful in doing this side by side or just use another translation you enjoy.**

4. The last question is “**How do I apply this to my own life?”(also called application)** What would God have me know, change, and/or learn from this passage. This is often a difficult challenge for us but one we need to do to allow the Word of God to change our hearts.

Now… after doing this, feel free to look in a commentary or listen to a sermon for what you do not understand. You have done the work but let the person who has done much more study guide you or to make sure you are on the right track. We often use Got Questions as well in helping us understand. (Wherever you look, you need to make sure they are Biblical and know they can be **trusted**.) If you are not sure, please ask one of the Elders about what commentary to use.