

Essential Disciplines: Bible Study Worksheet

This worksheet will guide you through process of studying a biblical passage using the simple method outlined in this workbook. There are six steps in this process:

1. Begin with prayer.
2. Read a short passage from scripture.
3. Ask the question: What Did God Say?
4. Ask the question: What Does It Mean for Us Today?
5. Apply the Big Idea of the passage to your life today.
6. Close in prayer.

We have described these steps below. The key is to work through each step, without getting stuck for too long on any one step. Do your best and keep moving. Over time, this process will become easier and more fruitful.

1. Begin with Prayer

Open with a brief prayer. Ask God to teach you what you need to know from His Word today. You may wish to write your prayer in the space below.

2. Read a short passage from the scriptures.

The passage I am studying is: _____

Note: If you are not sure where to start, we recommend that you begin with the book of Mark or Psalms.

3. Answer the question: What Did God Say?

Here we look at what the text would have meant to those who originally listened to or read this text. To do this, we must consider the various types of context surrounding the story or argument contained in the text. In the following sections, list significant facts that describe the context. Also, list any questions that you may have about the context, so you can research these areas later.

3.1. The Original Setting of the Story

In the space below list any interesting facts or questions you have about the geography, history or culture referenced in this text.

3.2. The 'Flow' of the Story

What comes immediately before this text? Describe what, if any, information in this earlier section of the story helps us to understand this text.

What comes immediately after this text? Describe what, if any, information in this later section of the story helps us to understand this text.

What other stories or arguments in the Bible can you recall that may help you to understand this text?

3.3. The Language of the Story

What important words or phrases do you find in this text? List them below, so you can research them further.

3.4. A Summary of the Story

In your own words, in one short sentence, summarize your answer to this question: What did God say to the original listeners or readers of this text?

4. Answer the question: What Does it Mean for Us Today?

Now, let's begin to apply this text to our current situation. To do this, complete the following two exercises.

4.1. Identify Timeless Truths in the passage

In your own words, summarize as simply as possible the timeless truth found in the passage. Remember that a Timeless Truth applies to all cultures in all times. To assist with this task, fill in any truths this passage contains about:

God: His Nature and Work

Jesus: The God/Man who is Lord and Savior

Humanity: Our Nature and Purpose

Creation: Its Nature and Purpose

Sin: Its Nature and Effect

4.2. State the Big Idea of the Text

A Big Idea is a brief statement that summarizes a Timeless Truth emerging from a passage of the Bible, expressed in plain, simple language. In Session 2 of the Essential Disciplines workbook, we provided the following Big Idea from 1 Corinthians 11:5, which deals with women's head coverings:

Men and women must dress and behave appropriately when they worship together.

In a similar way, state the Big Idea from the passage you are reading.

5. Apply the Big Idea of this passage in your life today.

Now we take the Big Idea and ask how this truth should shape our decisions and actions. It might be helpful to state these applications by asking the following questions:

*How does this passage **inspire or encourage** you, especially in difficult times?*

*How does this passage **instruct** you about what is true and what is false?*

*How does this passage **challenge** you to make a change in your attitude or your actions?*

You may wish to share these applications with a mentor or study group, who can then follow up with you to encourage your progress.

6. Close with Prayer

Ask God's Holy Spirit to encourage and empower you to apply this passage in your life today.