

The Key: Inductive Bible Study

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THE THREE COMPONENTS OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

- [INTRODUCTION TO INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY](#)
- [OBSERVATION](#): What does it say?
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INTRODUCTION TO INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY WHAT IS IT?

Click to skip the intro and go directly to OBSERVATION

- Do you long for a relationship with God, but feel lost when you open your Bible, not even knowing where to begin?

- Or perhaps you begin each year with a resolution to read through the Bible, only to give up in frustration, wandering about somewhere in the "*wilderness*" of the book of Numbers?
- Or do you read passages of Scripture and find that only moments later you can't even remember what you just read?
- Are you frustrated that there are so many different opinions about what the Bible says on a given subject and you wonder which one is true?
- Or do you doubt whether it's even possible for you to understand God's Word, since you're not a pastor, an elder or a degreed theologian?

If any or all of these questions describe you, then take heart, beloved, for you are about to embark on a journey called "**Inductive Bible Study**" (IBS), one that has the potential to truly radically transform your life as you study God's Word. **Inductive Bible Study** will expose you to an approach that can be applied to any Scripture, any time, any place, by any one. All that is required is the Holy Book, the Holy Spirit and a teachable heart.

But before we continue, let me give you a **warning** - Inductive Bible study can be habit-forming. Putting the principles into practice can cause loss of anxiety, decreased appetite for lying, cheating, stealing, hating and "symptoms" of growing sensations of love, peace, joy, compassion!

So as you begin this journey, remember that the Bible is to be your primary source "for no (spoken = rhema) word from God (is) [void of power](#) (a more [literal](#) rendering of Luke 1:37ASV). How sufficient is the Scripture for our spiritual life? Peter answers that "His (Who? See context = 2Pe 1:2) divine power has granted to us everything (How much?) pertaining to life and godliness, (How do we gain access to this treasure? It comes...) through the true knowledge of Him (Where found? Only in His Word) Who called us by His own glory and excellence. For (term of explanation) by these (By what? His "glory and excellence") He has granted to us His precious (How precious? Ps 19:10, 119:72, 127) and magnificent promises, in order that (term of purpose or result) by them (we) might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2Pe 1:3-4-note) If you tried to answer some or all of the questions (5W/H questions), congratulations! You have just completed your first inductive Bible study!

Beloved, if you are not convinced on the sufficiency and power of the Bible as your guidebook for abundant, supernatural life, you might consider performing a simple study on the inherent Power of God's Word. You must understand and believe that the Word of God not only is sufficient for every need but that it is a "love letter" from God, because it is! "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16) Your objective is to learn to read the Bible as if God were personally speaking to you. Why? Because He is!

B. B. Warfield once said "The Bible is the Word of God in such a way that when the Bible speaks, God speaks."

Allow the Author to speak directly, personally and powerfully to your mind and also to your

heart. Beloved, many saints are sitting **under** the Word today in Bible believing churches, but they are not **in** the Word for themselves. The psalmist writes that the blessed man or woman who flourishes like a tree by water is the one who delights not **under** but "**in** the law of the LORD, and **in** His law meditates (Biblical Meditation) day and night." (Psalm 1:1-6-note). The great need for most believers is to "get into" the Word for themselves. Instead many are sitting in pews growing **older**, but not growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18-note).

Inductive Bible Study is profitable...
not just that we should **know**
but that we might **grow!**

IBS is not a method to fill our head with Biblical facts and make us "*smarter sinners*". The ultimate goal of all IBS is the transformation of our lives from glory to glory, daily becoming more like our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you ready to get **into** the Word so that the Word can get **into** you in a way you never previously thought possible? Then, my friend, get ready for the joy and adventure of **Inductive Bible Study**.

Your Primary Resource:
THE BIBLE

GOD SPEAKS

∨

THROUGH HIS WORD

∨

DIRECTLY TO YOU

∨

**NOW YOU ARE EQUIPPED
TO STUDY OTHER RESOURCES**

After observing the schematic, you still may not appreciate the basic premise of **Inductive Bible Study** so let's illustrate two different approaches to Bible study using the life of a frog as our subject of study.

If you wanted to learn about frogs, you could go to the library and check out a book entitled "The Life of Frogs" (or in today's web savvy world you might "*Google*" the term "frog's life"). But how would you know that the so-called frog expert had really given you an accurate interpretation of a frog's life? You wouldn't if you relied solely upon that one source. On the other hand you could go to a nearby pond, sit by the water's edge and begin to observe and write down what you observed about the local frogs - **how** they gathered food, **what** they liked to eat and not eat, **where** they liked to sit, **how** they mated, **where**, **when** and **how** they laid their eggs, **what** transpired when the eggs hatched, and **how** long it took tadpoles to grow into adult frogs. Then you could take one of the slimy green creatures back home (not to your kitchen though), dissect him and observe how he was constructed in great detail, even observing the interrelationships of

the innermost parts under a dissecting microscope.

Now, let's be honest. Reading a reference by a "frog expert" is easier and more aesthetically pleasing than sitting by a pond and (heaven forbid) even touching one of the little green critters. And besides, you could glean the salient frog facts in a fraction of the time it would take you to perform your own **observations** of the frog's life cycle. So what's the point? In the first method, you might remember what you read for a few days, but with the second method you would likely be able to recall your observations months, even years later. And which method provides the potential for the joy of self discovery? Which method "costs" the most (in time and effort)? I'm sure you can see the clear distinctions between these two methods.

In terms of Bible study methods, you can study someone's else's study or you can study the Scripture for yourself. The inductive method provides you with the skills and familiarity with the tools which make it possible for even beginning students (and even children) to confidently study the Scriptures on their own.

Dr Howard Hendricks eloquently sums up the differences in the two contrasting approaches to Bible study writing that "Knowledge that is self-discovered is stored in the deepest part of the mind and remains the longest in the memory. There is no jewel more precious than that which you have mined yourself."

From the frog illustration, you can easily see that the key difference in the inductive approach is personal, active involvement in the process. As someone has said...

"I **hear** and I forget"

"I **see** and I remember"

"I **do** and I understand"

Instead of studying resources about the Bible, inductive study focuses first upon the Bible. You need to be willing to lay aside your preconceived notions, pet interpretations, ready references, study notes, sermon tapes, etc, coming to the Scriptures as for the first time. Your primary resource is God's Word, then other secondary resources. The tendency for many Bible students at the beginning of a study is to rally secondary resources that will do the "observing" and "interpreting" for the reader. It's quick but is it correct? How can you know if you don't make your own independent **observations** and arrive at your own interpretation based on those **observations**? And why even go to the Scriptures if you almost immediately forget what you've just read? Research show that we learn more and retain more, the more actively we are involved in the learning process.

PERCENTAGE REMEMBERED COMPARED to METHOD of LEARNING		
1	10%	Of what we read
2	20%	Of what we hear

3	30%	By watching a demonstration
4	50%	Combining #2 and #3
5	70%	Combine #4 with writing out what you learn
6	90%	All of the above plus application or practice

The key to effective, fruitful inductive Bible study is personal involvement and learning how to **carefully, prayerfully observe**... not sitting by a pond, but sitting at the feet of Jesus, allowing the Spirit of Christ to lead you into all truth.

Give me the insight, Lord,
As I read Your Word today,
So I will truly understand
Your message and Your way.
—Monroe

Inductive Bible study has as one of its major goals to give the student the knowledge and tools to allow them to "*fish for themselves*" so to speak. The Bible is a remarkable book. Millions of copies are bought each year. It has been the number-one bestseller for decades. But tragically, the Bible is said to be the least-read bestseller of all time!

J. I. Packer is surely correct when says that...

"If I were the devil, one of my first aims would be to stop folk from digging into the Bible."

Alan Redpath (past pastor at Moody Bible Church) once advised believers to "**wreck**" their Bible every 10 years! Do you use your Bible every day until it eventually falls apart? If you've never studied your Bible inductively, then you are about to experience that it is a wonderful "tool" by which you can wear out your Bible! Remember -- a well-worn Bible is a sign of a well-fed soul, and a Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't!

The treasures of the Word of God
Are great beyond compare;
But if we do not search them out,
We cannot use what's there.
—Sper

The godly missionary [Amy Carmichael](#) indirectly alluded to the value of inductive Bible study warning all saints to "**Never** let good books take the place of the Bible (**Ed**: It alone is the Best Book!). Drink from the Well, not from the streams that flow from the Well."

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

IS IT "BIBLICAL"?

You may be asking "Did anyone in Scripture study inductively?" It's a very relevant question.

In the book of Acts we encounter a group of saints often referred to as the "*Bereans*" who seem to approach the Scriptures with an inductive mindset.

Luke records that as a result of jealousy, the Jews stirred the city of Thessalonica into an uproar which prompted...

the brethren (to) immediately (send) Paul and Silas away by night to Berea and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these (Jews at Berea) were [more](#) noble-minded than those (Jews) in [Thessalonica](#), for they received the word with great eagerness, examining ("searched" KJV) the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were [so](#). Therefore (term of conclusion) many of them believed. (Acts 17:10-12-note)

The New Living Translation has a good paraphrase of this Acts 17:11 - "the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to check up on Paul and Silas, to see if they were really teaching the truth."

The Bereans were open to the Truth, but as any good inductive student would do, they searched the scrolls **for themselves** which may explain why Dr. Luke referred to them as **noble-minded**. This Greek word (**eugenes**, Strong's # [2104](#) from **eu** = good, well + **génos** = race, family) can mean "of noble birth", but in **context** conveys the idea that these men and women were open-minded, unbiased and characterized by a willingness to learn and evaluate something fairly. This is the attitude we should have as we begin to explore a passage inductively. The moment we come to a passage and say "I know what this one means", we are in "trouble".

**Needed:
Men and Women
Boys and Girls with...
A Berean Mindset!**

To experience the most fruitful inductive study, we need a "Berean mindset". We need to approach the Word of God "as if for the first time" and avoid approaching it with our mind already made up. We also need to approach the precious Word with teachable hearts that continually exhibit a willingness to allow the truth of the text to transform and renew our thinking if such a change needs to transpire. This Spirit wrought supernatural transformation of one's thinking upon confrontation with the Word of Truth (cp 2Cor 3:18-note, Ro 12:2-note, Eph 4:23-note) is at the very heart of [Application](#), the third

aspect of inductive study.

As you have noted in the above passage two key verbs are highlighted in **blue** and merit further analysis by looking briefly at the original Greek words. As you will learn later **Greek Word Studies** can be a valuable, illuminating component of inductive Bible study.

Receive The Word

The first verb is received. What did they receive? Who did they receive it from? (Begin to practice the habit of "bombarding" the Scripture with these 5 W's and H type of questions) In the context of Acts 17:1-14 clearly the Bereans received the spoken word from Paul and Silas (Acts 17:4-note). The verb received (dechomai, Strong's # [1209](#)) describes a deliberate and ready acceptance. It means to receive kindly and to take to oneself what is presented or brought by another. It means to welcome as one would welcome a teacher, a friend, or a guest into one's house. In modern day terms, the Bereans "put out the welcome mat" for the Word of Truth taught by Paul (cp 1Th 1:6-note and Jas 1:21-note where "receive" = dechomai)!

What was their attitude? How did they receive Paul's message? Luke says with "great eagerness" which is literally "all eagerness". How (5W/H) much? Not just "some" or "partial" but "all eagerness", which the NAS translates ([see Bible Versions](#)) as "great eagerness". Eagerness is the Greek word prothumia (Strong's # [4288](#), a compound derived from pro = before and thumos = mind, temperament, passion) which conveys the picture of a mind ready and willing to receive truth. In short, the Bereans approached the study of the God's Word not with a sense of drudgery but a sense of anticipation regarding the divine truth their Teacher the Spirit would unveil. Dear saint, does this attitude describe the way in which you approach the Word of Life? If not, keep reading and then begin practicing the inductive technique. If you persevere you will be pleasantly, profitably surprised by the joy of self-discovery and the spiritual growth which you experience! Remember that God feeds the birds, but He doesn't throw the food into their nests!

Examine The Word

The Bereans were not content with simply hearing Paul, but continually sought to check out what he said by daily (How often?) personally examining ("scrutinizing", Wuest) the Scriptures. The Greek verb (anakrino from ana = up and down, again + krino = judge) (Strong's # [350](#)) paints an interesting picture. It literally describes a process of "judging up and down". One can almost picture the Bereans "carefully sifting" the Scriptural scrolls, their eyes going up and down the pages, "prospecting" as it were for the truth, as one would for pure gold and then (on the basis of the truth gleaned) forming an opinion regarding Paul's message. The Bereans had discovered the timeless principle that it is amazing how much light personal study of the Scriptures will shed on the commentaries about the Scriptures.

Anakrino has an interesting secular association in that it was used of one who meticulously examined legal evidence. In a related use anakrino also described an investigation for the purpose of passing sentence in a judicial setting. These secular uses emphasize the careful, exacting nature of the Berean's approach to the Scriptures. For the Bereans, God's Spirit along with God's Word was their final "judge" which enabled them to assess the authenticity and accuracy of Paul's "commentary" on the Scriptures! As good Inductive Bible Students the primary goal of the Bereans was to know what "saith the LORD", a goal they achieved by practicing the art and skill of careful observation which led to accurate interpretation.

Although the Berean approach is not specifically called "*inductive Bible study*", I think you will agree that their approach to the Scriptures closely parallels the inductive method.

Paul also used the verb **anakrino** in writing to the saints at Corinth explaining that as believers we have each received

not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words BUT a natural (*psychikos* from *psyche* = soul; that part of immaterial life in common with the animals; Latin Vulgate translates it "*animalis*" - in context the contrast is between the "spiritual" and the unregenerate natural) man (who) does not (absolutely does not) accept (dechomai - accept readily, welcome as a teacher, "put out the welcome mat for") the things of the Spirit of God (why not?) for they are foolishness (moria ~ "moronic") to him and he cannot (does not have the inherent ability to) understand them, because they are spiritually appraised (anakrino) (1Cor 2:13-14-note)

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY CALLS FOR CONTINUAL DEPENDENCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Alexander Maclaren said "He who has the Holy Spirit in his heart and the Scriptures in his hands has all he needs." The Bible, God's Holy Word, is our primary Source and His Holy Spirit is our primary Teacher. But how do we engage and interact with our Teacher? In a word - we pray! Before we open the Book, we should always ask the Spirit to Open our eyes - "Open my eyes (the eyes of my heart) that I might behold wonderful things from Your law." (Ps 119:18)

Open my eyes, that I may see,
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key,
That shall unclasp, and set me free.

-Scott

As John Piper says "no one can see these wonderful things for what they really are without God's supernatural help...If God does not open our eyes, we will not see the wonder of the Word. We are not naturally able to see spiritual beauty. When we read the Bible without the help of God, the glory of God in the teachings and events of the Bible is like the sun shining in the face of a blind man. Not that you can't construe its surface meaning, but you can't see the wonder, the beauty, the glory of it such that it wins your heart." ([Ref](#))

Warren Wiersbe writes that "If we speak to the Lord about the Word, the Word will speak to us about the Lord!"

To understand the Word of God,
Rely on the Spirit of God.

And as we prayerfully read and study, we must actively think about what we are studying (Search for Mortimer Adler's comments on the phrase "active reading" in [How to Read a Book](#)), for as Paul instructed Timothy "Consider (fix your mind upon, ask 5W/H questions, reflect on) what I say, for the Lord (Your Teacher the Spirit) will give you understanding in everything." (2Ti 2:7-note) Our responsibility is to "Consider." The Spirit's gracious provision is to grant us "understanding." John Piper explains "It is not you who can see it on your own. Spiritual apprehension is a gift of God. But God has ordained to give the gift of supernatural light through thinking...So by all means pray and ask God to give you the light you need. But don't replace thinking with praying. Think and pray. Pray and think. This is the way God has set it up. A historical Christ. A book of preservation and revelation. All of that says: read and study and ransack and think. But all is in vain without prayer. Both-and, not either-or." ([Ref](#)) And so as we open our Bible, we must ask the Author to open our heart and our mind. (Luke 24:45, Eph 1:17-note; Eph 1:18-note)

"The unfolding (unveiling giving understanding) of Thy Words gives light. It gives understanding to the simple." (Ps 119:130) The Spirit's illumining work is not to change the sense of the Scriptures, but to restore us to our senses!

The Apostle John reminds us that the Holy Spirit Who abides in every believer (Ro 8:9-note) enables us to distinguish truth from error.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know....And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him (in context referring to the Holy Spirit) abides in you, and you have no need to have anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about an things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (1Jn 2:20-note, 1Jn 2:27-note).

John teaches that the Spirit of God, Who lives in each believer, is our personal, private tutor. To be sure, God has given us pastors and teachers for our edification (1Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11-12-note), but remember that they are in addition to and not a substitute for the Holy Spirit. And so the humblest believer in Christ may be taught of God through His Word, even when human teachers are lacking.

The Lord Jesus makes it abundantly clear in these words, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13,14).

The apostle John quoted Isaiah 54:13 recording Jesus' promise that "THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me" (Jn 6:45). He later explained that "It is the Spirit Who gives life; the flesh profits nothing" (Jn 6:63)

The Scriptures must be read in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. This axiom is important to remember in Inductive Bible Study, where we diligently seek to read the Scriptures objectively. The danger is that in so doing, we might become "mechanical" and divorce ourselves from the necessity of illumination of the Scriptures by the Spirit.

Ever-present, truest Friend;
Ever near Thine aid to lend;
Guide us as we search the Word,
Make it both our shield and sword.

The great 19th century preacher, **Charles Spurgeon** put it this way "It is one of the peculiar offices of the Holy Spirit to enlighten His people. He has done so by giving us His inspired Word, but the Book is never spiritually understood by anyone apart from the personal teaching of its great Author. You may read it as much as you will and never discover the inner and vital meaning **unless** your soul is led into it by the Holy Spirit Himself. You may have done well to learn the letter of truth, but you still need the Spirit of God to make it the light and power of God to your soul."

The Holy Spirit has inspired the Word and He alone can illuminate the Word in the "eyes of our heart" as we read it ([see The Bible and Illumination](#)). As Puritan Stephen Charnock wrote "The Word is the chariot of the Spirit, the Spirit the Guider of the Word." When we devote ourselves to the study of His Word, with a keen awareness of our need to continually depend upon our Teacher, the Holy Spirit, we will experience the joy of Spirit led discovery of God's Truth ("self-discovery" enabled by the Spirit) and the Truth He unveils to our heart will set us free so that we might be free indeed! (Jn 8:31, 36) (See also: [John Piper's sermon on our desperate need for God's illumination](#).)

C H Spurgeon writes that "If you do not understand a book by a departed writer you are unable to ask him his meaning, but the Spirit, Who inspired Holy Scripture, lives forever, and He delights to open the Word to those who seek His instruction. God, by His Spirit, brings old truth home to the heart, gives new light to our eyes, and causes the Word to exercise new power over us. Blind men may read the Bible with their fingers, but blind souls cannot. We want a light to read the Bible by; there is no reading it in the dark. Thus the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth, by suggesting ideas, by directing our thoughts, and by illuminating the Scriptures when we read them." (See link to sermon below)

Warren Wiersbe "Illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit, and we must depend on Him to

teach us new truths and to remind us of truths we may have forgotten (Jn 14:26b). When (we are) "in the Spirit," the Word comes forth with power and penetration. We experience what the little girl in London meant when she said to her mother, "Mother, is Mr. Spurgeon speaking to me?" The Word becomes personal....The blessing doesn't come because we hear the Word; it comes because we do the Word. Anything else is pure deception. (Jas 1:22)" Indeed, it is better to live one verse of the Bible, than to recite an entire chapter. As Jesus taught "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." (Jn 13:17)

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY CALLS FOR A PROPER ATTITUDE

J I Packer rightly reminds us that "One of the many divine qualities of the Bible is this: that it does not yield its secrets to the irreverent and censorious."

And so, as you begin this journey, inductive Bible study may seem somewhat labor intensive or academic, but if you desire to learn how to rightly divide the Word of Truth, you will need to persevere and exert effort ([an incredible illustration](#) of desire and effort).

Bob Smith in his practical book [Basics of Bible Interpretation](#) writes that "God wants everyone to be able to understand the Bible, for its message is essentially how we can have and enjoy the greatest kind of life, free from the futility of pointlessness, free from the limitations of our human, earthly thought patterns, free from the fear of death and dying. Not everyone understands it this way. In fact, many are so convinced they can't understand the Bible that they never give it a second look. It's strange how we will study most any other subject with diligence only to have the acquired knowledge perish with us. But the words of the Bible are words of life! (cp Dt 32:47, Php 2:16)"

Perhaps you have approached the Bible more as "snack food" because of unfounded notion that deeper study was only for the "professionals." In the inductive approach to the Scriptures you will come to learn that you too can experience a veritable feast at the King's banqueting table.

As **Oliver Wendell Holmes** once said "What you bring away from the Bible depends to some extent on what you carry to it."

And so in order to experience effective, profitable inductive Bible study we need the **right attitude** as emphasized by the following Scripture. The apostle Peter writes...

Therefore (term of conclusion), **putting aside** all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, **2** like newborn babes, **long for** the **pure** milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, **3** if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord." (1Pe 2:1-note; 1Pe 2:2-3-note)

Did you notice the order? **Putting aside** the perverse precedes practice of the positive. The Greek verb for "putting aside" was used to describe taking off one's old dirty clothes! Sin

in one's life will destroy one's appetite for the Word and needs to be "cast off" by confession and repentance (cf 1John 1:9-note). So first seek a "clean slate" as did David when he prayed "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts and see if there be any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way." (Ps 139:23-24-note)

Peter uses a figure of speech ("newborn babies ") to draw a poignant comparison (simile) between the appetite of a growing baby for its mothers milk and the appetite of a healthy believer for Gods Word. He commands us to **long for** pure milk, to desire it earnestly, to long for it greatly, to intensely crave possession of it and to have great affection for it. David wrote "As (simile) the deer [pants](#) for the water brooks, so my soul [pants](#) for Thee, O God." (Ps 42:1-note) where in the Septuagint = Lxx (the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) the word for [pants](#) is the same word translated **long for** in first Peter.

Spurgeon explains the idea of panting "As after a long drought the poor fainting hind longs for the streams, or rather as the hunted hart instinctively seeks after the river to lave its smoking flanks and to escape the dogs, even so my weary, persecuted soul pants after the Lord my God. ([Note](#))

The meaning of this word picture is obvious. Sinners bought with the precious blood and made into new babes in Christ are to crave the spiritual milk of God's Word just like babies crave the bottle.

And just as the Bible is to be our primary source in inductive study, Peter instructs us to make sure the "milk" we partake of is **pure** -- genuine, without guile or deceit, unadulterated, not mixed with anything else. So when you "eat" the Bible inductively, we seek to do so without "additives". (See related messages by **Dr. John Piper** - [Long for the Pure Milk; Sweeter than honey; Meditate on the Word; Thank God for an Inspired Bible](#))

Why does Peter insist on a healthy diet of pure milk? What is his goal? In context clearly it is spiritual growth, which is only possible when one takes in pure milk. No intake of God's Word will result in stunted spiritual growth and the off shoot, spiritual maturity. In short, "no milk, no growth!" Test yourself -- How long have you been a Christian? How would you grade your spiritual growth over this past year? Are you growing up in Christ or are you simply growing older? Remember the principle - No regular intake of the Word = No spiritual growth! It follows that we must be very wary of substituting Christian books and devotionals for the intake of "pure milk," for only the God's Word carries God's guarantee of growth "in respect to salvation (= sanctification)." (1Pe 2:2b-note).

Howard Hendricks adds that 1Peter 2:1-3 (1Pe 2:1- note; 1Peter 2:2-3-note) "tells us: in order that you might grow. Please note, it is not that you may know. Certainly you can't grow without knowing. But you can know and not grow. The Bible was written not to satisfy your curiosity but to help you conform to Christ's image. Not to make you a smarter sinner but to make you like the Savior. Not to fill your head with a collection of biblical facts but to transform your life." ([Ibid](#))

As a miner digs for ore;
Search, and you will surely find
Treasures to enrich your mind.
-Anonymous

Francis Bacon once remarked that "some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

Surely the Word of Truth and Life is to be "chewed and digested" so that it becomes part of our innermost being, not merely informing us but transforming us. Such was the approach of the weeping, downcast prophet Jeremiah who declared "Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts." (Jer 15:16)

German theologian **Johann Bengel** (1687-1752) said "Be like a maker of a well who brings no water to his source but allows the water he finds there to flow freely without stoppage, diversion, or defilement."

THE BENEFITS OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

If you're still not convinced that Inductive Bible Study is worth the investment of your time and effort, glance over a few of the benefits listed below.

(1) You will learn how to carefully observe the Scriptures and in so doing you will be enabled to "*rightly divide the Word of Truth*" (2Ti 2:15-note) and you be equipped to accurately interpret God's Word on your own. President Teddy Roosevelt rightly declared that "A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."

(2) You will no longer be dependent on commentaries, devotionals, pastor's sermons, conferences, etc. Please do not misunderstand. Believers should sit under a godly teacher of the Word, but this should be a stimulus, not a substitute for getting into the book for ourselves!

(3) When you encounter differences between interpretations in commentaries, which you frequently will, IBS enables you to discern which comment represents the most accurate interpretation.

(4) You will increase in the knowledge of God and His ways, growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2Pe 3:18-note)

Phillips Brooks said that "The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope, then he sees worlds beyond: but if he looks at his telescope, then he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through, to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it; and so they see only the dead letter."

(5) Your personal faith will be greatly strengthened for "faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ." (Ro 10:17-note)

D. L. Moody - "The study of God's Word brings peace to the heart...light for every darkness, life in death, the promise of our Lord's return, and the assurance of everlasting glory."

Henry Ward Beecher - "The Bible is God's chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbor is, and how to reach it without running on rocks and bars."

(6) You will become increasingly aware of what it means to be "**in Christ**" and to "be holy for I am holy" (Lev 11:44-note, 1Pe 1:16-note) for Jesus prayed "**Sanctify** them (His disciples) in the Truth. Thy Word is Truth." (Jn 17:17) The **NLT** paraphrases it "Make them pure and holy by teaching them Your words of truth."

It has been well said that "This book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book."

Howard Hendricks quips that "Dusty Bibles lead to dirty lives. In fact, you are either in the Word and the Word is conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ, or you are in the world and the world is squeezing you into its mold."

(7) You will develop an increasing assurance that you are believing not what someone else teaches but what the God's Word truly teaches. And since we behave on the basis of what we believe, we can be certain that we are ""[walking](#) (living) in a [manner worthy](#) of the [Lord](#), to [please](#) Him in [all respects](#), [bearing fruit](#) in [every good work](#) and [increasing](#) in the [knowledge](#) of [God](#)" (Col 1:10-note)?

So you can see why it is critical that what one believes about God is in fact truly what God says and not what someone else's "systematic" interpretation teaches, no matter how authoritative and respected the source. And make no mistake -- this attitude is not one of arrogance but one of prudence! Howard Hendricks once asked a group of businessmen

"If you didn't know any more about your business or profession than you know about Christianity after the same number of years of exposure, what would happen ?

'One guy said, "They'd ship me!" to which Dr. Hendricks replied

"Thank, you, sir, for the honesty"! (Living by the Book)

(8) You will learn a method of independent Bible study that can be passed on to others who in turn can go out and teach others. (cf 2Ti 2:2-note).

The Bible gives us all we need
To live our lives for God each day;
But it won't help if we don't read
And follow what its pages say
-Sper

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY SUGGESTED RESOURCES

At this point you may feel a bit overwhelmed, and yet you are intrigued with the inductive approach. Let me encourage you first of all to continue reading the remainder of the summary notes on this website. Here are some other suggestions you might consider:

1) "[How to Study Your Bible](#)" ([click](#)) by Kay Arthur is the most succinct, straightforward synopsis on inductive Bible study currently available. (Or try this similar resource - [Lord, Teach Me to Study the Bible in 28 Days](#))

2) [New International Inductive Study Bible](#) was developed by Precept Ministry International specifically with the inductive student in mind. This Bible is unique with an excellent synopsis of the inductive method including an example of how to mark the text, wide margins, paucity of study notes, suggestions at the beginning of all 66 books on how to study that specific book inductively and at the end of each book there is a blank "At A Glance" chart to record your chapter themes, key words, etc. If you are serious about the inductive Bible study method, you should strongly consider purchasing this Bible.

3) [40 Minute Bible Studies](#) ([click](#)) on a variety of topics (click following examples "[How Can A Man Control His Thoughts, Desires and Passions?](#)", "[Money, Possessions, and the Pursuit of Peace](#)", "[A Marriage that Really Works](#)", "[Discovering What the Future Holds](#)", a study on prophecy, etc).

Each 40 minute study (so named because the lesson can be completed in 40 minutes) is self-contained, self-instructional, does not require advanced training and is easily adapted to a small group setting even if participants are not familiar with inductive study. These 40 minute studies are an excellent, "painless" way to begin to experience inductive Bible study, learning how to study the Scriptures on your own in a way you never thought possible before.

4) [God Are You There? Do You Care? Do You Know About Me?](#) This self-contained study on the book of John will give you an excellent introduction to the inductive Bible study technique. You could do this one in your personal devotional time to whet your appetite for a full fledge Precept Upon Precept study discussed below.

5) Sign up for a Precept Bible Study in your area: Precept Upon Precept Bible Studies are the best in depth studies available for inductive Bible study. They take from 3-5 hours of homework per week but are well worth the time investment for you will learn more life transforming truth in these courses than you ever thought possible in a lay setting. You can also download the first lesson of each of their expanding selection of available Bible book studies in Pdf format ([click for list of available studies and Pdf downloads](#)). You may feel overwhelmed at first but all Precept leaders are trained in the

inductive method and are willing to assist you. If you are unable to find a Precept Bible study in your call Precept headquarters at 1-800-763-8280.

6) Sign up for a Precept Workshop on Inductive Bible Study: An Introduction to inductive Bible study is offered by Precept in Chattanooga (a blessing to visit if you are able) in addition to periodic seminars throughout the USA (call 1-800-763-8280).

7) Living by the Book: by Dr Howard Hendricks. This work is an entertaining and enlightening introduction to inductive Bible study which one could use to supplement the more practical and broader selection of inductive Bible study materials available from Precept Ministry International. (Available in [Print](#) and [Digital](#) formats)

8) [Basic Bible Interpretation](#) by Dr Roy B. Zuck. This book is an authoritative, well written, easy to understand textbook on hermeneutics (the "science" of interpretation). Chapter 2 is especially useful to give the student of Scripture an excellent historical summary of how the Bible has been rightly and wrongly handled over the last 2000 years. ([Hardbound book](#))

9) [Basics of Bible Interpretation](#) by Bob Smith is a well written book available free of charge online. Although it is not specifically a treatise on inductive study ([click](#)), this book does contain excellent guidelines on interpretation of [figurative language](#) and practical guidelines on how to utilize the original languages, [Greek](#) and [Hebrew](#).

10) [Hermeneutics - Study of Interpretation of Scriptures](#) - by Dr Stephen Lewis. This 152 page Pdf is used as for the course on hermeneutics at Chafer Theological Seminary and represents a compilation of sound, useful material from a number of sources. On page 22 there is an excellent summary of how the Bible has been interpreted over the past 2000 years (similar to resource #8 but no charge).

11) [How Can I Understand The Bible?](#) : A brief, well done online booklet from Radio Bible Class summarizing inductive Bible study.

12) [How to Read a Book](#) by Mortimer Adler. Howard Hendricks writes that "even though [How to Read a Book](#) is about books in general, it's an outstanding resource for Bible study because it teaches you how to read...I read it, and it transformed my study skills. In fact, it changed the course of my life. And that's what it can do for you in terms of Bible study." (This book is available free online in Pdf - [I presume that it is legal] - [How to Read a Book](#))

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

Begin your great adventure by first learning what to look for as you develop your God given ability to observe the living and active Word of God. Click the discussion on how to observe the Scripture.

HOW MUCH DO YOU

LOVE GOD'S WORD?

In France, there once lived a poor, blind girl who obtained the Gospel of Mark in raised letters and learned to read it with the tips of her fingers. By constant reading, her fingers became calloused, and consequently her sense of touch decreased until she could no longer distinguish the letters & words. She became so desperate for the Word of God that she literally cut the calloused skin from the ends of her fingers in an attempt to restore sense of touch, but in so doing actually resulted in completely destroying her sense of touch. Faced with the inevitable reality that she must now give up her beloved Book, with weeping & tears she pressed the Braille copy of Mark to her lips, saying "*Farewell, farewell, sweet word of my Heavenly Father!*" To her surprise, she discovered that her lips were even more sensitive to touch than her fingers had been & she was able to distinguish the individual letters. All night she "perused" the Word of God with her lips and overflowed with joy at this amazing provision from her LORD.

John Stott - A man who loves his wife will love her letters and her photographs because they speak to him of her. So if we love the Lord Jesus, we shall love the Bible because it speaks to us of Him. (our Bridegroom)

QUOTES RELATED TO THE WORD OF GOD

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.
- Samuel Smiles

- THIS BOOK contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good is its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened in the judgement, and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.— Anonymous

- All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them ... The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.— [Westminster Confession of Faith](#), 1647.
- Inductive Bible study is meant not merely to inform but to transform. (see **note** Romans 12:2)
- Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them. - E. Paul Hovey
- The old covenant is revealed in the New, and the New Covenant is veiled in the Old. - Augustine
- The new is in the old contained, and the Old is in the New explained. - Graham Scroggie
- The family Bible is more often used to adorn coffee tables or press flowers than it is to feed souls and discipline lives. - Charles Colson
- The Old Testament altar points to the New Testament cross.
- The Bible is meant to be bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions. ([Deut 8:3](#), [Mt 4:4](#))
- The Bible is the best "TV guide". ([Ps 101:3](#)) ([Spurgeon on Ps 101:3](#))
- When you open your Bible, ask the Author to open your heart. (Ps119:18, Luke 24:45, see notes Ephesians 1:17; 1:18)
- If a Christian is careless in Bible reading, he will care less about Christian living.
- Backsliders begin with dusty Bibles and end with filthy garments. - Spurgeon
- You can't enjoy the harmony of Scripture if you play just one note of truth. (Acts 20:27)
- To hear God speak, read the Bible carefully and study it prayerfully.
- We cannot bear fruit without the water of God's Word. (Luke 8:15)
- The highest goal of learning is to know God. (John 17:3)
- When we look into the mirror of God's Word, we see ourselves more clearly. (James 1:23-25)
- A text taken out of context becomes a pretext.
- Let God's Word fill your mind, rule your heart, and guide your tongue. (see **note** Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:18; 19;20)
- The Bible: The more you read it, the more you love it; the more you love it, the more you read it.
- The best protection against Satan's lies is to know God's truth. (see note Ephesians 6:14)
- Like a compass, the Bible always points you in the right direction. (Deut 28:13-14, Joshua 1:7-9)

- Those who only sample the Bible never acquire a taste for it. (Jer 15:16, Job 23:12, Ps 19:10)
- If you're too busy to read the Bible, you're too busy.
- God feeds the birds, but He doesn't throw the food into their nests.
- We lose the joy of living in the present when we worry about the future. And we lose the joy of living for the future when we focus on the present.
- Opening your Bible can be a real eye-opener.
- A well-read Bible is a sign of a well-fed soul.
- A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.
- Sin will keep you from the Bible or the Bible will keep you from sin.
- It's better to live one verse of the Bible than to recite an entire chapter.
- The Bible: read it through, work it out, pass it on!
- Apply yourself to the Scriptures and the Scriptures to yourself.
- Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like eating without chewing. (Ps 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148)
- God speaks through His Word--take time to listen.
- When the Bible becomes a part of you, you'll be less likely to come apart.
- The Bible is simple enough for a child to read and too deep for a scholar to master.
- The Bible is like the ocean. You can wade in it, feed from it, live on it--or drown in it. But those who take the time to learn its truths and practice them will be changed forever.
- With God's Word as your map and His Spirit as your compass, you're sure to stay on course.
- When you study the Bible "hit or miss," you MISS more than you HIT.
- When the Word of God dwells in you, the love of Christ shines through you.
- Beware! Error often rides to its deadly work on the back of truth! --Spurgeon (2Cor 11:13-15)
- Spiritual growth requires the meat of God's Word. (see note Hebrews 5:14, see **note** 1 Peter 2:2)
- Be diligent in your study of the Word of God. Then, instead of falling into error, you will stand firmly on the truth.
- Your life will run smoother if you go by "The Book."
- If we want our life to run well, even through stormy situations and rough circumstances, we must take the time to study the "Owner's Manual."
- Many people store the Bible on the shelf instead of in their heart.
- Some people make the Bible say what they want to hear
- To be a healthy Christian, don't treat the Bible as snack food.
- A well-read Bible is the companion of a well-fed believer.
- We must approach God's Word as if our lives depended on it--because they do.
- If your life depended on knowing the Bible, how long would you last?
- We must align ourselves with the Bible, never the Bible with ourselves.
- The branches of growing trees not only reach higher, but their roots grow deeper. It's impossible for a strong tree to have high branches without having deep roots. It would become top-heavy and topple over in the wind." The same is true with

Christians. It's impossible for us to grow in the Lord without entwining our roots around His Word and deepening our life in His commands." - Joni Eraeckson Tada

- The roots of stability come from being grounded in God's Word.
- Bible study demands pondering deeply on a short passage, like a cow chewing her cud. It is better to read a little and ponder a lot than to read a lot and ponder a little."
- To get the full flavor of an herb, it must be pressed between the fingers, so it is the same with the Scriptures; the more familiar they become, the more they reveal their hidden treasures and yield their indescribable riches. John Chrysostom, A.D. 347-407
- There's no better book with which to defend the Bible than the Bible itself. - D. L. Moody
- The study of God's Word brings peace to the heart. In it, we find a light for every darkness, life in death, the promise of our Lord's return, and the assurance of everlasting glory. - D. L. Moody
- We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy. - R. C. Sproul
- The Bible is a corridor between two eternities down which walks the Christ of God; His invisible steps echo through the Old Testament, but we meet Him face to face in the throne room of the New; and it is through that Christ alone, crucified for me, that I have found forgiveness for sins and life eternal. The Old Testament is summed up in the word Christ; the New Testament is summed up in the word Jesus; and the summary of the whole Bible is that Jesus is the Christ.— Bishop Pollock
- Mark the plain and manifest places of the Scriptures, and in doubtful places see thou add no interpretation contrary to them; but (as Paul saith) let all be conformable and agreeing to the faith.— William Tyndale
- The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope, then he sees worlds beyond: but if he looks at his telescope, then he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through, to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it; and so they see only the dead letter." Phillips Brooks
- The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity, but to make you conform to Christ's image. Not to make you a smarter sinner, but to make you like the Savior. Not to fill your head with a collection of biblical facts, but to transform your life." -- Howard Hendricks in *Living by the Book*
- It has been said that the Bible is so deep that theologians cannot touch the bottom, yet so shallow that babes cannot drown.
- In the midst of that period of intellectual history called The Enlightenment, a philosophy known as deism was sweeping Europe. In the midst of this development, the famous skeptic, Voltaire, proclaimed that within 25 years, the Bible would be forgotten and Christianity would be a thing of the past. However, 40 years after Voltaire's death in 1778, the Bible and other Christian literature were being printed in what had once been Voltaire's own house!
- My rule for Christian living is this: anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes

away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it. - Dr. Wilbur Chapman

- The Bible is God's chart for you to steer by, to keep you from the bottom of the sea, and to show you where the harbor is, and how to reach it without running on rocks or bars. - Henry Ward Beecher
- Leave not off reading the Bible till you find your hearts warmed...Let it not only inform you, but inflame you. - Thomas Watson
- Never let good books take the place of the Bible. Drink from the Well, not from the streams that flow from the Well . -- Amy Carmichael
- Gipsy Smith told of a man who said he had received no inspiration from the Bible although he had "gone through it several times." "Let it go through you once," replied Smith, "then you will tell a different story!"
- Plain places therein are for our nourishment, hard places for our exercise. - John Trapp
- Every one who knows what it is to give a lesson or an address occasionally on Scripture is aware how the verse or paragraph on which he has had to prepare himself to speak stands out in his Bible afterwards from the rest of the text, as if its letters were embossed on the page. Something thus to awaken the mind and concentrate the attention should be devised by every one; because it is not mere reading, but meditation — "meditation all the day," as the Psalmist says — which extracts the sweetness and the power out of Scripture.— Dr. James Stalker, [How to Study the Bible](#)
- Men must interpret to the best of their ability each particular part of Scripture separately, and then combine all that the Scriptures teach upon every subject into a consistent whole, and then adjust their teachings upon different subjects in mutual consistency as parts of a harmonious system. Every student of the Bible must do this, and all make it obvious that they do it by the terms they use in their prayers and religious discourse, whether they admit or deny the propriety of human creeds and confessions. If they refuse the assistance afforded by the statements of doctrine slowly elaborated and defined by the Church, they must make out their own creed by their own unaided wisdom. The real question is not, as often pretended, between the word of God and the creed of man, but between the tried and proved faith of the collective body of God's people, and the private judgment and the unassisted wisdom of the repudiator of creeds.— A. A. Hodge, [A Short History of Creeds and Confessions](#), 1869
- I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light, exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing ravishing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading. Used oftentimes to dwell long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.— Jonathan Edwards

- Again, we are taught by this passage [John 5:39-40], that if we wish to obtain the knowledge of Christ, we must seek it from the Scriptures; for they who imagine whatever they choose concerning Christ will ultimately have nothing of him but a shadowy phantom. First, then, we ought to believe that Christ cannot be properly known in any other way than from the Scriptures; and if it be so, it follows that we ought to read the Scriptures with the express design of finding Christ in them. Whoever shall turn aside from this object, though he may weary himself throughout his whole life in learning, will never attain the knowledge of the truth; for what wisdom can we have without the wisdom of God? Next, as we are commanded to seek Christ in the Scriptures, so he declares in this passage that our labors shall not be fruitless; for the Father testifies in them concerning his Son in such a manner that He will manifest him to us beyond all doubt. But what hinders the greater part of men from profiting is, that they give to the subject nothing more than a superficial and cursory glance. Yet it requires the utmost attention, and, therefore, Christ enjoins us to search diligently for this hidden treasure. Consequently, the deep abhorrence of Christ which is entertained by the Jews, who have the Law constantly in their hands, must be imputed to their indolence. For the lustre of the glory of God shines brightly in Moses, but they choose to have a veil to obscure that lustre.—John Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel of John
- So then, from this we must gather that to profit much in the holy Scripture we must always resort to our Lord Jesus Christ and cast our eyes upon him, without turning away from him at any time. You will see a number of people who labor very hard indeed at reading the holy Scriptures -- they do nothing else but turn over the leaves of it, and yet after ten years they have as much knowledge of it as if they had never read a single line. And why? Because they do not have any particular aim in view, they only wander about. And even in worldly learning you will see a great number who take pains enough, and yet all to no purpose, because they kept neither order nor proportion, nor do anything else but gather material from this quarter and from that, by means of which they are always confused and can never bring anything worthwhile. And although they have gathered together a number of sentences of all sorts, yet nothing of value results from them. Even so it is with them that labor in reading the holy Scriptures and do not know which is the point they ought to rest on, namely, the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.—John Calvin, Sermon on Ephesians 2:19-22
- Heresy is not so much rejecting as selecting. The heretic simply selects the parts of the Scripture he wants to emphasize and lets the rest go. This is shown by the etymology of the word heresy and by the practice of the heretic. "Beware," an editorial scribe of the fourteenth century warned his readers in the preface to a book. "Beware thou take not one thing after thy affection and liking, and leave another: for that is the condition of an heretique. But take everything with other." The old scribe knew well how prone we are to take to ourselves those parts of the truth that please us and ignore the other parts. And that is heresy.—A. W. Tozer, We Travel An Appointed Way.

- One does not hear God's word of grace in the Scriptures unless he has decided that this is the word he really needs and wants to hear. He must decide that as he hears he is prepared to submit to the voice of God, to be judged by it and to have it challenge all that he knows and intends. He must understand that what he hears the Bible say can change his very life. Therefore, he cannot come to the New Testament as the disputer, the wise man, the judge over the word of God. He can come only as the child who needs to be made wise by the Wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:18-31).—Glenn W. Barker, *The New Testament Speaks*
- It is strange how powerful is the tradition of the pulpit; how often able and thoughtful men will go all their lives taking for granted that an important passage has that meaning which in youth they heard ascribed to it, when the slightest examination would show them that it is far otherwise.—John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*

C H Spurgeon in his sermon on Hosea 2:23 exults in the authority and efficacy of God's holy Word...

To my mind, it is very instructive to notice how Paul quotes from the Prophets. The revelation of the mind of God in the Old Testament helps us to understand the gospel revealed in the New Testament. There is no authority that is so powerful over the minds of Christian men as that of the Word of God. Has God made known any truth in his Word? Then, it is invested with divine authority. Paul, being himself inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore able to write fresh revelations of the mind of God, here brings the authority of God's Word in the olden times to back up and support what he says: "As he saith also in Osee (Hosea)."

Beloved friend, if you are seeking salvation, or if you want comfort, never rest satisfied with the mere word of man. Be not content unless you got the truth from the mouth of God. Say in your spirit, "I will not be comforted, unless God himself shall comfort me. I want chapter and verse for that which I receive as gospel." Our Lord's reply to Satan was, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Give me, then, but a word out of God's mouth, and I can live upon it; but all the words out of man's mouth, apart from divine inspiration, must be as unsatisfying food as if men tried to live on stones.

Notice, again, how Paul teaches that the very essence of the authority of the Scriptures lies in this, that God speaks through his revealed Word:

"As *HE* saith also in Osee (Hosea)."

It is God speaking in the Bible whom we ought to hear. The mere letter

of the Word alone will kill; but when we hear God's voice speaking in it, then it has power which it could not possess otherwise. It is a blessed thing to put your ear down to the promises of Scripture, till you hear God speaking through them to your soul. It is truly profitable to read a gospel commandment, and to listen to its voice until God himself speaks it with power to your heart. I pray you, do not regard anything that is preached here unless it agrees with what is written there in the Bible. If it is only my word, throw it away; but if it is God's truth that I declare to you, if God Himself speaks it through my lips, you will disregard it at your peril.

I will make only one other observation by way of introduction. Is it not wonderful how God's Word is preserved century after century? There were seven or eight hundred years between Hosea and Paul; and it is remarkable that the promise to the Gentiles should lie asleep all that time, and yet should be just as full of life and power when Paul was quoting it after all those centuries. God's Word is like the wheat in the hand of the mummy, of which you have often heard. It had lain there for thousands of years; but men took it out of the hand, and sowed it, and there sprang up the bearded wheat which has now become so common in our land. So you take a divine promise, spoken hundreds or thousands of years ago, and lo, it is fulfilled to you! It becomes as true to you as if God had spoken it for the first time this very day, and you were the person to whom it was addressed.

O blessed Word of God, how we ought to prize thee! We cannot tell yet all that lies hidden between these covers; but there is a treasury of grace concealed here, which we ought to seek until we find it. (See full message on Hosea 2:23 God's People, or Not God's People) (Bolding added for emphasis)

Related Resources: [Quotations on Bible Study by various authors](#)

BIBLE VERSIONS COMPARISON OF LITERALNESS

**MORE
LITERAL**
LESS INTERPRETATIVE
MORE WORD FOR WORD

**MORE
PARAPHRASE**
MORE INTERPRETATIVE**
**MORE CONCEPT FOR
CONCEPT**

Young's	NAS	Amp	KJV		NRSV	NIV	NCV	NLT	GNT	TLB	Msg
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Literal	ASV	ESV	NKJV RSV	NAB	NJB	ICB	Phillips	CEV		
NAS = New American Standard Amp = Amplified Version ASV = Authorized Standard Version 1901 ESV = English Standard Version RSV = Revised Standard Version KJV = King James Version NKJV = New King James Version			NRSV = New Revised Std Version NAB = New American Bible NJB = New Jerusalem Bible NIV = New International Version NCV = New Century Version ICB = International Children's Bible			NLT = New Living Translation Phillips = J B Phillips Paraphrase GNT = Good News Translation CEV = Contemporary English Version TLB = The Living Bible Msg = The Message				

**** MORE INTERPRETATIVE:** For the most objective, non-biased and "pure" inductive study, do not use paraphrased versions as your **primary** resource for they provide no way to determine whether or not the translator's interpretation of the original Greek and Hebrew is accurate. The more literal versions such as **NAS, ESV, KJV, NKJV** more accurately render the words of the original biblical authors and are therefore recommended for inductive Bible study. Although more literal, the Amplified is not recommended as your primary text, but can be helpful once you have done your study because in many verses it functions like a "mini-commentary". Consultation (after your own inductive study) with some paraphrases (e.g., NLT and Phillips) may also yield insights into the meaning of the passage. Note that the **NIV** is a thought-for-thought (dynamic equivalence) translation which can be helpful for new believers, but it is **not recommended** for in depth bible study because of the inconsistent way in which it renders the Hebrew and Greek texts. In some cases, the NIV includes significant interpretation which leaves the reader without any indication of the other possible ways to understand that particular verse. Although every translation has some degree of interpretation, the **NAS** is the least interpretative and has the advantage over the NIV in that it identifies words in *italics* that are not in the original language but which have been added by the translators to make the passage more readable and/or understandable. Do not base your interpretation on the words in italics.

As a rule of thumb the most reliable translations for detailed study are those which include **italicized words** (NAS, ASV, Darby, KJV, NKJV, YLT). These translations use formal equivalence as evidenced by the italicized words which signify phrases and conjunctions added by the translators for clarity of reading, but for which no corresponding words exist in the original language text. This also helps the careful student to know when he or she is standing on solid ground (words not in italics) or "thin ice" (italicized phrases). Note that popular versions like the ESV, NIV, and NET Bible do not use italics (although sometimes they include notes to help explain the specific rendering.)

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