

Inductive Bible Study 1

Related Resources

- Simple Study on the Power of God's Word
- A Primer on the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation
- Memorizing God's Word - Why? How? Resource links...
- [Navigator's Topical Memory System \(TMS\)](#)
- [How to Perform A Greek Word Study on the Web](#)
- Greek Tense, Voice, Mood Reference Guide
- Greek Word Studies - in depth
- [Bible Interpretation - Figures of speech](#)
- Interpretation-Supernaturalistic, Naturalistic, Existentialistic, Dogmatic

THE THREE COMPONENTS OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

- INTRODUCTION TO INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY
- [OBSERVATION](#): What does it say?
- INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?
- [APPLICATION](#): How do I respond?
- [BIBLE VERSIONS](#) How Literal is your translation?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

DETERMINING THE CONTEXT OF

1 THESSALONIANS 1

(See discussion: Establish the Context)

1) Inductive Bible Study begins with the Bible itself. Our goal is to discover what the Bible says about itself. Please refrain from use of commentaries, study Bible notes, Bible handbooks, etc. Your goal is to discover truth for yourself in dependence on your Teacher the Holy Spirit.

For our purposes, one chapter will suffice to give a "taste" of how to establish **context**. Remember that **context** rules in interpretation and every passage of Scripture must be interpreted in the light of its context.

So let's begin. Copy and print out the double spaced text of [1 Thessalonians 1 \(below\)](#) which will serve as your "Observation Worksheet" (OWS), which is just that - worksheets on which you can mark key words, make lists, take notes, etc. so that you do not have to "practice" in your personal Bible. You can later use these OWS to transfer the most important findings to your personal Bible, which will not only still be neat but now much more informative and personalized!

Note that the **NAS** (New American Standard) is used, because this version is one of the **more literal** and **less interpretative** translations ([Click here for discussion of comparison with other versions](#))

Since our goal is to **establish the context** we will do so by observing for the most **obvious facts** (F.O.T.O.), those truths that are easiest to see. We are laying the foundation for subsequent study on the chapter. In a sense we are looking for the "corner pieces" of the "jigsaw puzzle" in chapter one. Once we have identified the "corner pieces", we will begin to notice the less obvious truths and understand them in relationship to one another. We could establish context by simply reading and re-reading the chapter, but the approach we are learning leads to more purposeful reading and re-reading.

Remember too that as we begin establishing context by observing the obvious, then the truths with the book that are not easy to see or understand will become clearer as your study stays focused on the obvious. Understanding the context will help you interpret the unclear, obscure, difficult to understand parts of any book. An intimate familiarity with a book is key to the proper understanding of it,

"What kind of literature is First Thessalonians?" As you know, First Thessalonians is a letter and thus has an **author** and **recipient(s)**. Keeping in mind that **people, places and events** are usually the most obvious truths we will begin by making observations about the **author** and **recipients**.

2) Prayerfully read 1 Thessalonians 1 and...

+ **Mark each occurrence of the author with a blue circle.**

+ **Remember to mark relevant pronouns** (like "I", "we", "my", "mine", "our", "your", "their", etc).

+ **Each time you pause to mark the author, try to ask some of the 5W and H type questions.** In other words, you don't want to mark mechanically but interactively.

But wait, there's a problem! In verse 1 you observed three names who are candidates for author, so you are probably asking *How can I determine which one wrote the letter?*" If you were taking the PUP course on 1 Thessalonians, ([click here](#) to download lesson one on "1Thessalonians: You - Blameless At His Coming") you would have been instructed to read through the entire letter, and would have discovered that there are 3 verses which help answer the question about the authorship.

Read the verses below: how do these verses help determine who wrote First Thessalonians?

(Do this before you read the explanation which follows). If you don't see the clue the first time, read the verses again.

2:18 For we wanted to come to you-- I, Paul, more than once-- and yet Satan thwarted us.

3:5 For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.

5:27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.

As you probably noted Paul uses the first person pronoun "I" three times and specifically in 2:18 Paul clearly associates it with his name, which indicates that he was the author.

3) Prayerfully read 1 Thessalonians 1 a second time

+ **Marking the recipients and pronouns with a red square.**

+ **Each time you pause to mark the recipients, try to ask some of the 5W and H type questions.**

Reading, marking and interrogating with the 5W and H questions will train you to read with **patience** (you have to stop and mark) and **purpose** (you have to think about who the fact refers to).

4) Prayerfully read 1 Thessalonians 1

+ **Make a list of the truths that tell you something about the author**

+ **Use the actual words of Scripture**

+ **Place the verse location by each fact**

Remember you are establishing context by focusing on the things which are easy to see (F.O.T.O.).

5) Repeat Step 4 this time making a list of the truths about the recipients.

Compare your list with [this one](#)

Just from marking the Author & Recipients do we get any kind of sense of what the times are like?

Tribulation V6

What kind of tribulation? V6

Much

Anything else about the times? V9

Idols (idol worship)

Notice that just from marking the Author & Recipients there was tribulation & idol worship. Do we need a commentary to tell us that? Have you ever gone to a commentary and they tell you "these people were saved, this was a time of tribulation, they were worshipping idols"... where do you think they got that information? Same place you got it... from the text...

Now how did the GOSPEL get to Thessalonica? V5

Paul took it

How did he bring the gospel? V5 (He brought the gospel how?)

In word, in power, in the Holy Spirit, in full conviction

And when he got there what did he do? V5

Proved himself (where? among them)

SO HE NOT ONLY SPOKE ABOUT THE GOSPEL WHAT ELSE DID HE DO?

He lived it out among them

As a result of Paul's living out the spoken word before them what did they do?

What did they become? V6

They became IMITATORS

And in turn in their imitating what did they become?

They became EXAMPLES

And as examples of Paul's words & actions what did they in turn do?

They SOUNDED FORTH the Word

Where? EVERY PLACE YOUR FAITH TOWARD GOD HAS GONE FORTH

How did Paul know that the church in Thessalonica had a work of faith, a labor of love and a steadfastness of hope?

It was reported

What was reported?

They had turned to God

Have you ever heard people say "when I get my act right I'll turn to God"?

No, they turned to God from idols

Then God did the work

So it was reported to Paul that they had done what...

turned to God

to serve and to wait

What does the turning show us?

They were headed one direction (towards idols).

They repented

So we see these truths about the Thessalonians just by walking thru & observing & questioning the text... having to stop & think... who is this talking about? how does this come about? where is this? So we just walked back thru the Scriptures and ask the text questions & let the text give us the answers..

INTRODUCTION TO KEY WORDS

While we making observations & reading & re-reading other words begin to show up over & over again... We call those KEY WORDS...

Keys are ALWAYS ESSENTIAL...

just think about a time you locked yourself out of your car... you couldn't get very far. By same token you can't get far in understanding the meaning of the text without an understanding of and ability to recognize KEY WORDS.

REPEATED...

what do you do when you want your children to get what you are saying? You repeat it if it's really important & that's exactly what God does.

Looking at this chart is there any word that if it were repeated from the text, the text would lose it's meaning... a word which is so essential?

Gospel but that specific word is only 1x

Synonym = word

Mark in green...

v5, v6 (READ "received the word in much tribulation")

v8 (READ "for the word of the Lord has sounded forth")

What about "word" in v5?

No because it refers to the SPOKEN WORD

It explains what? How the gospel came to Thessalonica

If we took the word GOSPEL & its synonyms out of the could we understand what brought about this great change?

No it is essential, unlocks the text explaining how they came to turning FROM idols to God & to serve Him & wait for His Son.

Let's make a list on the GOSPEL:

What's the first thing we need to put down from the list?

The Gospel came (in word, power, etc) v5

What's the next thing we see in v6?

The gospel was received

What do we see about the gospel in v8?

It was sounded forth

So what is this chapter about?

The Gospel

What have you just determined?

The theme of 1Thessalonians 1 = The main thing that this chapter is talking about is the Gospel. Write this theme on your Observation Worksheet.

A week from now you can pick up the Observation Worksheet and you can quickly recall what this chapter is about. An additional advantage of the inductive approach to Bible Study is that you will find yourself remembering whole passages of Scripture. How many times have you read chapter 1 in this simple study? About 5 - You "interviewed" this chapter with questions and then listed out your observations and summarized these findings in a short memorable phrase such as "The Gospel came, was received and was sent forth" A week from now you will remember the main thrust of 1Thessalonians 1. Now just think if you went through all 5 chapters with a similar inductive approach.

APPLICATION: How does the meaning of the text apply to me.

This is the goal of all Bible study... you have been confronted with God's Truth, and now you need to respond.

For example take some of the things you have observed and turn them into questions.

1). HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE GOSPEL SO AS TO TURN & SERVE GOD?

Jesus died on the Cross for your sins and He was raised. If He had not been raised you would not be justified... you'd have no hope. Have you received the gospel as shown by your turn from idols to serve the living & true God (by genuine repentance)?

2). DO YOU PRESENT THE GOSPEL WORD, IN POWER, IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, WITH FULL CONVICTION, & BY EXAMPLE- with a lifestyle that others should imitate... one like Christ?

3). ARE YOU SOUNDING FORTH THE GOSPEL IN EVERY PLACE THAT YOU GO?

4). IS YOUR EARNEST EXPECTATION (YOUR STEADFAST HOPE) OF JESUS' RETURN AFFECTING THE WAY YOU LIVE TODAY? Think back on this last week... did you live each day as if it might be the day the Lord might return?

5). DO YOU HAVE A WORK OF FAITH, A LABOR OF LOVE & A STEADFASTNESS OF HOPE THAT IS OBVIOUS TO THOSE AROUND YOU BE THEY BELIEVERS & UNBELIEVERS?

1 Thessalonians 1
(Version: NAS)

Chapter Theme: _____

1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 We give thanks to God always for all [of you], making mention of you in our prayers;

3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

4 knowing, brethren beloved by God, [*His*] choice of you;

5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

8 for the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

9 for they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, [*that is*] Jesus, Who rescues us from the wrath to come.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE
AUTHOR AND RECIPIENT LIST
1 THESSALONIANS 1

AUTHOR	RECIPIENTS
Who is the author? v1 Paul	Who are the recipients? v1 Church of the Thessalonians
What is Paul doing? Who is he thankful for? When does he thank God? v2 Thanks God always for all of them v2 Prays for them	Where are they geographically? spiritually? v1 In Thessalonica and In God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
What is his relationship to Jesus? to God the Father? v3 Jesus is his Lord	Why (for what?) does Paul commend the church at Thessalonica? v2 They had a

v3 God is his Father

What does Paul say about the Gospel?

(How did the Gospel come?)

v5 Came to the Thessalonians

In word (What does this mean?) - It was spoken

In power (What does this mean?) - Gospel has power

In the Holy Spirit

In full conviction (What does this mean?) - He was convinced of its saving power

What do we learn about Paul's witness?

v5 Proved what kind of men (life matched their "lips")

Where? - among them (the Thessalonians)

Why? - for their sake

What had Paul experienced as a result of the Gospel?

v6 Much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit

How effective was the sounding forth of the Thessalonians?

v8 No need for Paul to say anything

... work of faith

... labor of love

... steadfastness of hope

Where was their hope?

v2 In the Lord Jesus Christ

What do we learn about who the Thessalonians are to God?

v4 Brethren (of Paul, Silas and Timothy)

Beloved (of Whom?) of God

Chosen

What was their response to the Gospel that came to them?

v6 Received the word

What happened when they received the Gospel? (the historical context)

v6 Much tribulation

How did the Thessalonians respond to the tribulation?

v6 With the joy of the Holy Spirit

What did they become as a result of experiencing joy in midst of tribulation?

v6 Imitators of Paul, et al, and the Lord

And what was the result of their becoming imitators?

v7 Became examples to all the believers at Macedonia and Achaia

How did they prove to be examples to the believers?

v8 Sounded forth the Word of the Lord in every place

How effective was their sounding forth?

v8 Paul had no need to say anything

What was reported back to Paul?

v9 Their reception

What else was reported to Paul?

v9 They turned to God and turned from idols

What was the result of turning to God?

v9-10 Serve the living God

Wait for His Jesus (Whom He raised from dead)

What would Jesus do for them?

v10 Save them from the wrath to come

BIBLE VERSIONS

COMPARISON OF LITERALNESS

MORE LITERAL LESS INTERPRETATIVE MORE WORD FOR WORD					MORE PARAPHRASE MORE INTERPRETATIVE** MORE CONCEPT FOR CONCEPT					
YLT	NAS ASV	Amp ESV	KJV NKJV RSV	NRSV NAB	NIV NJB	NCV ICB	NLT Phillips	GNT CEV	TLB	Msg
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 YLT = Young's Literal Translation				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 as discussed above 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) 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 the verse being studied. 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.