I. INTRODUCTION: WHY STUDY THE BIBLE? – 3 BENEFITS

A. Bible study is essential to spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:2)
   1. Attitude – as a newborn baby
   2. Appetite (3 kinds of Bible students)
      a) “Nasty medicine”
      b) “Shredded wheat”
      c) “strawberries & cream” –
   3. Aim = to grow – not just to know (spiritual growth)

B. Bible study is essential to spiritual maturity (Hebrews 5:11-14)
   • Acquiring that taste (appetite) discussed above comes from maturity

C. Bible study is essential to spiritual effectiveness (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
   1. Nature of Scripture
      a) Inspired
      b) Inerrant
   2. Functions/Benefits of Scripture
      a) Teach doctrine
      b) Reproof
      c) For correcting
      d) For instruction
   3. Purpose – to equip
      a) One weapon/tool – “Sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:10-17)
      b) Jesus’ temptation – Matthew 4:1-11

II. WHY IS BIBLE INTERPRETATION IMPORTANT?

A. It is Essential for understanding and teaching the Bible properly
   1. Meaning Then – Message Today
   2. Conflicting Interpretations
      a) John 10:28 – Eternal Security???
      b) 1 Corinthians 15:29 – Baptism for dead relatives???

B. It is essential for moving beyond observation
   • Observation vs. Interpretation
      a) Should Christians drink milk? 1 Peter 2:2 compared to Hebrews 5:13-14
      b) Surgeon’s observation
      c) 2 Timothy 2:15 – “correctly handling”

C. Biblical interpretation is essential for applying the bible properly
   1. Observation – Interpretation – Application
   2. Heart appropriation not just head apprehension
      a) Bridges the gap

---

1 This section has been adapted from Living by the Book by Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, 21-25. A large bulk of this seminar is based on this text.
2 This section has been adapted from Basic Bible Interpretation, by Roy B. Zuck.
b) Improper Interpretation - leads to error (benign or deadly application)

III. BASIC TERMINOLOGY
A. Defining Key Terms
1. Hermeneutics
   a) Grk verb *hermeneuo*, and Grk noun *hermeneia*
   b) Origin of term – Grecian mythology – Hermes (messenger of the gods)
   c) Defn: art and science of biblical interpretation
      (1) Science – based on an orderly system of rules
      (2) Art – communication is flexible
      (3) Not the interpretation itself – but method used

2. Exegesis
   a) From two Greek words, ἐξ (“from, of, out of”) and ἔγω (“to lead”), referring to the process of leading out from a text its original meaning (Blomberg, xii).
   b) Exegesis is the application of the principles of hermeneutics to arrive at a correct meaning of a text

3. Eisegeisis
   a) (opposite of Exegesis) - “eis” means “into”
   b) Eisegeisis reads meaning into a text
   c) 2Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

B. Barriers/Challenges to Interpretation
1. Time Gap
2. Space/Geographical Gap
3. Cultural Gap
4. Language Gap
5. Literary Gap
6. Subjective Lens Gap

IV. A PROPOSED METHOD (INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD)
• Overview - 3 Steps
1. Observation – What does text say?
2. Interpretation – What does text mean?
3. Application – What do I do (How does the text apply)?

A. OBSERVATION
1. What and Why?
   a) Defn: “The action or process of observing something or someone carefully in order to gain information” – Oxford Dictionary
   b) Don’t Skip this step too soon (It may be the longest step, but worth it)
2. Seeing does not = “observation”
   a) How many steps are there in building you use regularly?
   b) How many doors do you pass on your way to your office at work?
   c) How many stoplights did you drive by on the way here today?
d) What was the color of the shirt your wife, husband, friend, or co-worker wore yesterday?

3. Observing the key facts (Historical & Cultural Factors)
   a) Author
   b) Audience
   c) Date
   d) Location
   e) Main Theme
   f) Purpose

4. Observe the Literary Genre
   a) Epistle/Exposition
   b) Narrative
   c) Wisdom Literature
   d) Prophecy
   e) Apocalyptic
   f) Genre within genre

5. Observe by recording the following
   a) Things emphasized
   b) Things repeated
   c) Key & substantial terms
   d) Things related
   e) Things alike (similarities)
   f) Things unlike (contrasts)
   g) Things true to life

6. Make a basic outline of book/section of passages
   a) Summarize each section
   b) Supply sub-points under each section
   c) Remember – outline is tentative (subject to amending and editing)

B. INTERPRETATION

1. List your unanswered questions (key information)
   • Who, what, when, where, why, and how

2. Check other translations
   a) Helps to understand range of possible meanings (semantic range)
   b) Types of translations
      (1) Word for word accuracy – sometimes loses thought
      (2) Thought for thought accuracy – sometimes loses precision

3. Unknown term
   a) Word analysis – lexical-syntactical analysis – study of meaning of individual words
      and how they are combined
   b) To understand authors intended meaning (exegesis)

4. Check related passages (cross-references) – study bible, concordance

5. Consult Secondary sources:
a) Bible Handbook  
b) Atlas  
c) Commentary  
d) Goal is not to be told what to believe, but to see what others who have seriously studied the passage have discovered – something you may have missed

C. APPLICATION

1. Is there an example to follow?  
2. Is there a sin to avoid?  
3. Is there a promise to claim?  
4. Is there a prayer to repeat?  
5. Is there a command to obey?  
6. Is there a condition to meet?  
7. Is there a verse to memorize?  
8. Is there an error to avoid?  
9. Is there a challenge to face?

III. BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

A. A Good Bible Translation (preferably two)
   1. NKJV (New King James Version)  
   2. NASB (New American Standard Bible)  
   3. ESV (English Standard Version)

B. Concordance
   1. The Strongest NASB Exhaustive Concordance Zondervan  
   2. The Strongest Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Zondervan  
   3. The Crossway Comprehensive Concordance of the ESV Crossway  
   4. The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance – Zondervan

C. Expository Dictionary
   1. Expository Dictionary of Bible Words Stephen D. Renn  

D. Bible Handbook
   1. The New Unger’s Bible Handbook Moody Press  
   3. Eerdmans’ Handbook to the Bible Eerdmans

E. Bible Dictionary
   2. The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary, Revised Merrill F. Unger

F. Concise Commentary
   1. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, 2 Vols. John Walvoord, Roy Zuck  
   2. Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged 2 Vols. K. Barker, J. Kohlenberger  
   3. New Bible Commentary G. J. Wenham

---

3 I adapted this Bible Study Tools section from course notes created by Rick Hoot, DidacticMinistries.org. This is also a great place to get good Bible study & educational resources, created by Rick Hoot who comes from a Sabbatarian background.