

# Campus Module 1:6 Studying the Bible

There are two ways in which a person can read the Bible: to study it and to read it devotionally. You have already learned about the devotional reading of the Bible. I now want to share with you about “Bible study”.

A big difference between devotional reading and Bible study is this; Bible study focuses more on the intellectual side of things, while the devotional reading of the Bible is more focused on touching the heart. In devotional reading, we are seeking to discover what God wants us to hear for that day and how to apply what we hear to our life.

“Bible study” refers to analyzing the contents of the Bible.

Dr Dave Smith, a professor at Indiana Wesleyan University will be sharing with you about Inductive Bible Study, which is an approach to God’s Word using three basic steps. The three steps are

- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application.

I will be borrowing from Kay Arthur in her book [How to Study the Bible](#) to give an explanation of each step.

**Observation answers the question: What does the passage say?** It is the foundation which must be laid if you want to accurately interpret and properly apply God's Word. Observation is discovering what the passage is saying. This requires time and practice. You'll discover that the more you read and get to know a book of the Bible, the more its truths will become obvious to you. You'll be awed at the wealth of spiritual riches contained in even the shortest books of the Bible—and you will have discovered it yourself!

**Interpretation answers the question: What does the passage mean?** And the basis for accurate interpretation is always careful observation. Interpretation is the process of discovering what the passage means. As you carefully observe Scripture, the meaning will become apparent. However, if you rush into interpretation without laying the vital foundation of accurate observation, your understanding will be colored by your presuppositions—what you think, what you feel, or what other people have said, rather than what God's Word says.

**Application answers the question: How does the meaning of this passage apply to me?** Usually this is the first thing we want to know when we read the Bible, but proper application actually begins with belief which then results in being and doing. Once you know what a passage means, you are not only responsible for putting it into practice in your own life, but accountable if you don't! Ultimately, then, the goal of personal Bible study is a transformed life and a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.

Study and devotional reading of the Bible are both very important if you really want to understand the Bible well and apply it to your life. After you watch the “Dr Dave Smith Video” you will be given opportunity to try doing an Inductive Bible Study.