

Mining the Word: Scripture Study Skills for Adults
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Introduction: Beyond *reading* the Bible to *studying* and *meditation*

- EZRA 7:10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.
- ACTS 17:11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.
- 2 TIMOTHY 2:7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Notes:

The Basic Inductive Bible Study Process

1. OBSERVE- What does this passage _____?
2. INTERPRET- What does this passage _____ in its _____?
3. APPLY- What is the _____ of this passage for _____?

Notes:

Five Tools and Strategies for Inductive Bible Study

- Color-code repeated words, phrases, and themes.
- Compare several English translations, for all translations are interpretations.
- Use a concordance to find out where else an author uses an important word, because a word's usage in context determines meaning.
- Use cross-references to interpret Scripture with Scripture.
- Use "phrasing" (or another method) to trace an author's flow of thought.

1. Color-code repeated words, phrases, and themes.

1 JOHN 2:1-6

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Notes:

2. Compare several English translations, because all translations are interpretations.

Formal Translations (“Word for Word”): KJV, NASB, ESV

Functional Translations (“Dynamic equivalent,” “Idea for Idea”): NET, NIV, TNIV, NLT

TRANSLATION COMPARISON FOR 1 JOHN 2:1-2

ESV	NIV	NLT
<p>1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.</p> <p>2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.</p>	<p>1 John 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.</p> <p>2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.</p>	<p>1 John 2:1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely.</p> <p>2 He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but the sins of all the world.</p>

Notes:

3. Use a concordance to find out where else an author uses an important word, because a word's usage in context determines meaning.

What does John mean when he says that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins in v. 2?

ESV Concordance Entry:

propitiation (4)

Rom 3:25 as a *propitiation* by his blood

Heb 2:17 God, to make *propitiation* for the sins

1 John 2:2 He is the *propitiation* for our sins

1 John 4:10 be the *propitiation* for our sins

Notes:

What does John mean by the word "perfected" in verse 5?

ESV Concordance Entry:

perfected (6)

Gal 3:3 you now being *perfected* by the

Heb 10:14 he has *perfected* for all time

1 John 2:5 of God is *perfected*. By

1 John 4:12 his love is *perfected* in us.

1 John 4:17 is love *perfected* with us,

1 John 4:18 not been *perfected* in love.

Notes:

4. Use cross-references to interpret Scripture with Scripture.

To use the ESV cross-references, you look for the small letter included in front of the word or phrase you want to look up, then you go to the cross-reference column and under the correct chapter and verse heading, you look for the letter that corresponds with your word or phrase in the text. This leads you to an abbreviated verse reference and then you look it up. These cross-references include (1) references to specific words or phrases; (2) comparative references (same theme); (3) less direct references (general thematic help); (4) quoted references (source of words or phrase in a different part of the Bible).

- In what way is Jesus an advocate with the Father for believers? See the ESV Cross-References for 2:1 (Rom. 8:34; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25)
- How could someone say “I know God” but not keep his commandments? What does it mean to “know God”? See the ESV Cross-References for 2:3 (John 14:15; 15:10).

Notes:

5. Use “phrasing” (or another method) to trace an author’s flow of thought.

Steps for Phrasing:

- (1) Find the beginning and end of the passage and give it a heading
- (2) Break the passage into smaller sections
- (3) Identify the phrases (i.e. propositions, assertions)
- (4) Identify the main phrase(s) and the modifying phrases
 - Place main phrases (subject + verb) to the far left of the page
 - Indent modifying phrases under the words they modify (e.g. a prepositional phrase would be indented under the verb)
 - *Tip:* Pay special attention to the conjunctions (i.e. connecting words, like therefore, because, that, but), which will be guides for you to follow the author’s thought
- (5) Reflect on your findings

❖ For more on “phrasing,” see William Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us*, chapter 8.

Notes:

Example of Phrasing: 1 JOHN 2:1-6 (ESV)

Heading 1: Jesus is our Advocate

- 1 My little children,
I am writing these things to you
so that you may not sin.
But if anyone does sin,
we have an *advocate* with the Father, *Jesus Christ* the righteous.
- 2 *He* is the *propitiation* for our sins,
and not for ours only
but also for the sins of the whole world.

Heading 2: Know that you know him

- 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him,
if we keep his commandments.
- 4 *Whoever* says “I know him”
but does not keep his commandments is a *liar*,
and the truth is not in *him*,
- 5 but *whoever* keeps his word,
in *him* truly the love of God is perfected.

By this we may know that we are in him:

- 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk
in the same way in which he walked.

Notes:

Phrasing Assignment: 1 JOHN 5:13

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

Notes:

Recommended Resources

- Any ESV Bible with Cross-References
- John Piper, “Biblical Exegesis: Discovering the Meaning of Scriptural Texts” (Desiring God)
- Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All it's Worth*, 3rd Edition (Zondervan, 2003).
- Howard Hendricks and William Hendricks, *Living By the Book* (Moody, 1993)
- William Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us* (Zondervan, 2003)
- William Mounce, *The Crossway Comprehensive Concordance of the Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Crossway, 2002)

Recommended Websites

- www.biblegateway.com (compare translations, do word searches, access other resources)
- www.biblearc.com (helpful resources for tracing the biblical author's flow of thought)
- www.blueletterbible.org (compare translations, do word searches, access other resources)
- www.bible.org (NET Bible, helpful study tools and articles)
- www.esvstudybible.org (ESV Study Bible with cross-refs, notes, maps)
- “Inductive Bible Study” course taught by Dr. George Guthrie (Union), available free of charge at www.biblicaltraining.org