



What is Inductive Bible Study?

Inductive means we start with the text itself and let it guide us. Instead of *someone telling* us what a passage *means*, we:

1. Read it closely.
2. Notice what it says.
3. Ask how it connects to our own lives.
4. Respond to God in prayer.

Inductive vs. Deductive Bible Study

Deductive = top-down.

- You start with a big idea, teaching, or conclusion.
- Then you go to Scripture to find verses that support it.
- Example: *“God wants us to forgive.”* Then you look up passages on forgiveness.
- Strength: clear teaching, big truths.
- Challenge: It can feel like you’re just being told the answers instead of discovering them.

Inductive = bottom-up.

- You start with the Scripture itself.
- You look for clues — what it says, what it shows about God and people.
- Then you build meaning from the ground up.
- Example: You read the story of the Prodigal Son. You notice the father’s forgiveness. Then you realize: *“God is forgiving, and we’re called to forgive.”*
- Strength: Everyone can participate. We learn *together* by paying attention and asking questions.
- Challenge: It takes patience and openness — sometimes you end with questions, not neat answers.

It’s like being detectives — we gather clues, ask questions, and make connections. No one person has all the answers. We learn *together*.

The SOAP Method

SOAP is a memorable way to do **inductive Bible study**.

STEP	EXPLANATION	PROMPTS
Scripture	What are you reading? Write down a few phrases that stick out to you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read it out loud. • What words or phrases jump off the page? • Is there a part you'd like to underline, highlight, or write down?
Observation	Write down, in your own words, what you think God is trying to communicate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is in the story? What's happening? • What happened before this story? What happens after? How does this scripture fit into the overall narrative? • What surprises you or confuses you? • Are there repeated words or big emotions? • What does this show us about God?
Application	What do you think this means for your life? How would living this out transform you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could this passage encourage you this week? • Is there an action you could take because of this? • How might this change the way you see yourself or others? • What challenge or comfort do you hear?
Prayer	Talk to God about your discoveries. Write a simple prayer asking for help to live this truth in your life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write or say a prayer in response. • Thank God for what you noticed. • Ask for help living it out. • Be honest if you still feel confused!

Example

SCRIPTURE: What are you reading? Write down a few phrases that stick out to you.	OBSERVATION: Write down, in your own words, what you think God is trying to communicate.	APPLICATION: What do you think this means for your life? How would living this out transform you?	PRAYER: Talk to God about your discoveries. Write a simple prayer asking for help to live this truth in your life.
Hebrews 11:1-3 "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."	Faith is like that invisible friend you totally trust, even if you can't see them. It's a gut feeling that you're sure about, even when you're not 100% certain. It kicks off with believing that God whipped up the world, and if you can have faith in that, you're ready to believe in just about anything!	I have a lot of doubts about God, but I shouldn't let those get in the way of believing in him. In fact, faith is acknowledging I have doubts but pressing on anyway.	God, help me with my doubts and show me that I can put my trust in you.

Practice SOAP

SCRIPTURE: What are you reading? Write down a few phrases that stick out to you.	OBSERVATION: Write down, in your own words, what you think God is trying to communicate.	APPLICATION: What do you think this means for your life? How would living this out transform you?	PRAYER: Talk to God about your discoveries. Write a simple prayer asking for help to live this truth in your life.

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