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Studying the Bible

Key Themes

- God's Word is the foundation for our lives.
- God wants us to study His Word.

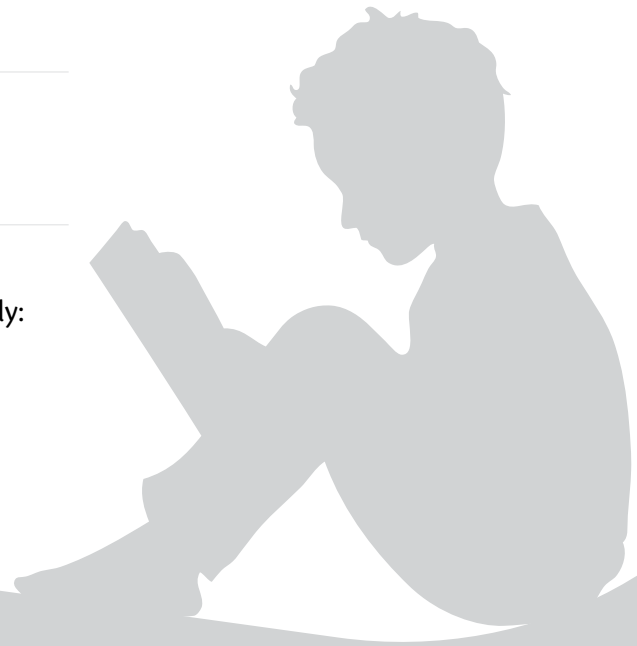
Key Passage

- 2 Timothy 2:15

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify and explain the three parts of inductive Bible study: observe, interpret, apply.
- Recognize the importance of careful study of the Bible.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will arrange the Books of the New Testament cards in order.



Studying God's Word

page 5

God's Word is the foundation for our lives, so He wants us to study it and understand what He is teaching us through it. Students will learn to study using a 3-step inductive study method including observe, interpret, and apply.



Activity 1: Who, What, When, Where, Why

page 6

Students will play a game of find a seat quick using the Bible Study Question cards.



Activity 2: Memory Verse Review Song

page 10

Students will learn the memory verse by singing it to the tune of "London Bridge is Falling Down."

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- ☐ Print and cut out the Books of the New Testament cards from the Resource DVD-ROM. Prepare one set of cards for every 3–5 students and place into envelopes, plastic bags, or other appropriate container. (Save these as they will be used throughout the quarter.)

- ☐ Books of the New Testament cards—one set for every 3–5 students



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.

- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets
- ☐ Piece of paper with a dark zigzag line drawn on it
- ☐ Pair of scissors



WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY

- ☐ Print and cut out enough of the Bible Study Question cards from the Resource DVD-ROM so each student will get one.

- ☐ Bible Study Question card for each student



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW SONG

- ☐ Print one Word of God song sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- ☐ Practice the song before class so you can teach it to the students.

- ☐ Word of God song sheet for each student



Memory Verse

Psalm 19:7–9 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

God has revealed Himself to us in the words of the Bible—His only written revelation to man. We are called to diligently study what has been revealed and apply it to the way we live our lives. Within the pages of Scripture, we find many exhortations to use what God has revealed in a way that honors Him.

In the Old Testament, we find examples of the Israelites abandoning what God had revealed to them. As a result, the people of that nation became corrupt.

We see in Nehemiah 8 the reading of the book of the Law of Moses before the assembly of Israel after it had been neglected for so long. Hearing the words, the people again understood what God required of them and sought to live accordingly.

Jesus chided the scribes and Pharisees for their failure to understand what God had revealed. “Have you not read?” was His way of pointing out their misunderstandings (Matthew 12:3–5, 19:4, 22:31). They had added their own ideas into the Scriptures rather than seeking to understand the plain meaning.

As Jesus taught, He constantly referenced the Scriptures as authoritative for guiding our lives. That same idea persisted as the apostles and disciples continued to spread the gospel after Christ’s ascension.

In Acts 17:10–12, we read of the Bereans, who were commended for searching the Scriptures to confirm what Paul was teaching.

In the New Testament epistles, there are many examples of examining the Bible to understand the truth. For example, in Hebrews 4:11–13, we are told that the Bible is like a sword that helps us discern truth from error in our thoughts. And Paul exhorted Timothy to study diligently God’s Word in order to discern what is true (2 Timothy 2:14–19).

We trust that God has revealed to us those things that we need to live lives that honor Him. Peter relates this idea to us in 2 Peter 1:2–4 when he tells us that “all things that pertain to life and godliness” have been given to us “through the knowledge of Him.” How do we know about God? We know primarily by what He has revealed to us in His Word. The doctrine known as the *sufficiency of Scripture* doesn’t mean that the Bible is an exhaustive manual on everything, but that its principles are sufficient to guide us in the different situations we face.

In this lesson, we will teach the three-step inductive study method which will then be used throughout this curriculum to discern what the text of Scripture says. Laying such a foundation is critical if we are to study the Bible in a way that will not distort the text or make it conform to our thoughts. We are

to submit ourselves to the Scriptures, not the other way around.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Many people chide Christians for reading the Bible literally. The Bible contains many different types of literature, but all of them communicate God’s truth to us. When we say we take the Bible literally, we really mean that we take it in the sense that it was written. Some sections of Scripture are meant to be read as historical accounts, while others are poetic.

The process of understanding what Scripture says is called *hermeneutics*—a big word describing the process of trying to understand what the Bible means. Learning proper hermeneutics opens a whole new world of truth found in the Bible. There are many different schools of biblical interpretation. These range from liberal approaches (mystical interpretation, naturalistic interpretation, etc.) to the more conservative approach we’ll be using (where ideas are considered in context and Scripture is used to interpret Scripture). This second, more conservative method, may be new to you. It is often referred to as the grammatical-historical method of interpretation because it takes into account the grammar and context of the passage as well as the historical and cultural setting of the author and the original hearers. We will call it the inductive Bible study method.

As Christians, we recognize that the Bible is God’s very breath revealing His words to us. As we seek to understand what He has said, we should not import our own ideas into Scripture but rather allow Scripture to inform and evaluate our ideas. Drawing ideas out of the text is called *exegesis* (ex- meaning “out of”), while adding our ideas into the text is called *eisegesis* (eis- meaning “into”).

Take Genesis 1 for example. If we simply read that chapter as it is plainly written, we would conclude that God created the universe in six normal days—an accurate exegesis. On the other hand, if we consider that same text by starting with a belief in evolutionary processes occurring over millions of years, we might be tempted instead to interpret those “days” as long ages. In that case, we would engage in eisegesis since we imported the idea of long ages into the text—a practice which can lead to the dangers of compromise and distorted conclusions.

In order to properly exegete a passage, we include three essential components in an inductive Bible study: observation, interpretation, and application. These steps can be subdivided in various ways, but we will stick to three basic parts to teach the process.

To **observe**, we simply ask *who, what, where, when, why, and how* questions about the study passage. For example, who is the author writing to? What words are repeated or emphasized in the passage? Where is the event taking place? When was this written? What type of literature is being used (history, poetry, parable, etc.)? What is the main point of the passage?

By taking time to observe the text, we become familiar with the important words, commands, and main themes that are present. Once we are familiar with the passage, we are ready to interpret what we have read.

To **interpret**, we look at the passage in light of what the rest of the Bible has to say on the same topic. We may identify cross-references, cultural considerations, specific word meanings, context, commentaries, or parallel passages that tell of the same account or provide the same idea. We should be careful during the interpretation stage because there is always the danger of trying to read our own ideas into the text.

After we have observed what the text says and interpreted the key ideas, the next step is to **apply** the Word to daily life. Scripture is full of God's commands to believers to apply what He has communicated—we are to be doers of the Word, not just hearers (James 1:21–24). We know from 2 Timothy 2:14–19 that Scripture is to be the source of truth in our lives.

As we examine various texts, our goal will be to help the students see that the Scripture is profitable to them when they apply the passage's teaching to one or more of the four areas identified in 2 Timothy 3:16–17:

doctrine (understanding of fundamental beliefs)

reproof (pointing out sin)

correction (identifying right actions)

instruction in righteousness (living by God's commands and principles)

The Word may expose an error in their thinking or a flaw in the way they are living and thus present an opportunity to repent of those sins and to be conformed to the image of Christ.

In summary, right theology leads to right living. We can praise God for the grace He has shown us by saving us and sanctifying us. We can ask Him to mature us and change us into the image of His Son through the power of His Spirit.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Evangelical tradition is built on the understanding that every Christian can read and understand God's Word. The fancy term for this idea is the *perspicuity of Scripture*. The Reformers fought to make the Bible available in the language of the people—a privilege we enjoy today—in stark contrast with the teaching of other groups who historically opposed the idea.

The fear that motivated this opposition was that people would take the Bible and misunderstand and misapply it. This has indeed happened on occasion, but those who distort the Scriptures do so “to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:14–18). Many cults and false religions have been founded on careless use or intentional distortion of the Bible. This makes it all the more important that we handle the Word carefully as God would have us do.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord, your Word is a precious treasure. Please guide me to rightly study it and to discern your message accurately. And please help me to present this lesson in such a way that my students will learn how to properly study your Word. Please help us all to be responsive to the guidance we receive and to be willing to turn from any impurities we discover in our lives when studied in the light of your guidelines.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- Provide envelopes containing Books of the New Testament cards for groups of 3–5 students. Students are to place the books in the proper order.

They can use the Books of the Bible poster or their own Bibles to confirm the right order.

Read the names of the books aloud together.

This activity will be repeated throughout the quarter.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme poster from last week, quickly review the previous lesson with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Children learn by repetition. These posters reference the lesson title with an illustration to review the key elements of the lesson.

Ask the children questions about the previous lesson as you display the Lesson Theme poster. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds, and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Studying God's Word

Today, we're going to learn how to study the Bible by learning *hermeneutics*. This is a pretty long word. Let's say it together.

Hermeneutics. *Repeat several times. Write on the board, "Hermeneutics."*

We're going to have our friend here help us remember the word and what it means. *Refer to the Bible Study poster.*

? What is this guy's first name? *Read from the poster: Herman.*

And his last name is Euticus.

? Our friend is Herman Euticus. What word do you think he is trying to remind us of? *Hermeneutics. Refer to the word you wrote on the board.*

That's right. Hermeneutics is a fancy word that means how we study the Bible. Because the Bible is the foundation for our lives, it is very important to learn how to study it correctly.

Do you think you are too young to read and study the Bible? If you can read, you can read a verse and figure out what it means. That is what hermeneutics is! Reading a verse and figuring out what it means!

The better you get at reading, the more of the Bible you will understand! Isn't that exciting?

Look with me at our Bible Study poster.

Hermeneutics:
reading a Bible
passage and
figuring out
what it means

There are three steps we'll take to study God's Word better. The first thing we'll do is observe the verse by asking questions about it. To observe means to look at something and see what it is like. We will observe a verse by asking questions about it. The easiest questions to start with are on these cards: Who, What, When, Where, Why. *Show the children one set of the Bible Study Question cards from the Resource DVD-ROM.*



Who, What, When, Where, Why

MATERIALS

- ☐ Bible Study Question card for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

Put chairs in a circle, one chair for each student minus one. Be sure there is enough room to pass between the chairs. Choose one student to stand in the middle. Shuffle the questions cards and hand each child a card with one of the "observe" questions on it (Who, What, When, Where, Why). The child in the middle calls out one of the questions for example: "What?" All children who have a "What?" card must get out of their chairs and find new chairs. They cannot sit back down in their own seat. The person in the middle races to find a seat, and a new person is left standing in the middle. He or she then calls out another question, for example: "Who?". The child in the middle can call out more than one question such as, "When? and Why?" and the children with either of these words on their card must

change seats. If a child says "All Questions," everyone must find a new seat. The object of the game is to get a new seat and not be the person left standing.

If you have a very small class and this game is not practical, use the cards to play Matching, Go Fish, or Memory Game.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

To learn more about a verse we need to ask questions about it. Who wrote it? Who was it written to? What happened to the person in this verse? Where does it take place? Who is talking? Asking and answering these questions is a good beginning to finding out what a verse means.



READ THE WORD

Now let's look at a verse and observe a few things about it. Remember, **observe** is the first step of Bible study. When we observe, we ask questions!

Our study passage today is found in the book of 2 Timothy. Let me tell you a little bit about this verse before we begin our study of it.

The Apostle Paul wrote a lot of letters telling people about Jesus when he was alive. God intended for many of these letters to be a part of the Bible. They are in the New Testament. Paul wrote two letters that are now part of the Bible to a young man named Timothy, who was a pastor. Those two letters are called 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy in the Bible. *Point out the books on the Books of the Bible poster.*

When Timothy was young, he lived with his mother and his grandmother who taught him the Bible. Timothy grew up to be a strong Christian man. He believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

Paul loved Timothy and wanted to help Timothy grow in his faith and to become a strong leader and pastor of his church. When Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, Paul was in jail and he knew that he would probably never see his dear friend again. So this was a very special letter.

We are going to read 2 Timothy 2:15 and find out what Paul wanted to teach his friend.

- ? Before we read the verse, what is the first thing we do when we study the Bible? *Ask questions, observe.*

Open your Bibles to 2 Timothy 2:15. Listen carefully while I read the verse.
Open your Bible and read 2 Timothy 2:15.

2 Timothy 2:15

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

OK. Let's ask some questions!

- ? Do you remember **who** (hold up Who? card) I said wrote this letter? *The Apostle Paul.*
- ? And **who** (hold up Who? card) did Paul write these words to? *To his good friend Timothy.*
- ? Was Timothy a friend of Paul's? *Yes.*
- ? Is this the only book Paul wrote to Timothy? *Point out on the Books of the Bible chart that he also wrote 1 Timothy.*

Now look at the verse in your Bible again. Paul asked Timothy to do two things in this verse: to be diligent, and to rightly divide the word of truth.

- ? **Who** (hold up Who? card) else is mentioned in this verse? *God.*

That's right. Paul wants Timothy to present himself approved to God.

- ? We've asked some questions about this verse. What is it called when we ask questions about something we find in the Bible? *Give the kids a clue by pointing to the Bible Study poster. Observe—ask questions.*

That's right. Now we'll move on to step two in our hermeneutics process. *Refer to the word "hermeneutics" on the board.*

Step two is to **interpret**. Interpret means to find out what the verse means. Let's say the word interpret together. *Say the word several times.*

- ? What do we do when we interpret? *We ask, "What does it mean?"*

That's right.



Discover the Truth

So, what does this verse mean? Let's figure it out by looking at some of the words.

- ? The word *diligent* is used in 2 Timothy 2:15. Does anyone know what *diligent* means? *Let children answer.*

Diligent means to be hardworking and very careful.

- ? What would someone who is not diligent be like? *Allow students to answer. Be sure to get these answers: they would not work hard; they would be lazy; they would not be careful but would be very sloppy and rushed.*

Have you ever not been diligent when you did something? Maybe you did your homework at the last minute and rushed through it and did a messy job. Or maybe you didn't sweep the floor, or clean up your room as well as you could have. You were not being diligent—you were not being hardworking or very careful.

But Paul is telling young Timothy to be diligent (hardworking and careful) as a worker for God.

- ? What is Timothy to be diligent about? Paul tells him in 2 Timothy 2:15. *Have the children look again at the verse or you can read it again for them. Allow them to answer if they can. He tells Timothy to be diligent, or hard working, in rightly dividing the word of truth.*

- ? What is the word of truth? *Allow children to answer. The Word of God.*

- ? It is God's Word, the Bible. But what does "rightly divide the word of truth" mean? Do you think you know what rightly divide means? *Allow for answers.*

The Apostle Paul made tents to earn money. He cut out pieces of canvas and sewed them together and sold them.

When you cut something out are you careful to cut on the lines? When Paul made a tent, he had to rightly divide—he had to cut the material straight and carefully or else the tent would be crooked. He had to be very careful—diligent—when he did that, didn't he?

Hold up a piece of paper on which you have drawn a dark line with a zigzag on it. Use scissors to cut carefully along that line while saying:

Diligent:
hardworking
and very careful

Well, “rightly dividing” means cutting carefully just as you do when you cut something out. And that is what Paul was telling Timothy to do with the Word of God. Paul wanted to be sure that Timothy worked hard when he studied and preached God’s Word.

That doesn’t mean we are cutting our Bibles up! It means we read it carefully and study it so we can learn what God wants us to do.

- ? Now, who remembers what our second step in studying the Bible is and what it means? *Interpret—to find the meaning of the passage. Point to the poster.*

That is what we just did. We interpreted—or figured out—what Paul meant. He wanted his friend Timothy to handle God’s Word very carefully and work hard at studying it. He wanted him to be diligent and rightly divide the Word of God.

There is one more step for us in studying God’s Word. It is to **apply** what we learned. Can you say the word *apply* with me? *Say the word together. Refer to the Bible Study poster.*

We know that Paul was teaching Timothy to be very careful—to be diligent or to work hard as he studied the Word of God.

- ? So what do you think God is trying to tell us in this verse? *That we should work hard at studying God’s Word, too!*

When we apply a verse, we think about what we can change in our life to obey what God is saying. We learn what we should do by applying the Word. We must study carefully. We do that by paying close attention to God’s Word in Sunday school and in church, by remembering to bring our Bibles and use them during class and church, and especially by reading our Bibles every day and studying them the way we should. We can also ask our parents to help us figure out what hard words mean. That is being diligent!

- ? So when we study the Bible, what is the first thing we do? *Observe—ask questions. Again, refer to the Bible Study poster.*

- ? Then what do we do? *Interpret—ask “What does it mean?” Refer to the Bible Study poster.*

And last we apply it! We ask, “How can I change my life to obey this verse?” *Refer to the Bible Study poster.*





Memory Verse Review Song

MATERIALS

- Word of God song sheet for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

Now we're going to review our memory verse with a song. Do you know the song "London Bridge Is Falling Down"? We will sing our verse to help us remember it.

Pass out the song sheets. Review the memory verse by singing this song together.

The law of the Lord is pe-r-fect, pe-r-fect, pe-r-fect. The law of the Lord is pe-r-fect, converting the soul.

The testimony of the Lord is sure, Lord is sure, Lord is sure. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, Lord are right, Lord are right. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

The commandment of the Lord is pure, Lord is pure, Lord is pure. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the ey-es.

The fe-ar of the Lord is clean, Lord is clean, Lord is clean. The fe-ar of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true, Lord are true, Lord are true. The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God's Word can do so many wonderful things for us. It can change our HEART, our BRAIN, our EYES, our SMILE, and our FEET and HANDS.

- ? What do we need to do to make these changes happen in our lives? *Be diligent to study God's Word!*



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

The Bible is a firm foundation for our lives.

- ? And what does God want us to do with that foundation? *Study it carefully.*

Very good!

- ? What are the three things we talked about today that will help us study God's Word carefully—the way He wants us to? *Observe—ask questions; Interpret—ask, "What does it mean?"; Apply—ask, "How does God want me to change my life?" Refer to the Bible Study poster.*

- ? What questions can we ask when we observe a verse? *Who, what, when, where, why.*

When we interpret, we learn what the verse means. And when we apply we ask, “How can this change me?”

In our verse today—2 Timothy 2:15—we learned we are all to study God’s Word very carefully.

GOD’S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

? Do you know what it means to be ashamed? *Embarrassed, feel bad about what you did.*

? Do you know what it means to be approved? *“Good job,” “You did it right.” It’s like when you do a good job on your homework or making the bed. It means reliable or trustworthy.*

? Would you rather be ashamed or approved? *Allow for answers.*

Our verse today tells us that when we are diligent and work hard, and are careful when we read the Bible, then God approves of what we do! But if we do not work hard and are lazy, then we will be ashamed. When we study God’s Word we will learn more and more about who God is. The more we know about God and the Bible, the better we will be at putting on our biblical glasses, and seeing the world the way God wants us to.

More importantly, the Bible is the only way you can come to know Jesus Christ and the truth about His life, death, and Resurrection. It’s the only way to learn about the forgiveness He offers to all who understand that they are sinners and who turn away from their sin, asking Him to be their Savior.

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 19:7–9 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for His faithfulness that provided the Bible as our foundation.
- Thank God for showing us how to be hard workers when we study His Word.
- Ask God to open our eyes this week as we study His Word.

