



2

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

Review last week's lesson by arranging the mini-posters in the correct place under their headings. Students will place a bookmark at 2 Timothy 2.



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.



Activity 1: Bible Study Guidelines Bookmark

page 9

Students will make Bible bookmarks that summarize our Bible study guidelines: the three steps of inductive study and what they mean.



Activity 2: Link Them Up Challenge

page 10

Students will link together pairs of words as they are found in the memory verse.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print the eight Psalm 19 mini-posters (lesson 1) that describe what God's Word is from the Resource DVD-ROM—one set of 8 posters for every 3 students.
- Cut strips of paper for each student to mark 2 Timothy 2 in their Bibles.

- Psalm 19 mini-posters—one set for every 3 students
- Strips of paper for each student



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print Lesson Board Work Outline

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Lesson Board Work Outline
- Piece of paper with a dark zigzag line drawn on it
- Pair of scissors



BIBLE STUDY GUIDELINES BOOKMARK

- Print (preferably on cardstock) and cut apart the Bible Study Guidelines bookmark from the Resource DVD-ROM, one per student.

- Bible Study Guidelines bookmark for each student
- Pencils



LINK THEM UP CHALLENGE

- Print one Link Them Up Challenge worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Link Them Up Challenge worksheet for each student
- Link Them Up Challenge answer key
- Pencils
- Optional: minute timer or stopwatch



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 Israel 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 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 diligently study God’s Word in order to discern what is true (2 Timothy 2:14–19).

We trust that God has revealed to us all things necessary 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*. 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, we ask: 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 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 our studies 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 discover 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 . . .

- Put students in teams of three. Give each team a set of Psalm 19 mini-posters describing God's Word—perfect, sure, right, pure, true, righteous, more to be desired than gold, sweeter than honey—used last week. Have the teams put the posters in order according to Psalm 19:7–11.
- Have students place a bookmark at 2 Timothy 2:15.



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 while I write it on the board. *Write the word on the board and say it several times.*

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.*

? What is his last name? *Read from the poster: Euticus.*

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

That's right. Hermeneutics is a fancy word for 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.

Look with me at Herman's poster.

There are three steps we'll take to study God's Word better. The first thing we'll do is **observe** the text by asking questions about it. *Write on the board "Observe: ask questions."*

Then we'll **interpret** the meaning of the text. *Write on the board "Interpret: what does it mean?"*

And finally, we'll think about how that meaning **applies** to us today. *Write on the board "Apply: how can this change me?"*

- Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for easier planning.

Hermeneutics:
principles for
interpreting
Scripture

READ THE WORD

Our study passage today is found in the book of Second Timothy. Let me tell you a little bit about this passage before we begin our study of it. We have already learned that God taught the earliest Christians by inspiring some of the apostles to write letters or “epistles.” *Write on the board “Letters = epistles.”*

The Apostle Paul wrote most of the epistles—letters—in the New Testament. Sometimes Paul wrote his epistles to churches in different cities. Paul wrote two epistles to a young man named Timothy. Those two letters are called 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy in the Bible. *Point out the books on the Books of the Bible poster. Write on the board “Paul wrote to Timothy.”*

Timothy was not a Jew like Paul but was from a Greek family. He lived with his mother and his grandmother. The Bible doesn’t tell us anything about his dad. Timothy was a young Christian man. He believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

Paul loved Timothy like a son and wanted to help Timothy to 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. Paul was giving Timothy the very last advice he would ever give him. Let’s take a look at what some of that advice was.

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 are the three steps we need to keep in mind when we are studying God’s Word? *Refer to the Bible Study poster and the notes you put on the board. Observe, interpret, apply.*

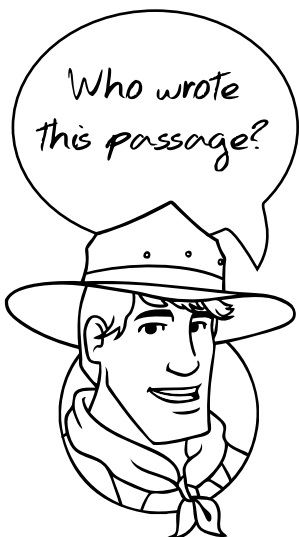
2 Timothy 2:15

Open your Bibles to 2 Timothy 2:15. Who would like to read this for me?

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? OK. Before we get started, what is the first thing we do after we read something from our Bible? What is the first step in our hermeneutics? *Refer to the notes on the board and the Bible Study poster. Observe—ask questions.*
- ? That’s right. Do you remember who I said wrote this letter or epistle? *The Apostle Paul.*
- ? And who did Paul write these words to? *To his good friend Timothy.*
- ? Who remembers something I said about Timothy? *He was a Greek Christian, not Jewish like Paul. Paul loved him like a son. Timothy lived with his mother and grandmother. The Bible doesn’t tell us anything about his father.*



- ? **Is this the only book Paul wrote to Timothy?** *Point out on the Books of the Bible poster that he also wrote 1 Timothy.*
- ? **Now look at the verse in your Bible again. Look carefully. Can you tell me two things Paul asked Timothy to do in this passage?** *Write on the board as students respond. Possible answers: be diligent, present yourself approved, do not be ashamed, divide the word of truth rightly.*
- ? **Who 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 or the words you've written on the board. Observe—ask questions.*
- ? **That's right. Now we'll move on to step two in our hermeneutic process. What is step two?** *Again, point out the answer on the board and allow a student to answer: interpret.*
- ? **What do we do when we interpret?** *We ask, "What does it mean?" Point to the board.*
That's right.

Discover the Truth

- ? **So, what does this verse mean? Let's figure it out. The word *diligent* is used here. Does anyone know what diligent means?** *Let children answer.*
Diligent means to be hardworking and very careful. Write on the board "Diligent: hardworking and very careful."
- ? **Based on our definition here, 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 very sloppy and rushed.*
So, Paul is telling young Timothy to be diligent (hardworking and careful) to present himself to God as a worker who is approved.
- ? **But how will Timothy do that? Paul tells him how in our verse. Can anyone tell me?** *Wait for answers. Paul says he is to rightly divide 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? Let me explain. Paul was a tentmaker. When he wasn't busy preaching about Jesus, he was making tents. When he told Timothy to rightly divide the Word, I believe he was thinking about making tents and about preaching.
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 no good. He had to be very careful—diligent—when he did that, didn't he?

Diligent:
hardworking
and very careful

Have you ever worked on a craft project or built a model plane or car? Do you remember how important it was for you to prepare the pieces “rightly” or “correctly” so you didn’t make a mistake?

Hold up paper on which you have drawn a dark line with a zigzag in it. Use scissors to cut carefully along that line while saying: Well, “rightly dividing” means cutting carefully just as you did on your project. And that is what Paul was telling Timothy to do with the Word of God. Paul wanted to be sure that Timothy was very careful when he studied and preached God’s Word.

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

? OK. What was Paul trying to teach Timothy? *To handle God’s Word very carefully and work hard at studying it. To be diligent.*

Right! So, that is what this verse means. We have just interpreted the verse. We figured out what the verse means.

There is one more step for us in studying God’s Word.

? What is that step? *Apply.*

? What does apply mean? *Point to the board. Apply—how can I use this information to change my life?*

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? *That we should work hard at studying God’s Word, too!*

? How would you apply this verse to your life? How could this verse change your life? *Allow children to answer.*

One way we can apply Paul’s instructions to our lives is by paying close attention to God’s Word in Sunday school and in church. Another way is by remembering to bring our Bibles, and to use them during class and church. An important way is by reading our Bibles every day and studying them the way we should. How do we do that? First we **observe**—ask questions about what we’re reading. Second we **interpret**—ask, “What does this mean?” Third we **apply**—ask ourselves how what we learned can change our lives. *Refer to Bible Study poster and board work.*

Now we’re going to make a bookmark to put in our Bibles so when we read them, we’ll remember to observe, interpret, and apply. God’s Word is the foundation for everything we do, and it is very important that we study it.





Bible Study Guidelines Bookmark

MATERIALS

- Bible Study Guidelines bookmark for each student
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out one bookmark per student. Review the steps of the hermeneutic process with students by guiding them to fill in the three steps to studying Scripture.

- ? Who can tell me what the first step is in studying a Scripture passage? *Observe.*

Write “observe” on the first line on your bookmark. Our first step is to observe. When we observe, we ask questions.

- ? What kinds of questions should we ask when we read the Bible? *Who, what, when, where, why, how.*

Write these question words on the six blank lines below observe on your bookmark. *Refer to the Bible Study poster and point out answers.*

- ? Then what is the second step in studying the Bible? *Interpret.*

Write “interpret” next to number 2 on your bookmark. Fill in the missing word to the question we ask to interpret: “What does this passage _____?” *Mean.*

That’s right. We study to learn what the passage means.

- ? And what is the final step in Bible study? *Apply.*

Write “apply” next to number 3.

- ? What question should we ask to apply the passage to our lives? Fill in the missing word: “What does God want to _____ in my life?” *Change.*

You can keep these bookmarks in your Bible as a handy reminder of the questions to ask whenever you study Scripture.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

We know that God provides the foundation to guide you into a clearer understanding of how to live for Him each day as you focus on the truth from God’s Word. He wants us to carefully read and study His Word.

Now that you have this study guide on a Bible bookmark, you can also use these guidelines when you study the Scripture at home with your family. Remember to observe, interpret, and apply when you are reading God’s Word.





Link Them Up Challenge

MATERIALS

- Link Them Up Challenge worksheet for each student
- Pencils
- Optional: minute timer or stopwatch

INSTRUCTIONS

Students will work in pairs to place the Bible descriptors listed in the memory verse in order. Then they will link those descriptors to their matching consequence. Optional: If appropriate for your class, you can increase the challenge to the groups by setting a time limit to finish the task.

We're going to work on a team challenge with our memory verse.

- ? **Does anyone know what the word synonym means?** *Synonyms are two words that have the same meaning, such as hard and difficult.*
- ? **How many synonyms for Bible are there in this verse?** *Point to the Memory Verse poster and assist students as necessary to determine the answer: five—law, testimony, statutes, commandment, judgments. Distribute the Link Them Up game sheets and pencils or pens.*

Today, you are going to work in groups to fill out these worksheets to help you memorize the verse. In Word Box 1 on your worksheets, you'll find those five words for God's Word listed. Your task will be to rewrite them in the correct order in column 1 according to Psalm 19:7–9. Have students fill out the first part of the worksheet. Use the timer to increase the challenge.

- ? **What is the order?** *Have students give answers: 1. law, 2. testimony, 3. statutes, 4. commandment, 5. judgments.*

Now look at the words in Box 2. (How is God's Word described?) Put those in the proper order in Column 2 according to the verse.

- ? **God's Law is what?** *Perfect.*

- ? **God's testimony is what?** *Sure.*
- ? **God's statutes are what?** *Right.*
- ? **God's commandment is what?** *Pure.*
- ? **God's judgments are what?** *True.*

And now we're going to do one final link up. Our memory verse tells us what results to expect when we apply God's Word to our lives. Put the words in Box 3 into the proper order according to our verse. List the words in Column 3. Again, use a timer if appropriate for your group.

OK, time's up again! Let's review to see how well you did in matching the powerful results of God's Word.

- ? **What does God's Law do?** *It converts the soul.*
- ? **What does God's testimony do?** *It makes us wise.*
- ? **What do God's statutes do?** *They rejoice our hearts.*
- ? **What does God's commandment do?** *Enlightens the eyes, or helps us understand.*
- ? **Why can we trust God's true judgments?** *They are righteous altogether.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Look at your worksheet. God's Word can do so many wonderful things for us. It can change us—or convert our soul. It can give us wisdom—make us wise. It fills our hearts with joy. It gives us more understanding of who God is. And it enables us to trust God and His promises completely.

- ? **From our lesson today, what can you do to make these things real in your life?** *Be diligent to study God's Word.*





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

- ? What did God give us as a firm foundation for our lives? *His Word.*
- ? And what does God want us to do with that foundation? *Study it carefully.*
- ? 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.*

God's Word is made up of ancient documents and letters written to different people and by different people. Although God has given the Bible power to change us, the Bible itself will never change. God spoke the truth once and it endures forever.

- ? What did Paul teach Timothy? *To study God's Word diligently.*
 - ? What is God teaching us? *The same thing!*
- We are all to study God's Word carefully.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? What does it mean to make God's Word our foundation? *Allow discussion.*

If God's Word is truly our foundation, we will learn to trust God completely. We will turn to the Bible to answer questions we may have. We will always put on our biblical glasses when we hear things that don't make sense to us, because we know that God's Word stands above man's word.

- ? How can you be diligent in your study and learn to rightly divide the Word of God? *Allow discussion.*

This can only be done by getting serious about the Bible. You learned today to observe, interpret, and apply. Studying God's Word this way will lead you to a better understanding of who God is. More importantly, the Bible is the only way you can come to know Jesus Christ and the truth about His life, death, and Resurrection—and the forgiveness He offers to all who understand their sinfulness against a holy God and turn away from their sin.



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



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.



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 strong workmen for Him.
- Ask God to open our eyes this week as we use this approach to study His Word.

