



2 Studying the Bible

Key Themes

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

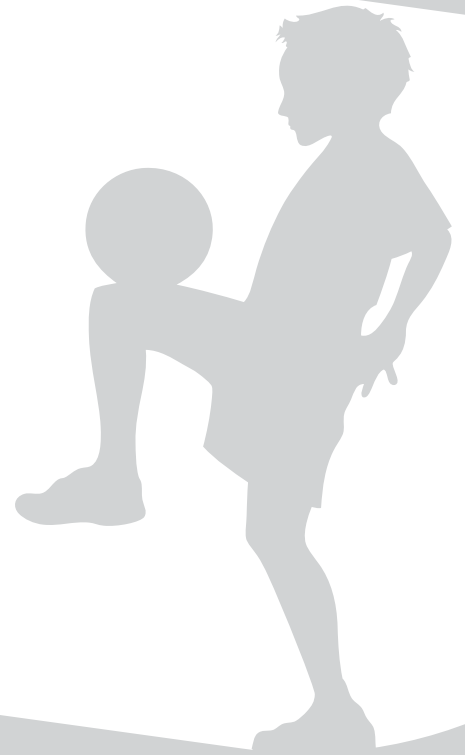
Key Passage

- 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

Students will brainstorm synonyms for the word Bible.

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 God wants us to study it and understand what He is teaching us through it. Students will study using a 3-step inductive study method: observe, interpret, apply.



Activity 1: Bible Study Guidelines Bookmark

page 9

Students will make Bible bookmarks that summarize the three steps of inductive study and what they mean: observe, interpret, apply



Activity 2: Memory Verse Scramble

page 10

Students will review the memory verse as they put the memory verse phrases in order.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- ☐ Cut paper into strips for each student to mark 2 Timothy 2 in their Bibles.

- ☐ Strips of paper for each student



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.
- ☐ Print the Lesson Board Work outline from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- ☐ 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 (on cardstock if possible) and cut apart the Bible Study Guidelines bookmarks from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- ☐ Bible Study Guidelines bookmark for each student
- ☐ Bible Study Guidelines bookmark answer key
- ☐ Pencils



MEMORY VERSE SCRAMBLE

- ☐ Print and cut out one set of Memory Verse strips from the Resource DVD-ROM for each team of 2–4 students.

- ☐ Memory Verse strips, one set per team of 2–4 students



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.



SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

God has revealed Himself to us in the words of the Bible—His only written revelation to man. We are called to study diligently 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 a way that my students will learn how to properly study your Word. Please help me to be responsive to the guidance I discover and to be willing to turn from any impurities I discover in my life when studied in the light of your guidelines. Draw the children in my class to love your Word, believe it, and allow it to guide their lives.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- Ask them if they know any synonyms for the word *Bible*. As they come up with various synonyms, write them on the board. Encourage them to come up with as many as they can before class begins. Examples include holy book, rule book, good book, Word of God, Scripture, etc. Refer them to the memory verse, which contains 5 synonyms. This activity sets the students up for talking about synonyms later in the lesson.
- Distribute paper strips to students and direct them to mark 2 Timothy 2:15 in their Bibles



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 students 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*. Do any of you know what that means? *Allow for answers. Write the word "Hermeneutics" on the board. Have some of the students repeat the word to get familiar with it.*

Well, take a look at this poster. 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 way to explain Bible study. It includes principles for interpreting Scripture—how to figure out what a passage means. 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?"*

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

Hermeneutics:
principles for
interpreting
Scripture

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

READ THE WORD

Our study passage today is found in the book of 2 Timothy. Let me tell you a little bit about this passage before we begin our study of it. 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. When he was young, He lived with his mother and his grandmother who taught him the Bible. 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.

Open your Bibles to 2 Timothy 2:15. We are going to read this passage to find out what Paul wanted to teach his friend. As we read, we are going to practice our hermeneutics.

? Who remembers what the three steps of hermeneutics are? *Refer to the Bible Study poster and the notes you put on the board. Observe, interpret, apply.*

? Who would like to read the passage for the class while we all follow along? *Choose a volunteer to read the passage.*

2 Timothy 2:15

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 grew up 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, rightly divide the word of truth.*
- ? **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 students 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 students 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.

Diligent:
hardworking
and very careful

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?

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! That is what this verse means. We have just interpreted it.

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

? What is that step and what does it mean? *Point to the board. Apply—how does God want to 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!*

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

We can all apply Paul's instruction to our lives by paying close attention to God's Word at 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. 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.

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
- ☐ Bible Study Guidelines bookmark answer key
- ☐ 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 the three steps we take in studying a Scripture passage? *Observe, interpret, apply.* Write these words on the first three lines on your bookmark.
- ? Our first step is 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 the question words on the six blank lines on your bookmark. *Refer to the poster and point out answers.*
- ? Then what is the second step? *Interpret.*
That's right, interpret. Fill in the missing word to the question we ask to interpret: "What does this passage _____?" *What does this passage "mean"?*

That's correct. We study to learn what the passage means.

- ? And what is the final step? *Apply.*
- ? What question should we ask to apply the passage to our lives? Put the missing word in the blank. *What does God want to "change" in my life?*

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

God provides the foundation to guide us into a clearer understanding of how to live for Him each day as we 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 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.





Memory Verse Scramble

MATERIALS

- Memory Verse strips, one set per team of 2–4 students

INSTRUCTIONS

Students will practice putting the memory verse in order by putting mixed up phrase pieces back in order.

We're going to practice putting the memory verse in order. This verse has a lot of synonyms for the Bible. Synonyms are two words that have the same meaning.

- ? What synonyms for Bible are in this verse? *Point to the Memory Verse poster and the list put together earlier during the Come On In activity: Law, testimony, statutes, commandment, judgments.*

Our memory verse has five different synonyms for God's Word! Remembering them may help you remember our verse. Now I am going to divide the class into teams, so you can work together on your verse. I'm going to pass out Memory Verse strips to each team. Your job is to put the phrases of the verse in order as fast as you can. *Divide students into groups of 2–4. Have them spread out throughout the room, using the floor or table space to work. Pass out one set of Memory Verse strips to each group.*

I've passed out your Memory Verse strips. You are spread out around the room, and look ready to begin. But before we get started, let's say our verse together as a class. *Refer to the Memory Verse poster and say the verse, including the reference, all together.*

OK. When I say, "Go," do your best to put it in the correct order as fast as you can. When you think your group has the verse in the proper order, stand up. When all the groups are standing, we'll say the verse so you can check your work. Ready? Go! *Walk around the room, encouraging the groups to get their phrases in order quickly. After all groups have their phrases in order, say the verse together as a class. Have the students hand in their memory verse phrases and return to their seats.*

- ? Without looking at the Memory Verse poster, who can remember what our verse says that God's law does? *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—helps us see clearly.*
- ? What are God's judgments? *True and righteous.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

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.

- ? 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—what does it mean; apply—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? *Refer to board work. 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.
- ? What do we call it when we are looking at the world with the Bible as our foundation? *Wearing biblical glasses.*

We should consider 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, studying God's Word will teach you about Jesus Christ. The Bible is the only way you can come to know the truth about His life, death, and Resurrection, the forgiveness He offers, and the everlasting life He freely gives to everyone who believes.



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students 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.
- Pray that God will help us to be diligent in studying His Word.
- Ask God to open our eyes to His truth.

