

Approaches to Bible Study

There are a number of existing and innovative methods of Bible Study. It would be good to use a number of approaches over a period of time, both in individual study and in group study. Here are ten examples.

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES
Book or Passage	Work directly from the biblical text itself with no additional helps. Example: study of John or Romans	Direct exposure to the biblical text, avoiding a writer's possible bias
Deductive	Use Bible, but read and discuss textual guide of author which seeks to interpret for you, letting you apply principles to life	Much interpretation already done for you; you learn from a scholar
Inductive	Use Bible text and have list of key questions to ask about and answer from the text. You move from the particulars of scripture to the whole of your life. Example: Spiritual Journey Notebook	Excitement of digging out the meaning and application for yourself. No additional aids needed.
Relational	A study of certain biblical texts, putting yourself into the situation by making subjective evaluations Example: <i>Serendipity Bible</i>	You get directly involved in the text. You experience an event.
Character	Study all relevant biblical text relating to a specific personality.	You get to know Bible personalities in-depth note their strengths and weaknesses; assess your own traits.
Doctrinal	Key in on a particular doctrine (teaching) and study in depth the related Scriptures.	Learn biblical basis for doctrinal beliefs; learn to discern what is really an essential doctrine.
Word	Select a word, such as "disciple" or "faithfulness" and study its usage in the Bible. An advanced adaptation would be to study the Hebrew/Greek word used.	In-depth look at key words and how they were used. Using the original language to dig out root meanings.
Topical	Select a topic such as "the parables of Jesus" or "the prayers of Paul for the churches"; look up, study, and compare relevant Scripture.	Depth study of certain topics; gain specific insight on key subjects.
Study Guide with Questions	Select one key verse of Scripture and examine it word by word, thought by thought	In-depth look at some important verses, getting into deeper implications
Current Issues	Current issues such as abortion, environment, hunger, justice, race relations, poverty, beauty, television, etc.	Relevance to life and how our culture shapes our world-view and vice versa.