Hello Friend!

Let me congratulate you on your decision to learn more about ministering to others in the name of Jesus Christ. This decision is critical in your continued growth as a disciple.

One of the most valuable skills a Christian can develop is the ability to study the Word of God for ourselves and to apply it in our own life. The method of inductive Bible study offers such an opportunity. This method is an effective, practical way of arriving at the meaning and application of a Bible passage. We in WDA want to help you grow as a disciple and become all you can be in Christ Jesus!

My prayer and confident belief is that “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6) so that He is able “to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.” (Jude 1:24) To Him be glory and praise!

May God richly bless you as you strive to grow in Him.

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Sample

Inductive Bible Study Manual
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Student Workbook

A complete copy of the Student Workbook

What's Next?

About WDA

IMPORTANT: Along with this Manual, you need to purchase (or have access to) the book How to Understand Your Bible by T. Norton Sterrett (1974 Edition) (InterVarsity Press). Students need to have access to this book also. The Inductive Bible Study Student Workbook is included in this Manual.
One of the most valuable skills a Christian can develop is the ability to study the Word of God for himself and to apply it in his own life. The method of inductive Bible study offers such an opportunity. This method is an effective, practical way of arriving at the meaning and application of a Bible passage. To make it easy to follow, a numbered guide has been designed and is supplied at the back of this booklet. When a student uses this method with a few passages of Scripture, he will “catch onto” the method and will be able to use the guide easily without the instructions.

What is inductive Bible study? The word “inductive” refers to the way we process information and come to conclusions. When we think inductively we begin with specific facts and details and then draw general conclusions (interpretations and application) from those details. When we apply this type of thinking to Bible study, we observe the facts of a passage and then derive general principles from those facts. This involves studying the background of the passage, considering the context, understanding the words and grammar, and grasping the author’s intention.

This study method may be used for private devotions, for a leader’s preparation of a Bible study, for a small group’s study time together, or for group member’s individual preparation before a meeting. A group leader may wish to supplement the study with his own lecture or discussion questions. Inductive studies are especially effective in groups where people can
share their insights, research and application, and where leaders can hold members accountable for completing the study. It is recommended that a group be kept to twelve people or less. (See *A Small Groups Manual*, WDA.)

The passages chosen for study in this workbook focus on evangelism, a theme in Phase III. After completing these passages, students may go on to a passage of their own choosing if they need more practice. A well-outlined study Bible can be helpful. The *New International Version* (*NIV* published by Zondervan) has excellent paragraph and idea divisions.

A word about commentaries needs to be added here. While commentaries (an in depth study of scripture) are useful tools, it is important for the Bible student to do her own study of a passage *before* reading a commentary. This encourages the student to do the mentally and spiritually challenging work of studying and allows the Holy Spirit to reveal truth directly to the student. After a study is complete, it can be helpful to read several commentaries to investigate different viewpoints.

We also need to comment on the different types of Bibles. There are two basic kinds of Bibles: translations and paraphrases.

**Translations** are Bibles which are translated from the original languages, and there are many of them. Some translations are written by individual scholars and some by a committee of scholars. Generally, the ones authored by committee are better because there are more checks and balances in operation. Usually it is best to use a modern translation because it is easier to understand; however, the *King James Version* (*KJV*) is still very popular. Two good recent translations are the *New American Standard Bible* (*NASB*) and the *New International Version* (*NIV*). The *NIV* is the easier to read and understand of the two.
A **paraphrase** is not a translation. The author writing a paraphrase begins with a translation and puts the ideas into his own words. Some popular paraphrases are *Good News for Modern Man*, *The Living Bible* and *The Message*.

The value of a paraphrase is that it makes difficult passages and complex sentences much easier to understand. The drawback is that the reader is receiving another person’s interpretation of the passage, and this may interfere with the reader developing her own point of view. For that reason, when doing inductive Bible study, it is best to begin with a translation. After doing your study, a paraphrase can help you get another opinion about what the passage means. It is best to form your own opinions first and then let others argue against them.
Motivating Objectives Of An Inductive Bible Study

1. A disciple will learn a systematic approach to a limited passage of Scripture (one chapter or a section of eight or ten verses) and learn how to accurately, more fully understand what it teaches.

2. A disciple will better understand what is in the Bible because it is studied in more depth.

3. A disciple will prepare to study a whole book of the Bible by learning to separate it into its parts and interpret them.

4. A disciple will learn how to think through applications of Scripture after having interpreted it.
Lesson preparation for these Equipping For Ministry (Phase III) Bible studies will take some time and effort on your part. We provide you with direction, tools and suggestions. Of course, as always, make any changes necessary to use these materials in ways that meet the needs of your disciples.

On pages 10-11 of this *Manual* you will find a list of suggested assignments. (The assignment pages for the student are found on pages 12-13 of the *Student Workbook.*) We will use these assignments as a guide for our instructions. Sessions #1, 2 and 3 are explained in more detail below in order to help you and your group get started.

**IMPORTANT:** The book entitled *How to Understand Your Bible* by T. Norton Sterrett (1974 Edition) (InterVarsity Press) will be used with this *Manual* and the *Student Workbook*. This book has been in print for years and is an excellent resource for the person who is learning Bible study principles. Disciples who are being trained in ministry need to have this book in their library. Be sure your students have a copy of this book or have access to it.

**Overall Goals:**

- For a disciple to be prepared to do a background study on a book of the Bible independently.
- For a disciple to be able to complete an inductive Bible study independently.
- For a disciple to begin to understand basic hermeneutic principles.
SESSION #1

Content and Resources for the Leader:
Present the information in the Teaching Outline entitled “Inductive Bible Study” (page 13) at this first session. (The Teaching Outline is not included in the Student Workbook.)

Assignments Given to Students for Session #2:
From Assignment sheet:
• Read Chapter 11 in How to Understand Your Bible.
• Do a background study on Acts. (Look at the sample after completing the background study.) (Be sure that students can locate the sample in their Workbook on pages 15-16.)

SESSION #2

Goals:
• For disciples to report on their background studies.
• For disciples to observe a demonstration of completing the Observation column in the Inductive Bible Study (IBS) Guide.

Content and Resources for the Leader:
• Discuss the background studies the students did on Acts.
• Discuss Chapter 11 of How to Understand Your Bible.
• Demonstrate doing the Observation column on the IBS Guide. Use Acts 8:26-40.

NOTE: At the end of this Manual and at the end of the Student Workbook there are sample inductive Bible studies for students to learn from. Also, there is a blank Inductive Bible Study Guide that may be reproduced. A downloadable pdf of the blank Guide can also be found at https://www.disciplebuilding.org/store/ministry-tools/inductive-bible-study-guide-pdf/.
Assignments Given to Students for Session #3:
From Assignment sheet:
• Read pages 1-10 of Student Workbook.
• Read Chapter 10 of How to Understand Your Bible.

SESSION #3

Goal: For the disciple to observe an inductive Bible study being done.

Content and Resources for the Leader:
• Review and complete the IBS Guide on Acts 8:26-40 while the students are observing.
• Discuss How to Understand Your Bible Chapter 10.

Assignment to Students: See Assignment Page (pages 12-13 of Student Workbook)

SESSIONS #4-8

For the remainder of the assignments, continue following the Assignment Page. The format remains the same: A student completes the inductive Bible study on the assigned passage during the week, and then discusses the passage in the group setting. The student also participates in a discussion of the assigned portion of How to Understand Your Bible.

Group sessions consist of discussions which center on the truth focused on in the passage, as well as on the mechanics and principles of inductive Bible study. The reading in How to Understand Your Bible begins acquainting the student with good hermeneutic principles.
Inductive Bible Study Assignments

Teaching Session

Session #1
• What is IBS?
  (Use Teaching Outline pg. 13)
• How to do background study
• Types of Bibles (study Bible, translations, etc.)

Session #2
• Discuss background study of Acts
• Discuss Chapter 11 in UB
• Demonstrate doing the Observation column on the IBS Guide (Use Acts 8:26-40)

Session #3
• Demonstrate completing the IBS Guide on Acts 8:26-40 during this session
• Discuss UB Chapter 10

Session #4
• Review IBS on Acts 17:22-31
• Discuss UB Chapter 7

Assignment for Next Session (given at end of session)

• Read How to Understand Your Bible, Chapter 11
• Do background study on Acts (author, date, purpose, occasion, outline of book). Look at sample after you complete the study.

• Read IBS Student Workbook, pages 1-10
• Read UB Chapter 10

• Do IBS on Acts 17:22-31 (w/o looking at sample at end of IBS Student Workbook)
• Read UB Chapter 7

• Do IBS on Acts 2:22-36
• Read UB Chapter 8
### Teaching Session

**Session #5**
- Review Acts 2:22-36
- Discuss *UB* Chapter 8
- Draw students’ attention to background study on John

**Session #6**
- Review John 3:1-15
- Discuss *UB* Chapter 9

**Session #7**
- Review John 4:7-26,39-42
- Discuss *UB* Chapter 12

**Session #8**
- Review John 8:12-30
- Discuss *UB* Chapter 2

### Assignment for Next Session (given at end of session)

- Do IBS on John 3:1-15
- Read *UB* Chapter 9

- Do IBS on John 4:7-26,39-42
- Read *UB* Chapter 12

- Do IBS on John 8:12-30
- Read *UB* Chapter 2

- None

**IBS:** Inductive Bible Study  
**UB:** *How to Understand Your Bible*, Sterrett
INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Teaching Outline

SESSION #1

Introduction:

The Scriptures are one of the greatest assets that God has given us to know Him and to discover His will.

A. The Bible is part of special revelation. It tells us things that we could not know without its help, especially about God, His will and salvation.
   1. We learn much from general revelation, which includes everything we can learn from observation, experience and study in this world.
   2. But we need a filter (worldview) through which to interpret or understand it. The Scripture provides that viewpoint for us.

B. What is inductive Bible study?
   1. The word “inductive” refers to the way we process information and come to conclusions.
   2. Inductive thinking means that we begin with specific facts and details, and then draw conclusions.
   3. Applying inductive thinking to our Bible study means that we observe the facts of a passage, and then derive general principles from those facts.

C. Interpretation of Scripture is sometimes straightforward and obvious. However, it is often more difficult.
   1. Therefore, it is important that we approach Scripture from a right perspective. This message is designed to help us do that.
2. God is the Author of the Bible so we need to ask Him to help us to understand what it means and how it applies to our lives (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Transition:
Christians can learn how to study the Scriptures inductively by understanding and applying the following ideas.

I. PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

A. There are two presuppositions that give us guidance about how to interpret Scripture.
   1. God gave us the Bible in the languages that His people spoke at the time, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.
      a. We need to apply the rules of language to understand Scripture.
      b. The Bibles we use are translations of those languages into English.
      c. This removes us one step further from the original language and makes interpretation a little harder. Often knowing what a word means in the original language helps us to understand the text better.
   2. The correct interpretation is what the author intended, and it does not change over time.

B. There are general rules of interpretation derived from the meaning of context, words, and grammar.
   1. Context is critically important to interpretation.
      a. Context includes the historical/cultural setting of the times in which the book of the Bible was written.
      Example: Jesus broke the cultural rules by talking to the woman at the well (John 4). Because she was a woman and a Samaritan also, He should not have approached her. We know this because Jewish men
in that day were not suppose to talk with women in
public or have anything to do with Samaritans.
b. Another important aspect of context is how the
specific context fits into the overall message of the
Bible.
c. The context also includes the book, paragraph and
sentence in which the words are found.

2. Another important part of interpretation is the meaning
of words and how they are related (grammar).
a. The meaning of words is important, but most words
have more than one meaning. This is true in Greek
and Hebrew, as it is in English.
b. The only way to determine the right meaning an
author intends is in the context of its use. Example:
The word “bear” refers to a big wild animal but can
also be used to talk about carrying a burden. We
can easily determine which meaning is correct by
considering the context of the statement.

C. In addition to the general rules of interpretation, there are
special rules of interpretation for special types of literature
(Hebrew poetry, wisdom literature, etc.). For example,
apocalyptic books, such as Revelation, use symbolism
which should not be interpreted literally.
1. Each kind of literature in the Bible has its own
peculiarities that must be considered in order to achieve
a correct interpretation.
2. For example, wisdom literature like Proverbs presents
ideas that are generally true, but there may be exceptions
as well. If we treat them like they are promises or
absolutes, we will come to some wrong conclusions.

D. Another aid in interpretation is the use of parallel passages.
1. Because of the consistent message of Scripture
throughout, we need to let one scripture interpret
another scripture where we can.

2. There are many passages in Scripture that teach on similar subjects, and they all need to be considered in order to have a balanced, accurate view of a subject.

II. PRINCIPLES OF APPLICATION

A. Generally, when we are thinking about application, we are looking for principles from the Old Testament and New Testament that transcend time, that is, they are true in any generation.

1. When looking for eternal principles in historical biblical literature, any principles we see need to be backed up by teaching sections of the New Testament.

2. When applying scripture we need to look at whether the passage is prescriptive or descriptive.
   a. By prescriptive we mean that the text is explaining how we should live; giving us direction.
   b. By descriptive we mean that the text is merely telling us what happened (not what we should do). For example, Acts 4:32 describes how the believers lived, but does not necessarily prescribe how all Christians should live.
   c. When looking at a descriptive passage, you may find an eternal principle illustrated. In order to be certain that it is a valid principle you need to find substantiation for that principle from a prescriptive statement in the New Testament.
   d. Example: The account of Philip witnessing to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 is sometimes misused to say that this is the way to evangelize (prescriptive). In fact, this section of Scripture is descriptive and shows a way to evangelize.
B. Even if you can rightly interpret Scripture, it is still a challenge to rightly apply Scripture.

1. We might be able to interpret the meaning of a particular Old Testament text correctly, but does that text apply the same way to a New Testament Christian?

2. For instance, there are a lot of dietary laws in the Old Testament. Are New Testament Christians required to keep them? The answer is “no” because the New Testament shows that it is no longer necessary (Acts 10:1-23, especially vv. 9-16).

III. KINDS OF BIBLES

A. There are many different kinds of Bibles. Some are translations and some are paraphrases. Information about translations and paraphrases will help you choose the appropriate one to use.

B. Most versions of the Bibles are direct translations from the Greek and Hebrew.

1. Although some translations have been written by individuals, most popular translations were written by committee of a large number of scholars. Generally, the ones by a group are better because there are more checks and balances in operation.

2. There are two kinds of translations, literal and dynamic.
   a. The New American Standard Version is the only literal translation that has been done.
      1). It seeks to stay as close to the original language as it can.
      2). But that causes it to be a little wooden and hard to read because it doesn’t flow very well.
   b. The other translations are dynamic. The King James and the New International Version are examples of dynamic translations.
1) These translations do not follow the original language word for word. Instead, the translator determines the meaning of a phrase and then writes it in the new language expressing the meaning, even if word order changes.

2) The result is that the translation tends to flow better and be more understandable.

3) Sometimes it can be helpful to compare translations when you are studying to help with interpretation.

C. There are also paraphrases of the Bible that attempt to make the Bible even more understandable. But since they do not start from the original languages, it is best to use them only in a supplementary way while starting from something that is closer to the original languages. Some examples are the New Living Bible and The Message.

**Conclusion:**

It is important to know how to correctly interpret and apply God’s Word to our lives.

Assignment #1: Do a background study on the book of Acts.

A. Summarize on one page the following information:

1. The Author

2. The Recipients

3. The Date
4. The Purpose

5. A brief Outline

B. Use several sources to gather background information:

1. Bible dictionary, encyclopedia or handbook; study Bible

2. Introduction to a commentary on the book

Read *How to Understand Your Bible*, Sterrett, Chapter 11.

(This is the first assignment listed for the student on page 12 of the *Student Workbook*.)