



# ***Steps for an In-Depth Study of the Bible***

## **1 - Select your text.**

Decide what portion of Scripture that you want to study. It may be a book of the Bible, a chapter, a section of Scripture, a specific story, or a verse. Decide where the central thought begins and ends. Be sure to maintain a unity of thought.

## **2 - Read your text.**

Read your text several times. Read it silently. Read it aloud. Look at the passage in several different translations. The American Standard, New American Standard, and Revised Standard will be more literal translations of the original language of the Bible. The New International and New Century Versions will be more modern translations.

## **3 - Notice the context of your text.**

What is the immediate context of your passage? What comes immediately before it and immediately after it? What is the larger context within the book of the Bible you are studying? What is the main point the biblical writer is trying to get across? How does your text fit into the overall message? What other passages in Scripture enlighten the meaning of this text? Use a concordance to look up key words or phrases.

## **4 - Study the style of language.**

What kind of literature are you studying? Is it a narrative (story)? Is it a letter? Is it poetry? Is it meant to be literally or symbolically understood?

## **5 - Study the history of the passage.**

Who wrote this passage? When was it written? Where was it written? What was going on in the lives of the original readers? What problems is the author addressing? What would the original readers have understood when they read this for the first time? Atlases, Bible handbooks, encyclopedias and biblical history works are helpful for this step.

## **6 - Study the words in the passage.**

What do the key words in your passage mean? Use a word study books, dictionaries and concordances for insights. How are the thoughts in the passage developed? What is the author's line of logic?

## **7 - Look at what other people have studied about your text.**

Now it is time to open up commentaries and other books to compare what you have studied with what others have studied about your passage. Do not take this step too quickly. Give yourself a chance to discover as much about your passage as you can before depend on someone else for answers to your Bible study.

## **8 - Pull it all together.**

Carefully synthesize the conclusions to your study. Paraphrase the text in own words, bringing out the message that God intends. Carefully check conclusions with the context of the passage, the rest of Scripture, the meaning of the words, the history of the passage, and so on.



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**Congratulations! You have just been on an in-depth exploration of God's Word.**