

## **BUILDING A BIBLE STUDY**

### **OBSERVATION**

Step 1 - Using a plain Bible, without notes or paragraph headings, read the chapter several times over, making some general observations on the chapter as a whole, Once you have completed this process describe the content of the chapter, summarizing it in one of the following ways:

- \* Paraphrase the chapter, rephrasing it in your own words in such a way that you could read it to another person in a way that they would understand.
- \*Outline the chapter, following the internal paragraph divisions of the chapter. Give each paragraph a heading and place the sub-points of the paragraph beneath.
- \*Rewrite the chapter leaving out all modifying clauses and phrases. You would write out the chapter using just the subjects, verbs, and objects.

Step 2 - Note your observations and insights. look at every detail of the chapter, examining each sentence and word, and writing down everything you see.

Step 3 - Ask detailed questions of the chapter. Write upon the form each question you ask even if you cannot find an answer for it now. The time may come when you do find an answer to the question in another study and be able then to place it here as well. Be sure to note any difficulties you have with the passage so that you can research them in the future. Refer to the handouts to help you answer some key questions:

- \*Observe the context of the passage.
- \*Define the words and phrases used so that you have the correct meaning of the structural components of the passage.
- \*The structure and grammar of a passage is of benefit to help you to understand the flow of ideas and concepts within the passage so that you can see them in relation to each other.
- \*Use other translations to see if their use of English is more understandable.
- \*Try to view the passage against its background (historical, cultural, geographic, economic, social, current events, etc.) Use your Bible dictionary or encyclopedia to obtain this information.
- \*See what other passages in the Bible say about the concepts covered within this chapter. This is actually done more thoroughly in step four.
- \*If all other means have failed refer to a commentary and compare your interpretation of the

passage with that of the commentator.

Step 4 - Correlate your chapter with other Bible passages. Cross-references are important because they are helpful tools in interpreting the meaning of a chapter; they enable you to see what the Bible as a whole has to say on any given teaching. Quotes of Bible prophecies are often footnoted.

Step 5 - Make a list of some possible applications. You will not be attempting to apply all that you write here, you are making a list for future reference and from which, in step seven, you will choose one application to work into your life.

Step 6 - Formulate and make note of some conclusions. After reviewing the first five steps of this study write down your conclusions on the chapter. You may discover additional information during this step which you should also note.

Step 7 ~ Write out one application from the list you compiled in step five. Be sure that it is practical and that it is applicable to your life!. Remember to return to your written application in the near future so that you can evaluate your progress.

1. Ask the six vital observation questions: What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?
2. Look for key words.
3. Look for repeated words and phrases.
4. Look for questions being asked.
5. Look for answers being given.
6. Look for commands.
7. Look for warnings.
8. Look for comparisons - things that are alike.
9. Look for contrasts - things that are different.
10. Look for illustrations.
11. Look for causes and effects and reasons for doing things.
12. Look for promises and their conditions for fulfillment..
13. Look for progression from the general to the specific.
14. Look for progression from the specific to the general.
15. Look for steps of progression in a narrative or biography.
16. Look for lists of things.
17. Look for results.
18. Look for advice, admonitions, and attitudes.
19. Look for the tone of the passage - emotional atmosphere.
20. Look for connectives, articles, and prepositions.
21. Look for explanations.
22. Look for Old Testament quotes in the New Testament.
23. Look for the literary form.
24. Look for paradoxes.
25. Look for emphasis through the use of space ~ proportion.
26. Look for planned exaggerations or hyperboles.
27. Look at the grammatical construction of each sentence.
28. Look for the use of the current events of the times.
29. Look for the force of the verbs.
30. Look for anything unusual or unexpected.

## General Questions for a Biographical Study

Here is a list of seventy questions you can use in constructing a biographical study. You shouldn't try to use every question listed here in a single study. Depending on the depth of your study and the time you have, select the questions you would like to have answered. The questions are categorized into seven major divisions for easier use. As you think of other questions, add them to this list.

### Reputation

1. Who wrote what we know about this person?
2. What did people say about him/her?
3. What did his enemies say about him/her?
4. What did his/her family say about him/her?
5. What did God say about the person?
6. Why do you think God allowed this person to be mentioned in the Bible?

### Tests of Character

1. What were his/her aims and motives?
2. What was he/she like in the home?
3. How did the person respond to failure? Was he/she discouraged easily?
4. How did the person respond to adversity? Handle criticism well?
5. How did the person respond to success? Proud when praised?
6. How did the person respond to the trivial and mundane things in life? Was he/she faithful in the little things?
7. How quickly did the person praise God for the good/bad things that happen in their life?
8. How quickly did the person obey God when told to do something?

### Background

1. What can you discover about his/her family and ancestry?
2. What does his/her name mean? Why was he/she given that name? Was it ever changed?
3. What was his/her home life like? How was he/she raised? Where was he/she raised?
4. What were the characteristics of his/her parents? Did they influence him/her?
5. Was there anything special about his/her birth?
6. Where did he/she live? What was his/her everyday life like?
7. Was he/she exposed to other cultures? Did they affect him/her in any way?
8. What was the condition of his/her country - politically and spiritually - during his/her lifetime?
9. What kind of training did he/she have? Did he/she have any schooling?
10. What was his/her occupation?
11. How long did he/she live? Where did he/she die? How did he/she die?

### Significant Events

1. Was there any great crisis in his/her life? How did he/she handle it?
2. What are the great accomplishments for which he/she is remembered?
3. Did he/she experience a divine 'call?' How did he/she respond to it?
4. What crucial decisions did he/she have to make? How did they affect him/her? Others?
5. Did any recurring problem keep coming up in his/her life?
6. Where did he/she succeed? Where did he/she fail? Why?
7. How did the environment and circumstances affect him/her?
8. What part did he/she play in the history of God's plan?

9. Did he/she believe in the sovereignty of God (God's control over all events)?

### **Relationships**

1. How did he/she get along with other people? Was he/she a loner? Was he/she a team person?
2. How did he/she treat other people? Did he/she use them or serve them?
3. What was his/her spouse like? How did they influence him/her?
4. What were his/her children like? How did they influence him/her?
5. Who were his/her close companions? What were they like? How did they influence him/her?
6. Who were his/her enemies? What were they like? How did they influence him/her?
7. What influence did he/she have on others? On his nation? On other nations?
8. Did he/she take care of the family? How did his/her children turn out?
9. Did his/her friends and family help or hinder him/her in serving the Lord?
10. Did he/she train anyone to take his place? Did he/she leave a "Timothy" (disciple) behind?

### **Personality**

1. What type of person was he/she? What made him/her the way he/she was?
2. Was his/her temperament choleric, melancholic, sanguine, or phlegmatic?
3. What were the outstanding strengths in his/her character? What traits did she have?
4. Did his/her life show any development of character as time passed? Was there growth and progression there?
5. What were his/her particular faults and weaknesses?
6. What were his/her particular sins? What steps led to those sins?
7. In what area was his/her greatest battle: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or pride of life, ...etc..?
8. What were the results of his/her sins and weaknesses?
9. Did he/she ever get the victory over his particular sins and weaknesses?
10. What qualities made him/her a success or failure?