

The Inductive Guide.

How to study the Bible for yourself — the Berean way.

*“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so.” — Acts 17:11*

Inductive study means coming to the text first — before the commentary, before the sermon notes, before anyone else's conclusions — and letting Scripture speak for itself. It moves through three questions, in order. The order is the method: what it **says**, then what it **means**, then how you must **change**.

1 Observation — *What does it say?*

Slow down and look. Read the passage more than once, in more than one translation. You are not interpreting yet — you are gathering evidence like a careful witness.

- Who is involved? Who is speaking, and to whom?
- What is happening? When, and where?
- What words or ideas repeat? Repetition is emphasis.
- What contrasts and comparisons do you see? (but, as, like)
- What commands are given? What cause-and-effect? Watch for terms of conclusion — **therefore, so that**.

Mark the text

Color-marking makes observation visible. In the Dashboard, select any word or phrase and give it a color — the legend is yours to edit, but this is the classic scheme:



God — His character & actions



Commands



Key repeated words



Sin & warnings



Promises



Time · place · contrast

2 Interpretation — *What does it mean?*

Now ask what the text meant to the people who first received it. Meaning is fixed by the author and the Author; our job is to discover it, not invent it.

—**Context rules.** Read the verses around your verse, the chapter around your passage, the book around your chapter.

—**Scripture interprets Scripture.** The clearest passage lights up the harder one. (Revelation 13's dragon is named in Revelation 12:9.)

—**Go to the original words.** Tap a Strong's number in the KJV to open the Hebrew or Greek — one word study can unlock a whole passage.

—**One true meaning, many applications.** If your interpretation contradicts the rest of Scripture, it isn't the meaning.

Only now consult the commentary and others' writing — as fellow students to check your work against, never as a substitute for it. The text of Scripture outranks every commentary.

The whole reference shelf belongs to this step, and not to the one before it — lexicons, dictionaries, atlases and maps, background articles, other students' commentary. It is all help for the second question, and almost none of it belongs to the first. The Dashboard does not try to be that shelf: large reference sites already are one, free, and better stocked than anything a single page could carry. What it tries to be is the desk you work at — the passage in front of you, your marks on it, your notes in your own words. Bring back what you find, and then write down what you now believe the text means. The study is not what you read about the passage. It is what you wrote down after reading the passage.

When you do go looking, the Dashboard points the way rather than standing in it: every Lexicon entry carries a link out to Blue Letter Bible on the same Strong's number, so the reference shelf is one tap from the word you were asking about. It stays a link — their pages are never copied here.

3 Application — *How must I change?*

Truth observed and understood but not obeyed makes a scholar, not a disciple. End every study by asking what this passage requires of you — specifically, personally, this week.

- Is there a **promise** to trust?
- Is there a **sin** to confess and forsake?
- Is there a **command** to obey?
- Is there an **example** to follow — or avoid?

Working the method in the Dashboard

Open a passage and read it in parallel. Mark what you observe. Use the **Verse Workbench** to copy the focused verse and each step's key questions into your notes. Keep Observation, Interpretation, and Application in their own tabs. Ask the **Study Partner** when you're stuck — it will ask you the next good question rather than hand you an answer. Then export your study as Markdown: your notebook, in a format that will outlive every app.

[Open the Berean Dashboard →](#)

SEEKING GOD DILIGENTLY · SOLI DEO GLORIA