

Delaware Christian Church

Zoom study notes

Why Study the Bible?

- Psalm 119:105 – Life (spiritual, physical, emotional) guidance and clarity in life.
- Ephesians 1:17 – To grow in the knowledge of God.
- Hebrews 4:12 – Having a changed life.
- John 8:12 – Follow and depend on God.

How to Study the Bible?

Three Important Principles of Bible Study

1. Observation: What Does It Say? To Whom does it say it?

- Read slowly
- Gather the basic facts: who, how, what, where, and when.

Good questions to bear in mind include:

Who is speaking or writing?

To whom are they speaking or writing?

Who are the main characters?

Where is this taking place?

Are there any repeated words or ideas?

Are there words that show chronology?

What are the themes found in this passage?

Are there contrasts, comparisons, or conditional statements?

What is the logical progression in the author's argument?

Are there words that indicate atmosphere, mood, and emotion? Figures of speech?

What are the section divisions and linking words?

What don't I understand here?

2. Interpretation: What Does It Mean?

Considered what the passage says, but what does it *mean*?

It may help to ask questions like:

Why did the biblical author write this particular passage?

Why did he feel it necessary to include.... in his letter?

How would I paraphrase this passage in my own words?

Do, what are, other passages of Scripture complement, agree, supports my interpretation? (The saying “Let Scripture interpret Scripture” reminds us to let clearer passages shed light on more complex verses.)

How does my understanding of this passage fit within the Bible’s teaching as a whole?

Here is a simple framework, gleaned from a pastor named Tommy Nelson, that has helped me interpret all of Scripture with the Savior in view:

Old Testament: *Anticipation*

Gospels: *Manifestation*

Acts: *Proclamation*

Epistles: *Explanation*

Revelation: *Consummation*

No matter where you turn, your Bible is about Jesus.

3. Application: So What? How Should I Respond?

This is the ultimate goal of Bible study.

In the first two stages you study the text; now the text studies you.

To quit prematurely, before applying what you observe and interpret, is like chewing without swallowing.

What's something I learned about God—his character, his plan, his priorities, his promises, his desires, his ways?

What's something I learned about myself? My neighbor? The world?

How do I need to change my thinking or living based on what I've learned?

How should I be praying in light of this passage?

Is there an encouragement or promise here that I need to meditate on?

What implications does this passage have for the way I engage my unbelieving friends?

How does this passage apply to my brothers and sisters in Christ?

How does it speak to our life together as a church?

What does this Scripture passage say? That's *observation*.

What does it mean? That's *interpretation*.

How should I (or we) respond? That's *application*.

The Book of James

The date and audience of the letter of James depends on its composition history. Early church tradition affiliated this letter with James the brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55). As leader in Jerusalem, James spoke with authority to end an internal Church controversy over the circumcision of gentile believers (Acts 15:13–19; see also 21:18). And according to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, the Jewish religious hierarchy put to death by stoning “the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James” (*Antiquities of the Jews* 20.200). This would have been around 62 C.E.

- Relationship with Jesus
Mark 6:3
Mark 3:21
John 7:5
- Relationship with Paul
Galatians 1:19

Two Reasons to Study James

1st – To examine the relationship between faith and works.

2nd – To explore the impact of our faith on life and the world around us.

Practical Study Time

Read through James in one sitting. This will help you see the book as a whole unit. As you read through the book, use colored pencils to highlight and make notations. Mark any phrases or thoughts that give you an overall impression as to the theme of the book.

1. Jot down key words or phrases as well as key verses that summarize the main message of the book.
2. Survey: Write down the main theme of the following sections:

1:1-12

3:13-18

1:13-18

4:1-12

1:19-27

4:13-5:6

2:1-13

5:7-12

2:13-26

5:13-18

3:1-12

5:19-20

3. Consult <https://www.blueletterbible.org> as you answer the following questions:
 - a. Which “James” is the author of this book?
 - b. When is it estimated that this book was written?