



Name:

THE STEPS OF BIBLE STUDY

BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH



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Our Covenant

As a bond of unity among us, Berean Baptist Church accepts for its members the following covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and upon our profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We fully realize that the strength to uphold this covenant comes from the grace of God our Father, the shed blood of God the Son, and the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We promise to actively pursue personal holiness; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church's spiritual growth and unity; to faithfully abide by the doctrines and behaviors outlined in this church's Articles of Faith; and to give cheerfully of our time, talents, and finances for the support of this ministry and its missionaries.

We further promise to faithfully attend the church's worship services, to maintain personal spiritual disciplines; to teach our children the Word of God; to share the gospel with our relatives and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements; and to avoid all gossip. We promise that we will love and pray for each other and in times of distress help one another.

We promise to endeavor to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus and to abstain from anything that would cause our fellow brother or sister in Christ to stumble or that will bring reproach to the name of Jesus Christ.

We further realize that if we should fail to live up to the promises we have made, our brothers and sisters in Christ will always strive for our reconciliation and spiritual restoration. However, if we partake in a sustained and unrepentant violation of an Article of Faith, we will be brought under church discipline in accordance with the Church Constitution.

We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God as the visible representation of the body of Christ.

When it comes to understanding and applying the Bible, Bible study tools are nice, but a person can fully hear from God through His Word with only a copy of the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Since the beginning of time, the typical believer didn't even have a Bible. Many in the world still do not have a copy. It was only since the last century that tools like commentaries, study Bibles, computer programs, etc. have become available to the average person, and this is only within the first world nations. Please feel free to use Bible study tools, but do not let them distract you from the Word of God itself.

This booklet is to help you grow as a self-feeder of God's Word, the Bible. There are many pathways to learning how to breakdown Scripture for understanding and application, but this is the approach we normally promote within the Berean family, Berean Baptist Church (BBC).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Booklet Introduction

Overview	2
Self-Feeder	3
Bible and Notebook	3
Inductive Bible Study Method	4
Two Levels of Maturing as a Bible Self-Feeder	4
"On Your Own" versus "With Others"	4
Personal Relational Disciple-Making	5
Additional Bible Study Tools	5

Level 1: Beginning as a Bible Self-Feeder

Introduction	7
Observation	8
Context	9
Interpretation	10
Application	11

Level 2: Maturing as a Bible Self-Feeder

Introduction	12
Observation	13
Context	20
Interpretation	21
Application	23

Continuing the Journey of a Bible Self-Feeder

Discovering Other Bible Study Methods	26
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The Booklet Introduction

Overview

Within our name, Berean Baptist Church, our foundation of studying the Bible is clear, as it comes from Acts 17.

“The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to **Berea**, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; **they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.**”
(Acts 17:10-11)

Every believer should be able to examine the Scriptures daily to hear from God for themselves and discern as they hear others preach and teach. We refer to people that live this way as self-feeders of God’s Word, the Bible. So how does the progression to becoming a self-feeder of the Bible look? Let’s think about how a new born child progresses in taking in physical nourishment.

If you think about a baby, they receive their physical nourishment through milk, directly from their mother, or from a bottle. Growing as a self-feeder of God’s Word is part of maturing as a disciple of Jesus. It is also helpful for others to speak into their lives to gain spiritual nourishment from God’s Word. And these other people will teach them very simple and basic truths from the Scriptures that can bring about Christlike transformation.

As a baby grows into a child, they move from milk to being spoon fed, soft food first and then regular food cut into small pieces. As a new believer starts growing in Christlikeness, they are an immature disciple, but they are starting to become a disciple of Christ. They have moved beyond milk, and now need to be spoon fed more and more challenging truths from God’s Word.

But, as with humans, disciples of Jesus are expected to continue maturing until their last day here on earth. Children are meant to learn how to feed themselves the food that is put in front of them, and then some day even prepare their own food. Growing disciples of Jesus need to start feeding themselves from God’s Word and stop totally depending on others. They do this by learning how to read the Bible to understand the truths that are in it, then taking those truths about God and man, and then identifying personal application in their lives.

Interestingly enough, once a disciple becomes a self-feeder of the Bible, the journey has only just begun, because a disciple of Christ will make other disciples. So now they become the ones helping to feed others and helping others learn to digest the Scriptures themselves as self-feeders. And because of the Great Commission (Mat 28:18-20), this cycle must continue until Jesus comes again.

Self-Feeder

A Bible self-feeder is someone who prioritizes abiding with God through His Word. We abide with God as we spend time in His presence. Through this abiding, a disciple will grow their relationship with God and mature as a fully functioning follower of Christ. Becoming a self-feeder is a level of discipleship needed for you to take responsibility of your spiritual growth. Self-feeders normally strive to interact with the Scriptures each day. Often this time in God's Word is referred to as a "Quiet Time." A quiet time is when a person blocks out some time during the day where they spend time in the Bible and prayer. Quiet times normally start off very basic for believers and then they become more in depth as the believer grows.

A believer is someone who has trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord and is following Jesus as His disciple. The foundation of this relationship with God is the Bible. So, prioritizing time in God's Word is essential.

Another aspect of a Bible self-feeder is their ability to find Bible understanding and application as they listen to a passage being preached or during a small group Bible study discussion. Even though we are making a big deal out of disciples becoming Bible self-feeders, this does not mean that they will reach a point where they should stop listening to preaching or stop being part of a Bible study. On the contrary, as a self-feeder matures, they will be able to get even more out of sermons and Bible studies and then in turn help others have a better understanding of those sermons and Bible studies.

Bible and Notebook

Two basic tools for everyone striving to be a Bible self-feeder is 1) a Bible and 2) a notebook. A study Bible would be very helpful as a third tool. Here is a link to a video the pastors recorded on study Bibles, <https://bbcfnc.org/helpful-discussions/>.



We will talk about other tools further into this booklet. As you read and study your Bible, it is ok to write in and mark up your Bible. Please do not feel like this is disrespectful of God in any way. It is the best way to help you learn and remember important passages and elements within those passages. Along with your Bible, a notebook will greatly help you organize your thoughts. As you ask questions, you need to have a place to write them down because it will be difficult to remember every answer and most Bibles do not have enough margin space to write down all your discoveries.

Inductive Bible Study Method

The method this booklet will teach is called an inductive Bible study approach, because it is an investigative method of asking and answering questions to draw conclusions. This method helps pull the truths out of a passage versus applying an outside idea into the text. The text needs to drive your understanding and beliefs, not the other way around where you read with preconceived ideas and force the text to fit them. Through this inductive method, Scripture will be used to interpret Scripture.

This approach can be used to study however large or small of a passage of Scripture you would like. If you are just getting started in Bible study, try to cover a paragraph or pericopy, which is a portion of Scripture that is large enough for a complete thought or message.

Two Levels of Growing as a Bible Self-Feeder

- ❖ **Beginner Self-Feeder – Level 1:** This booklet will promote two levels of becoming a self-feeder of God's Word. Everyone starts the journey of becoming a self-feeder as a beginner. Beginner self-feeders will be taught a basic four question outline (pages 7-11).
- ❖ **Maturing Self-Feeder – Level 2:** After someone has become proficient using the four question outline they are ready for level 2 of maturing as a Bible self-feeder. This second level of maturing takes that same four question outline and adds depth and details to the inductive approach (pages 12-25). This is a maturing journey which will take time, so a person should not get overwhelmed by trying to use everything taught at once on the second level.
- ❖ **Continuing the Journey of a Bible Self-Feeder:** Maturing as a self-feeder of God's Word should never stop. The outline and questions provided within the second level of this booklet are enough for a lifetime, if you are using them daily, but for the curious, we admit that there are other methods out there that are helpful. At the end of the book we recommend additional resources for those looking for more.

“On Your Own” versus “With Others”

This booklet can be used by an individual on their own, but it will be more effective if used within a disciple-making relationship with others. When using this booklet on your own, you will have to reach out to someone independently and ask questions as you go, but when you are walking through this booklet with others, it will be easier to discuss your questions and get their help since you are meeting regularly. When working through this book with others, they have the opportunity to share understandings you do not even know you need to know. Working with others creates a dynamic of growth through you being asked questions.

Personal Relational Disciple-Making

Before we move into the beginner level of this booklet, we want to remind you that the Great Commission calls each of us to be disciples, that make disciples, that make disciples. Becoming a Bible self-feeder is a foundational piece of becoming a fully functioning follower of Christ. As we become self-feeders of God's Word, we can then help others to do the same. The Bible is meant for everyone and it is our responsibility to help the world know God through His Word.

Additional Bible Study Tools

Below is a list of additional and optional Bible study tools. We have provided a brief introduction, but it will take time and interaction with each tool to fully understand how to use them and gain the most benefit.

❖ Paper Tools – The tools listed below come in book form.

➤ Study Bible

- A study Bible is a Bible that has additional study notes to help understand and apply passages.

➤ Different English Translations

- The original languages of the Bible were Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. The Bibles we have in English have been translated by different scholars with different desired outcomes making them vastly different. Some Bibles are translated word-for-word which should provide a more accurate translation. Some Bibles are translated thought-for-thought which should provide an easier to read translation, while still trying to remain somewhat close to the original. Paraphrase Bibles are very readable and can help with understanding an overarching thought, but they are loosely translated from the original.

➤ Exhaustive Concordance

- An exhaustive concordance will list all the words in a particular translation and all the verses where that word can be found.

➤ Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia

- Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias provide word meanings and background information on passages.

➤ Topical/Reference Bible

- Topical and reference Bibles connect passages that contain similar topics and/or words.

➤ Bible Handbook

- A Bible Handbook provides overviews of the 66 books within the Bible for understanding the context.

➤ Word Studies

- Word studies are just that, a very deep focus on the words used in the Bible.

➤ Commentaries

- Commentaries vary on the amount of detail and the depth of information but they are designed to help a reader understand the words and meaning of a passage. There are one-volume commentaries that cover the whole Bible, but with less detail. There are also individual commentaries that focus on just one Bible book or a portion of a Bible book.

❖ Technology Tools – The tools listed below are found in electronic form as an app (for your phone) and/or for a computer.

➤ Blue Letter Bible website and app

- This website and app are free to use and have different versions of the resources listed above in paper tools. This is the first technology tool we recommend at BBC and you will find it referenced in sermons as a tool used.

➤ Logos Bible Software

- This computer program and app can give you all of the tools you desire. However, they require purchasing or paying a subscription. Consulting someone who uses Logos will be very helpful in you discerning if you need this and what you should buy.

➤ Olive Tree Bible Software app

- Olive Tree is a free app with in-app-purchases for Bible translations and other Bible tools. This app is more user-friendly, but it is limited on the number of resources available.

➤ YouVersion app

- This is a free app where you can read the Bible, and/or listen to it being read, use Bible reading plans, create social media Scripture photos, and connect with others.

➤ Bible Hub website and app

- This website and app are free to use and provide many of the resources mentioned above in the paper tools section.

Level 1: Beginning as a Bible Self-Feeder

Introduction

The Bible Study approach that will be taught in this booklet has four overarching questions.

What does the passage say?	Observation
What is the background, setting, circumstances, etc. of the passage?	Context
What does the passage mean?	Interpretation
What personal changes does God desire you to make as you strive to be more Christlike in your thinking, being, doing, and proclaiming?	Application

At the beginner's level, Level 1, we will just focus on finding an answer to each of those four questions. Each question falls under a step within inductive Bible study, as seen above: Observation, Context, Interpretation, and Application.

On Level 2, we will journey through the same inductive outline and develop deeper answers to those four questions with more questions to gain a deeper understanding.

As you grow as a self-feeder of God's Word, these four questions will work more closely together and you will find some overlap, but in the beginning, it is best to take one step at a time. This will help you develop a clear process that you will be able to use on any Bible text.

Now let's begin your journey of growing as a self-feeder of God's Word with a basic look at Observation, Context, Interpretation, and Application.

Level 1: Beginning as a Bible Self-Feeder

Observation

What does the passage say?

Observation involves exegesis, which is discovering the explanation of the words within a passage.

Examine the passage to understand and comprehend the words.

The key to observation is coming to an understanding of what the words say in and of themselves. You are not drawing any conclusions to the meaning of the text, just trying to clearly know what all the words are and mean.

In its most simple form, in observation, you should be able to summarize the text into your own words. You should be able to explain what the text is saying, but not trying to point out what it means.

What does the passage say?

Level 1: Beginning as a Bible Self-Feeder

Context

**What is the background, setting,
circumstances, etc. of the passage?**

Identifying the context involves figuring out the situation within the passage; what is the state of affairs, the way something is in relation to what is around it and those who are around it, and/or the location and the surroundings.

Search for context clues within the Bible and other reliable sources.

Within some passages/books, some of this information can be found within the Bible text. But sometimes, you will need to use some other resources to realize the context of the passage.

In its most simple form, in context, you should be able to describe the background of the passage. You should be able to explain the literal and figurative landscape behind the text.

What is the background, setting, circumstances, etc. of the passage?

Level 1: Beginning as a Bible Self-Feeder

Interpretation

What does the passage mean?

Interpretation involves exposition, which is discovering the understanding of the truth within the passage, what information is being conveyed or explained from God.

Ask questions, seek answers, and integrate with the whole of God's Word.

Often, when people read the Bible, they jump to interpretation and never go anywhere else. This limits the effectiveness of the interpretation and totally leaves out any personal application.

Only once someone understands observation and context of a text, should they draw any interpretive conclusions. But, these Bible truths are what we are looking to understand as we read God's Word.

In its most simple form, in interpretation, you should be able summarize what God is desiring you to understand. You should be able to explain, at least in basic terms, what is God teaching, and what does He want you to learn?

What does the passage mean?

Level 1: Beginning as a Bible Self-Feeder

Application

**What personal changes does God desire
you to make as you strive to be more Christlike
in your thinking, being, doing, and proclaiming?**

Identifying the application involves figuring out the personal transformation desired by God within a disciple and within your life for you to be more like Jesus.

Identify the life changes needed as a disciple of Jesus Christ who is constantly maturing in Thinking – Being – Doing – Proclaiming like Christ.

Although it is vitally important to get the interpretation of a passage correct, without applying this new-found Bible understanding to your life, it is all for naught. The Bible is foundational to our sanctification.

In its most simple form, in application, you should be able to identify areas of your life that need to be more like Jesus. You should be able to explain how God desires to transform you as a disciple of Jesus and as a fully functioning follower of Christ since He is your King.

What personal changes does God desire you to make as you strive to be more Christlike in your Thinking, Being, Doing, and Proclaiming?

Level 2: Maturing as a Bible Self-Feeder

Introduction

The following section will cover Level 2 of Bible study on the journey of growing as a self-feeder of God's Word. As was stated in the Level 1 introduction, this Bible study method is built off of four questions. On Level 2, those four questions will be expanded with multiple questions and areas to look for deeper answers to the original four questions. Do not try to add in all the extra depth questions and discovering areas at once, because it will be quite overwhelming. Slowly add more in-depth study over time and preferably with other people. As you study God's Word with others this will create a disciple-making environment where you can help each other grow in Christlikeness.

Level 2: Maturing as a Bible Self-Feeder

Observation

What does the passage say?

Observation involves exegesis, which is discovering the explanation of the words within a passage.

Examine the passage to understand and comprehend the words.

The goal here is not drawing any conclusions about the passage, but asking and answering the right questions to gain information on the words that will then be used in Interpretation. There are different ways to look at the words in a passage like genre/literary form, key words, sentence/grammatical structure, original texts, and connections to the Gospel within God's story.

Observation starts with reading the text. Read it multiple times. Read it in different English translations. At this time you can use resources beyond the Bible to help you understand the words that are within the text. Some understanding into the genre/literary form, key words, sentence/grammatical structure, original texts, and connections to the Gospel within God's story can be figured out through just reading the text, but for a deeper understanding, other resources can help.

***WARNING: When using other resources to gain knowledge on the words within your passage, do not read their passage conclusions. Always draw your own conclusions and then you can compare them with others. At this point in your Bible study, you are only drawing conclusions on what the passage says.

Genre/Literary Form

It is helpful to understand the genre or form of literature used in the passage. Knowing the style or the type of literature of a given passage provides us with a framework and expectations of what we are reading and how we should approach the truths within. Some books of the Bible are all one genre, but others have a mixture. You will probably not know this as a beginning Bible self-feeder, and it can be challenging to figure out on your own, so here is a place where a study Bible with Bible book introductions can come in handy. Many commentaries also identify the genre in the introduction. Following this, you will find the main Bible genre and some thoughts on what perspective you should have as you approach understanding the words being used.

- ❖ **Law:** The biblical law outlines and explains legal material and God's commands to His people. It explains God's sovereign will concerning government, priestly duties, social responsibilities, etc. Knowledge of Hebrew manners and customs of the time, as well as a knowledge of the covenants, will complement a reading of this material.
 - Types of law: Biblical law is typically grouped into three types.
 - Moral Law – laws about living a holy life, what God desires of us, typically meant for all people in all times
 - Ceremonial Law – laws about purity and ritual such as sacrifices, restrictions, and festivals.
 - Civil/Judicial Law – laws given to the nation of Israel for governance under the theocracy of God
 - Example Books: Elements of the law can be found throughout the OT, but it is primarily found within the Torah, which are the first five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

- ❖ **History:** Biblical history is the factual story telling of real-life people and events. History helps connect the dots of God's working in and through human life. Knowledge of secular history can be helpful to see connections with biblical history.
 - Example Books: Almost every book in the Bible contains some history, but books like Genesis, Exodus, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, and many other OT books are predominantly history. Acts would be a NT example.

- ❖ **Wisdom:** Wisdom literature within the Bible explains and communicates wise living and provides general rules for life. These sayings teach the meaning of life and key principles. These principles are normally universal but not always. Some of the language used in wisdom literature is metaphorical and poetic, and this should be taken into account during analysis.
 - Example Books: Most of the wisdom literature in the Bible is found in Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

- ❖ **Poetry:** Poetry has rhythmic prose, parallelism, word pictures, symbolic language, metaphors, idioms, comparison, expressions of feelings, and refrain. Some of the flow of the poetry can be lost as the original languages are translated into English.
 - Example Books: Poetic language can be found throughout the Bible, but the main books with poetry are Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

- ❖ **Narrative:** Narratives are stories with main characters where the events are conveyed in a sequential timeline. Within narratives, elements of a plot, setting and a more detailed character development are key. Narrative passages teach lessons through observed behavior of those within the passage. Some Bible books and passages might fit under more than one of these genres, for example, most narrative passages are also teaching history.
 - Example Books: Many narrative passages can be found throughout the OT and NT. Clear examples of this would be the books of Ruth, Esther, and Jonah.

- ❖ **Gospels:** Technically the Gospels fall under the genre of narratives, but since they are focused on the life of Jesus, they receive special distinction. The gospels were written from eye witness accounts of Jesus's ministry and life. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the "synoptic gospels," because they include many of the same events.
 - Example Books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

- ❖ **Epistles:** An epistle is a letter that was written to an individual or various churches. Most letters contain a combination of clarification of prior teaching, rebuke, explanation, correction of false teaching, and/or a new teaching on living as a follower of Jesus. To get the most out of reading an epistle, you should understand the context of the recipient and what was going on at the time.
 - Example Books: There are 21 epistles in the NT. They were written by Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, and the anonymous writer of Hebrews. You can identify these books as they are named for the writer or recipient.

- ❖ **Prophecy and Apocalyptic Literature:** Biblical prophecies are messages from God about the future. Some prophecies are directed at the present recipients, with others meant for a future generation, and some apply to both in some way. Within these prophetic predictions there might be warnings, future events, and/or plans from God. Apocalyptic literature is a specific type of prophecy, largely involving symbols and imagery and the prediction of disaster and destruction.
 - Example Books: The Prophetic writings are the OT books of Isaiah through Malachi, and the New Testament book of Revelation. The OT prophetic books are grouped into 2 groups, major prophets and minor prophets, not because of importance, but strictly on their length. Apocalyptic language is found in Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Revelation.

Key Words?

Key words within a passage can be important for different reasons, thus needing to be studied. Reading other English translations can be one way to help identify and then understand key words. Below are some questions to help you to identify key words. Then you can use the study tools you have to help you with understanding.

- ❖ Main words?
- ❖ Are there any repeated words?
- ❖ Are there any words that you do not know?
- ❖ Are there any theological terms used?
- ❖ Are any of the words used in a different passage that can help you to understand the meaning?
- ❖ Are there any related passages that would shed light on the words within this passage?
- ❖ Sometimes rephrasing a passage can help you to develop a better understanding of the words used within the text.

Sentence/Grammatical Structure

As you are reading a passage, pay careful attention to the sentence and grammar structure to help with the understanding of the words being used. Below are some questions that may help. Please remember that chapter and verse breaks have been placed into the Bible by man, so they might be off from the flow of the original text.

- ❖ Where do the sentences begin and end?
- ❖ Where do the paragraphs begin and end?
- ❖ What is the subject that the sentence focuses on?
- ❖ Are there any prepositional phrases that modify the subject and/or object?
- ❖ What is the verb and does it make the sentence a statement, an exhortation, a question or answer, an action, explanation, or illustration?
- ❖ Are there any conjunctions such as: and, but, or, so, for, both, therefore, because, since, so that, etc. and do they create a cause and effect or some other linkage?
- ❖ What pronouns are used, and what/who do they reference?
- ❖ How do the adjectives help with understanding the nouns and pronouns?
- ❖ How do the adverbs modify the verbs?
- ❖ Is there a time reference given such as: after, before, when, while, since, until, etc.?
- ❖ Is there a concession within the sentence such as: although, even though, whereas?

Original Texts

Since the Bible was not written in English, it is very helpful to investigate the original language and how those words were translated. For this, you will need a resource like an interlinear Bible, computer program/app, etc.

- ❖ What was the original word used, and what does it mean?
- ❖ What would the original audience have heard?
- ❖ How well do the Hebrew and Greek words translate to English?
- ❖ Is the original language sentence structure/grammar difficult to translate into English?
- ❖ Is there a synoptic problem?
- ❖ Is there a textual variant?
- ❖ Does using the Septuagint help clarify a word in the OT with a Greek word used in the NT?

Connections to the Gospel within God's Story

Discovering how this passage connects to the Gospel within God's story will help with understanding what the passage says.

Within the Bible we have God's story. He is the main character, and we see Him as a Trinitarian God; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. The 66 books that make up the Bible have a grand narrative or a metanarrative. This one story, God's, answers the foundational questions:

- ❖ How it all begin? (Creation)
- ❖ What went wrong? (Fall)
- ❖ Is there any hope? (Redemption)
- ❖ What will the future hold? (Restoration)

Man is found throughout Scripture, giving us the perspective that each person has a story, but our stories are always subordinate to His story.

At the center, but also woven throughout God's story is the Gospel, the good news, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Which is the salvific/Lordship work of God the Son, through the power of God the Spirit. This is how Jesus can be Savior and Lord. Jesus can be seen in all areas of God's story. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are central to the Gospel.

Understanding word usage can be helped by understanding which area of God's Story (Creation, Fall, Redemption, or Restoration) a verse is connecting with. It helps in a similar way as understanding the genre.

Level 2: Maturing as a Bible Self-Feeder

Context

**What is the background, setting,
circumstances, etc. of the passage?**

Identifying the context involves figuring out the situation within the passage; what is the state of affairs, the way something is in relation to what is around it and those who are around it, and/or the location and the surroundings.

Search for context clues within the Bible and other reliable sources.

As you are looking at a passage, always read the passages and/or the chapter before and after so that you will not be pulling verses out of the context of the book they are in. You can draw some context conclusions from the passage or the book that it is within, but you might also have to look at some other resources to gain contextual understanding.

***WARNING: When you are using other resources for context, do not read their passage conclusions. Always draw your own conclusions and then you can compare them with others.

Below are seven different questions to ask when trying to identify the context within a Bible passage.

1. Who authored the book?
2. Whom were the original recipients?
3. Where were the author and the recipients located?
4. When was the book written compared to the time of the subject matter?
5. What cultural effects influence this passage?
6. Why is the author writing this?
7. How was the author expecting the recipients to react?

Level 2: Maturing as a Bible Self-Feeder

Interpretation

What does the passage mean?

Interpretation involves exposition, which is discovering the understanding of the truth within the passage, what information is being conveyed or explained from God.

Ask questions, seek answers, and integrate with the whole of God's Word.

- ❖ What is the clearest, most obvious, or simplest meaning of this text? (A passage should not be overcomplicated to fit some belief or thought pattern. The understanding should be natural, there is no need to twist things.)
- ❖ What conclusions would the original hearer(s) have taken from this passage?
- ❖ God Truth – What does this passage teach about God, as the Bible centers on Him?
 - What does the passage say about God the Father?
 - What does this passage say about God the Son, Jesus?
 - What does this passage say about God the Spirit, the Holy Spirit?
- ❖ Man Truth – What does this passage teach about man, created in God's image but a fallen creature?
- ❖ What does God want you to understand after reading through this passage?
- ❖ What does this passage say about God and the vertical love relationship?
- ❖ What does this passage say about people and horizontal love relationships?
- ❖ What does this passage say about being a disciple of Jesus?
- ❖ What does this passage say about sin?

- ❖ Are there cross-referenced passages that help with understanding the truths within this passage?
- ❖ What conclusions can be drawn from the information gathered?
- ❖ Are my conclusions consistent with other Scripture? (We always use Scripture to interpret Scripture.)
- ❖ Is(are) my conclusion(s) in alignment with the resources that I looked at? (Normally, if no one has similar conclusions to yours, you may need to rethink your conclusions.)
- ❖ As you transition from Interpretation to Application, it can be helpful to summarize your passage like it was a message you would preach or speak on. To do this, come up with a title and identify the thesis or main idea.
 - Title – A short name that will connect the passage and the people the message will be heard by.
 - Thesis (Main Idea) – A complete sentence that identifies the main theme or timeless truth that will drive the message or discussion of the passage.

Level 2: Maturing as a Bible Self-Feeder

Application

**What personal changes does God desire
you to make as you strive to be more Christlike
in your thinking, being, doing, and proclaiming?**

Identifying the application involves figuring out the personal transformation desired by God within a disciple and within your life for you to be more like Jesus.

Identify the life changes needed as a disciple of Jesus Christ who is constantly maturing in Thinking – Being – Doing – Proclaiming like Christ.

- ❖ As you make personal application from this passage, it can be helpful to use the SMART Application (Goals) acronym. Hopefully this specificity will help you to mature and grow in Christlikeness.
 - S – Specific
 - M – Measurable
 - A – Action-Oriented
 - R – Realistic
 - T – Time-Based
- ❖ What might have been some personal application for the original hearer(s)?
- ❖ As you are working through this passage, what will help you to mature as a fully functioning follower of Christ within the areas of our disciple definition?
 - Thinking
 - Being
 - Doing
 - Proclaiming

Below are additional questions. You do not have to use all of these questions. Every passage does not address all of these questions. Answer the personal application questions that are appropriate.

❖ 10 distinctives' questions.

- Is there an area to surrender in my life?
- Is there something that will help as I listen to God?
- Is there something that will help me abide with God?
- Is there an area for obedience?
- Is God calling me to sacrifice something within my life?
- Is God clarifying a way for me to be a brighter light for Him?
- Is there an act of love that I need to follow through with?
- Is there an opportunity to serve that I now see?
- Is there an opportunity to share the Gospel within God's Story that I now understand better?
- Is there something that will help me reproduce as a disciple-maker?

❖ General application questions. Does this passage give me...

- An example to follow?
- An opportunity for repentance?
- An opportunity to ask for forgiveness?
- An opportunity for forgiveness?
- A sin to avoid?
- A promise to trust?
- A prayer to repeat?
- An attitude change that is needed?
- A command to obey?
- A condition to meet?
- A verse to memorize?
- An error to mark?
- A challenge to face?
- Something to thank God about?
- Something to praise God about?

Continuing the Journey of a Bible Self-Feeder

Continue Growing as a Self-Feeder of God's Word

Maturing as a self-feeder of God's Word never stops. Please seek to read and study the Bible for the rest of your life.

Disciple Others

As you have developed into a self-feeder of God's Word, there are others out there that have not. Please allow God to use you in helping others. Leading a micro group would be a great ministry where you can do just that.

Additional Resources

There are other resources out there to further your Bible study maturing if you are interested. Below are a few recommendations.

- ❖ Dr. Bill Boyd, a member of the Berean family, teaches an Exegetical, Inductive Analytical Outline Approach (You can talk with him personally.)
- ❖ *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks
- ❖ *Seven Arrows* by Matt Rogers and Donny Mathis
- ❖ *Grasping God's Word* by Duvall Hays
- ❖ *Inductive Bible Study* by Richard Alan Fuhr Jr. and Andreas J. Köstenberger

Our Covenant

As you read over our church covenant please notice that it is built upon the Bible. Members of the body of Christ are expected to recognize and follow the inerrant Word of God as their authority for living a godly life. Be sure to check out our ministry distinctives page as well.

As a bond of unity among us, Berean Baptist Church accepts for its members the following covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and upon our profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We fully realize that the strength to uphold this covenant comes from the grace of God our Father, the shed blood of God the Son, and the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We promise to actively pursue personal holiness; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church's spiritual growth and unity; to faithfully abide by the doctrines and behaviors outlined in this church's Articles of Faith; and to give cheerfully of our time, talents, and finances for the support of this ministry and its missionaries.

We further promise to faithfully attend the church's worship services, to maintain personal spiritual disciplines; to teach our children the Word of God; to share the gospel with our relatives and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings faithful in our engagements; and to avoid all gossip ([backbiting, whisperings]). We promise that we will love and pray for each other and in times of distress help one another.

We promise to endeavor to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus and to abstain from anything that would cause our fellow brother or sister in Christ to stumble or that will bring reproach to the name of Jesus Christ.

We further realize that if we should fail to live up to the promises we have made, our brothers and sisters in Christ will always strive for our reconciliation and spiritual restoration. However, if we partake in a sustained and unrepentant violation of an Article of Faith, we will be brought under church discipline in accordance with the Church Constitution.

We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God as the visible representation of the body of Christ