

Chapter 1 Knowing God's Word

1A The goal of knowing God's word

We study God's word because we desire to change our attitudes, perspectives, and actions into His likeness. We should not study His word only to satisfy ourselves intellectually.
[Col 1:9-12] [2 Ti 3:16,17]

2A The importance of knowing God's word

1B *The word of God is the foundation of our personal relationship with God.*

1C That we may know His purpose and plan for us.
[Eph 1:11-14]

2C That we may be strengthened in the assurance of our salvation and in the hope of our inheritance.
[2 Ti 3:15] [Ac 20:32] [Eph 1:15-19, 3:14-19]

3C That we may be strengthened in our faith and love for God.
[Jn 14:23, 15:10]

4C That we may live and keep His word, and be sanctified in His truth.
[Jos 1:7,8] [Ps 119:9-16, 105] [2 Ti 3:16,17] [Jn 17:17] [Php 1:9-11] [Col 9:1-12]

5C That we may have true wisdom and discernment, and be able to stand firm in trials and temptations.
[Ps 119:98-104] [Mt 7:24-27] [Lk 4:1-13] [Ac 17:11,12] [Eph 4:11-16, 6:14-17] [Heb 4:12, 5:13,14]

2B *The word of God equips us to reach out to others more effectively.*
[Ac 8:30-35, 17:1-4,11,12, 18:24-28]

3B *The word of God equips us to build up the Body of Christ.*
[Mt 28:19,20] [Eph 4:11-16] [Col 1:28] [Tit 1:9]

4B *The word of God is the basis for reformation and revival.*
[Ne 8:1-18]

3A Our attitudes towards knowing God's word

1B *Acceptance of the authority of the Bible*

1C Believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God and in its inerrancy.

2C Accept the Bible as the interpreter of itself and let it speak for itself.

3C Realize the unity of the Bible and the progressive nature of God's revelation.

2B *Humility and obedience*

1C Be aware that God promises us adequate understanding, but not perfect understanding.
[1 Co 13:12]

2C Be humble and realize that we cannot know the Scripture based merely on human wisdom.
[1 Co 2:12-14] [Jn 16:13, 14:26]

3C Be obedient to live out what God wants in our lives, attitudes, and action.

[2 Ti 3:16,17]

3B *Diligence and persistence*

- 1C Read the Bible as if you are reading a letter from a loved one– read it thoroughly and repeatedly.
- 2C Read it as if you are reading an exciting suspense novel– read it with concentration, patience, and persistence [Mt 7:7].

4B *General hindrances*

- 1C Insufficient preparation in your environment
 - 1D Giving yourself too much or too little time.
 - 2D Being physically too tired.
 - 3D Being in a distracting environment.
- 2C Insufficient preparation in your work
 - 1D Using a bad studying method.
 - 2D Settling for mediocrity.
 - 3D Reading or listening only to others' works.
- 3C Insufficient preparation in your mind
 - 1D Without vision in what you are doing.
 - 2D Without open-mindedness or discernment.
 - 3D Without persistence.
- 4C Insufficient preparation in your spirit
 - 1D Lack of prayer.
 - 2D Lack of a humble and obedient heart.
 - 3D Lack of faith in God or the Bible.

4A **Abbreviations**

Genesis	Ge	Exodus	Ex	Leviticus	Lev	Numbers	Nu
Deuteronomy	Dt	Joshua	Jos	Judges	Jdg	Ruth	Ru
1 Samuel	1 Sa	2 Samuel	2 Sa	1 Kings	1 Ki	2 Kings	2 Ki
1 Chronicles	1 Ch	2 Chronicles	2 Ch	Ezra	Ezr	Nehemiah	Ne
Esther	Est	Job	Job	Psalms	Ps	Proverbs	Pr
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	Song of Songs	SS	Isaiah	Isa	Jeremiah	Jer
Lamentations	La	Ezekiel	Eze	Daniel	Da	Hosea	Hos
Joel	Joel	Amos	Am	Obadiah	Ob	Jonah	Jnh
Micah	Mic	Nahum	Na	Habakkuk	Hab	Zephaniah	Zep
Haggai	Hag	Zechariah	Zec	Malachi	Mal	Matthew	Mt
Mark	Mk	Luke	Lk	John	Jn	Acts	Ac
Romans	Ro	1 Corinthians	1 Co	2 Corinthians	2 Co	Galatians	Gal
Ephesians	Eph	Philippians	Php	Colossians	Col	1 Thessalonians	1 Th
2 Thessalonians	2 Th	1 Timothy	1 Ti	2 Timothy	2 Ti	Titus	Tit
Philemon	Phm	Hebrews	Heb	James	Jas	1 Peter	1 Pe
2 Peter	2 Pe	1 John	1 Jn	2 John	2 Jn	3 John	3 Jn
Jude	Jude	Revelation	Rev				

Chapter 2 Inductive Bible Study Overview

1A The fundamental guideline for studying the Bible

The true meaning of the biblical text for us today is what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken.

1B *Reason:* the Holy Spirit was the one who inspired the original meaning of the Bible to the original readers, He cannot contradict Himself now by inspiring a different meaning to us with the same Bible.

2B *As a result:* the task of studying the Bible must be in two sequential steps:

1C First, we must faithfully extract the original meaning and intent of the writer.

2C Second, with the guiding of the Holy Spirit, we must carefully apply that meaning to our own situations.

2A The inductive method for Bible study

1B *Induction and deduction*

1C *Induction* is the process of deriving a general idea, principle, or conclusion by collecting and examining the contents and structures of a group of related facts (**facts → conclusion**).

2C *Deduction* is the process of finding scattered evidences to support or refute a preconceived idea or principle (**assumption → evidences**).

2B *The inductive method is consisted of four sequential steps:*

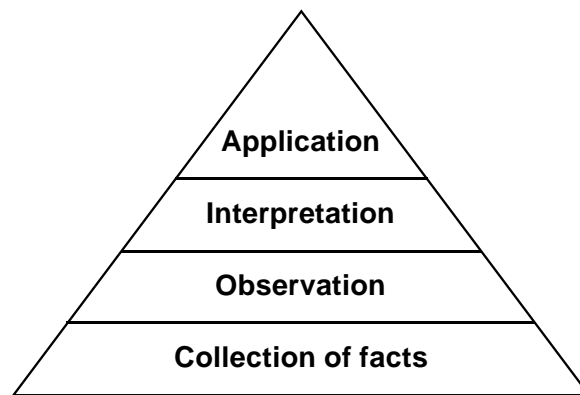
1C *Collect* both internal and external facts relevant to the passage

2C *Observe* the structure and relationship of the collected facts

3C *Interpret* the objective meanings and the original intents of the writer from the observations made on the passage

4C *Apply* the interpretation to our situation and draw out the meanings of the passage to us today.

3B The pyramid of inductive Bible study:



4B *The advantages of inductive Bible study are*

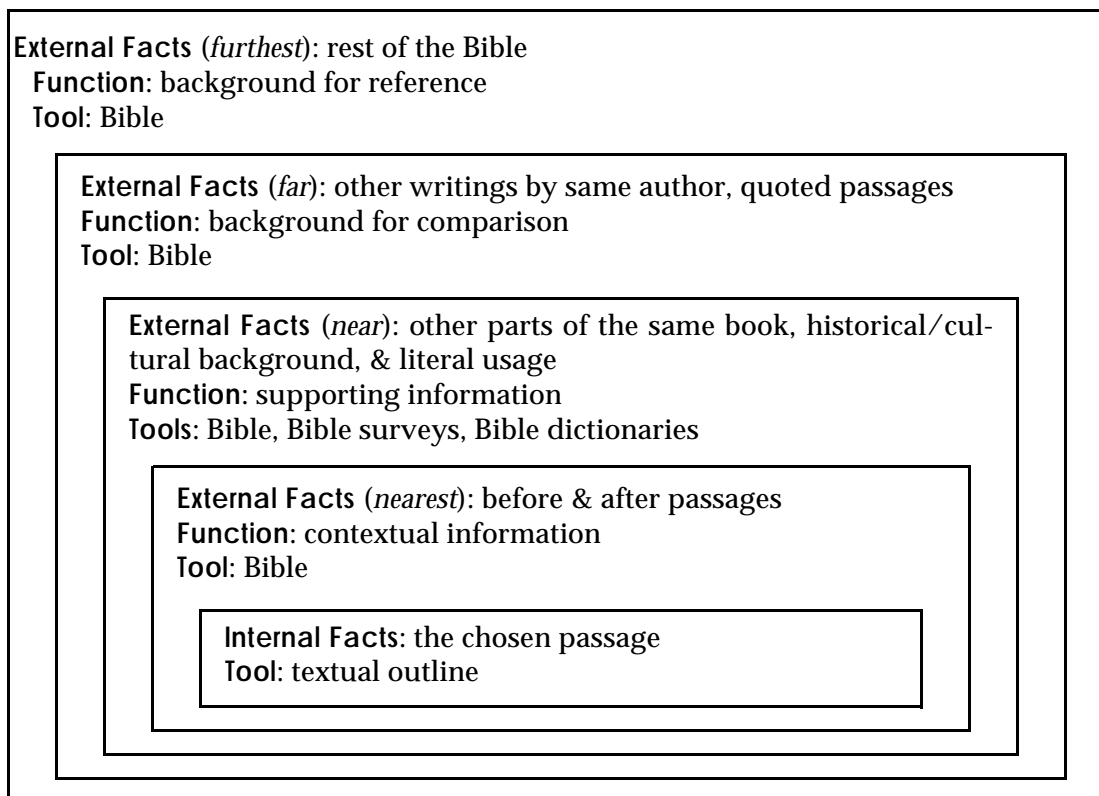
1C It is consistent with the fundamental guideline for studying the Bible. It forces us to draw out the original meaning first, and then from the latter the contem-

porary meaning.

- 2C It is both scientific and efficient. Since God chose to reveal Himself through the medium of human language, the use of ordinary linguistic guidelines (as in the steps of observation and interpretation) is both necessary and powerful.
- 3C It can be used for personal Bible study, and is even more versatile for studies in a small group.

Chapter 3 Collecting Facts

1A Overview of collecting facts



2A Collecting internal facts: textual outlines

1B *Format of a textual outline*

1C It is an arrangement of the original text in an outline form

1D *without* deleting or replacing any words

2D *without* regard to the chapter divisions, verse numbers, headings, or paragraphs provided in the Bible

3D *without* changing the order of the words used in the passage (with very few exceptions)

4D *with* a minimal addition of words or phrase to clarify major divisions

2C It looks like

Main Theme 1

Major lesson 1

Major subpoint 1

Minor subpoint 1

Minor subpoint 2

Major subpoint 2

Major lesson 2

Major subpoint 1

Minor subpoint 1

Major subpoint 2

Major lesson 3
Main Theme 2

...

3C There are 3 common ways of numbering the structure:

1D Method 1:

- I. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - A. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 2. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - a. xxxx
 - b. xxxx
 - 3. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - B. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- II. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - A. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

2D Method 2:

- 1 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1.1 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1.1.1 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1.1.2 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1.1.2.1xxxx
 - 1.1.2.2xxxx
 - 1.1.3 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1.2 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- 2 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 2.1 xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

3D Method 3 (preferred):

- 1A xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1B xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1C xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 2C xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1D xxxx
 - 2D xxxx
 - 3C xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 2B xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- 2A xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 - 1B xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

2B *Functions of textual outlines*

1C It helps us discover the grammatical and logical structures of a passage.

2C It helps us see the passage as a whole as well as the parts and details of the passage.

1D *The whole*: progression of thoughts

2D *The part*: variations and patterns, major and minor points, cause-and-effect relationships, and differences and similarities

3D *The details*: grammatical components and relative significance of each phrase and word

3C It is particularly useful for studying NT letters.

3B *Guidelines for writing a textual outline*

We are constantly comparing two elements (words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs) of a passage when we try to decide how to organize them in the textual outline form. The most important task is to concentrate on the grammatical structures.

1C Parallelism and subordination

The relationship (parallel or subordinate) between two elements is determined only by their grammatical associations, not by the importance of the ideas contained in each elements.

1D Two elements are *parallel* to each other when each of them make a distinct assertion, even though the two assertions may be related in meaning. Biggest hints are the coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or, nor, nevertheless, etc.*).

2D *Subordinate* elements do not stand alone as a sentence containing a full assertion, although they are not necessarily less important than the independent ones. Biggest hints are the subordinating conjunctions (*because, therefore, although, for, when, where, which, who, whom, etc.*).

2C General patterns

The relationship between two consecutive elements, S_1 and S_2 , usually falls into four categories:

1D S_2 is *subordinate* to S_1

when

1E S_2 specifies the contents of S_1 , or

2E S_2 gives the reasons for S_1 , or

3E S_2 establishes a concrete ground for S_1 , or

4E S_2 is the implication of all or part of S_1 , or

5E S_2 verifies S_1 , or

6E S_2 clarifies S_1 , or

7E S_2 applies S_1 .

This structure looks like

...

S_1 xxxxxxxxxxxx

S_2 xxxxxxxxxxxx

...

2D S_2 is *parallel* to S_1 , and both are *subordinate* to S_0

The ideas contained in both elements can be in sequence or can be independent. But each of them remains subordinate to S_0 even without the presence of the other. They look like

...

S_0 xxxxxxxxxxxx

S_1 xxxxxxxxxxxx

S_2 xxxxxxxxxxxx

...

3D S_2 is *parallel* to S_0 , while S_1 is *subordinate* to S_0

S_2 is neither subordinate (as in 1D) nor parallel to S_1 (as in 2D), but is parallel to a more remote, earlier element, S_0 . S_2 and S_0 remain parallel even without S_1 . They look like

...

S_0 xxxxxxxxxxxx

...

S_1 xxxxxxxxxxxx

- S_2 xxxxxxxxxxxx
- ...
- 4D S_2 is the *only element subordinate* to S_1
 In this case, the immediately following element, S_3 , is parallel to either S_1 or to a more remote element. Then instead of assigning a lower level to S_2 like
- ...
- S_1 xxxxxxxxxxxx
- S_2 xxxxxxxxxxxx
- S_3 xxxxxxxxxxxx
- ...
- both S_1 and S_2 should be combined as one element like
- ...
- S_1 xxxxxxxxxxxx S_2 xxxxxxxxxxxx
- S_3 xxxxxxxxxxxx
- ...

4B *Steps in writing a textual outline*

- 1C Clear your mind of any preconceived ideas about the passage. Read the passage through in one sitting to get a general idea. Do not bother with specific details for the first reading.
- 2C Read the passage again, now more slowly, to refine the general idea you have just gotten from the first reading. Read it for the third or fourth time when necessary. Do not write down anything until you have a rough outline of the passage in your mind.
- 3C Keeping interpretation to the minimum, you can now start to write down the first draft of the outline using the guidelines above.
- 4C Constantly check yourself
- 1D Make sure that you are not biased by the relative importance or significance of the elements (this we will do when we interpret). An element that is grammatically subordinate to another element does not mean that it is less important.
- 2D Do not be limited by punctuation, paragraphs, section headings, chapter divisions, and verse numbers. As a matter of fact, the original greek text does not have any of these.
- 5C Add your own words to clarify major headings or subheadings, but put them in square brackets [] to distinguish them from the original text.
- 6C Do not rearrange the words of the passage unless absolutely necessary.
- 7C After finishing the first draft, evaluate it by
- 1D reading the major headings and see if they really represent the thesis statement of the whole passage
- 2D checking parallelism and subordination by looking at the grammatical structures
- 8C Rewrite a better draft until you think you have the best by appropriately
- 1D raising or lowering the level of an element
- 2D splitting an element into two or more
- 3D combining a lonely element into the element it is subordinate to
- 4D adding, deleting, or rewording a heading or subheading in [] (your own words) such that they look parallel

5B *Examples of a textual outline* (see Appendices A–C, & E)

3A Collecting external facts

1B *Anything outside of the passage being studied are external facts.*

2B *External facts range from nearest to furthest.*

1C The *nearest* external facts are adjacent passages from within the same book of the Bible. For example, if we are studying Rm 1:18–32,

1D then one of the nearest external facts is in Rm 1:16–17, where we find the *thesis statement* of what Paul was about to say throughout the letter.

2D Another nearest external fact is in Rm 2, where we find out that Paul was about to say something directly to the readers after making a general statement about mankind.

2C *Near* external facts are other parts of the *same* book, historical and cultural backgrounds, and literal usage of the book. For example,

1D From Rm 1:11,12 and 15:23,24 we know Paul had a great desire to visit the Roman church, but could not do so because he had to care for the poor Christians of Jerusalem (15:25–28). So the letter to the Romans was a temporary substitute for his physical presence, presenting the basic system of salvation to a church that had not yet been taught by an apostle.

2D From *historical studies* we know the letter was probably written during Paul's third missionary journey (as described in Ac 18:23–21:16) while staying at Corinth, getting ready to return to Jerusalem to deliver the donations for the poor. Shortly after this journey, Paul was arrested and imprisoned. This letter was the last one written while Paul was still a free man.

3D From a *Bible dictionary*, we find out that the word *justify* means, generally, to be vindicated or proved genuine (as was used by James in Jas 2:21–24), while as a technical term it can also mean, more specifically, the act of declaration of “not guilty” (as was used by Paul in Rm). And thus, there is no contradiction between Paul and James.

3C *Far* external facts are other writings by Paul, and the OT quoted by Paul in the letter.

1D From Paul's other writings we study about Paul's other theological and practical teachings.

2D In Ge 15 we study about Abraham whom Paul had used as an example in this letter.

4C The *furthest* external facts are the rest of the Bible, such as

1D Peter's letters, from which we may compare Peter's theology with Paul's, or

2D Psalms, from which we may study about God's relationship with an OT figure and compare it with Paul, an NT figure.

3B *Guideline for collecting external facts*

1C We should *always* complete our task of collecting internal facts (by doing textual outline) before going about collecting external ones.

- 2C We collect only necessary external facts.
 - 1D The *nearest* ones are sometimes necessary for a correct understanding of the passage
 - 2D *Near* ones enrich our understanding
 - 3D *Far* and *furthest* are for references only
- 3C We should proceed from collecting the *nearest* ones first, then keep going out to *near* and *far* if we want more.
- 4C The emphasis we place on external facts in helping us sort out the internal ones should diminish as we go further out.

Chapter 4 Observations

1A An illustration– A Fish Story

After the brief moment of a handshake and exchanging names, the director picked out a rather elaborate wooden model of a fish from his extensive bookshelf. He handed it to me and said, “Look at this fish and tell me what you’ve seen when I return.” Without waiting for my response, he turned and left the office.

I figured that I should have at least 10 minutes to do this exercise, and I had decided to take his request seriously. I had also decided that a good scientist should make no assumptions. So the first item I wrote on my list was “it looks like a fish.” I continued with this trend and wrote down some more. “It has two eyes; it has pointy fins on its back and a flabby tail; it has a pair of gills;...” and on and on I wrote, until I had a list of 18 items.

I checked my watch, and I used up only 6 minutes. So I looked at the fish some more and found out that there were certain peculiar lines around the fish mouth and around the gills. The spines on the fin were slightly curved and pointy at the ends. I continued to make some more not so obvious observations and managed to write down 8 more items.

I checked my watch again and it was already 17 minutes after the director left the room. So I might have half an hour to do this exercise after all. I looked at my list again and thought that it should be quite thorough by any standard. So I started to rearrange certain items on my list to make it look organized.

There were a number of items that were quite general, like “there are scales on the fish” and “there are a pair of gills.” I then looked at the fish again and discovered that the scales were not all the same size. Those near the middle were somewhat bigger than those near the back. Also, there were no scales at all on the belly, and the gills look just like two big scales. So I wrote down these findings under the heading “scales.” And on and on I wrote more comparative details under each items.

I looked at my watch again and it’s almost 34 minutes since I started this exercise. Well maybe he’s giving me one hour to do this exercise, I thought. I looked at the fish again. But by now I was quite familiar with it that I thought I couldn’t come up with any thing new. I picked up the fish and played with it. As I was tossing the fish up and down, I wondered, “should the real fish be this heavy? Or lighter?” I thought for a moment and concluded that since this piece of wood would definitely float if I put it in water, while a fish would not, I wrote down “the sample is lighter than a real fish.”

The next thing I discovered was that the fins were not only of different sizes but also shaped differently. I started to wave it around in air as if it were swimming. And I thought, with this kind of shape, the fish wouldn’t be too happy to swim backwards. I also noticed the symmetry of the body, and there might be a functional reason for that as well. Following this trend of thought, I wrote down 34 more items before I realized that it’s been almost one hour since I started. And I have filled up 5 pages with my list.

I was sure there should be some more thing about this fish that I have not discovered. But just at that moment the director came in. I thought, “should I ask for another hour?”

2A Objective in making observation

- 1B The fundamental objective in making observation on a passage is to answer the question: “*What is it saying?*”
- 2B In order to find out what the passage *means* (the step of interpretation), we must first find out what the passage *says*.

3A Principles in making observation

- 1B There are two components in every Bible passage (in fact, in every normal communication in general): the *list* of facts and the *relationships* among the facts.
- 2B Observation must be made on both the *list* and the *relationships* to find out what the passage says.
- 3B A *carefully done textual outline* gives us both components about the passage.
 - 1C The process of observation begins when we fine tune the first draft. We are making observations on both the *list* and the *relationships* when we ask,
 - 1D “Are the major headings *parallel?*” and
 - 2D “Are the subpoints *subordinate* to the heading?”
 - 2C So the more effort we put into the textual outline, the easier it is to make observations.
- 4B With the supplement of external facts, observation is almost half completed.

4A Guidelines in making observation

- 1B *Extract major ideas or events*

The object that the author has in mind for writing is his purpose, which is usually consisted of one or more interrelated main points. These major ideas are usually the high-level divisions (the “A” level) in your textual outline.
- 2B *Extract details*

Every single details should be noted. The Bible contains no junk words, sentences, or sections. (Consider how difficult it was to write something back in those days!) The followings are some factors you should consider:

 - 1C Definition of words
 - 1D What is the general definition (as found in a dictionary)?
 - 2D What is the general Biblical definition (as found in a Bible dictionary)?
 - 3D Has the author defined the word in the passage (e.g., the righteousness from God in Rm 3:21–31)?
 - 2C Core elements of a sentence
 - 1D Subject
 - 1E What kind of people the author is talking about?
 - 2E Who is the writer and what is his background?
 - 3E Who is performing the action and what is his background?
 - 2D Main verb
 - 1E What is the action described?
 - 2E How emphatic or picturesque is the verb?
 - 3E What is the hidden meaning of the verb in its original language? (e.g., look up *justify* in a Bible dictionary)

- 3D Object (there may not be an object)
- 1E To whom the action is performed? (e.g., Jews or Gentiles, and what's the difference?)
- 2E To whom the letter is written? (e.g., is the Roman church a young church? Are they mostly Jews or Gentiles?)
- 3C Part of speech
- 1D *Nouns*: singular or plural
- 2D *Verbs*: tenses, changes in tense
- 3D *Pronouns*: their references and changes
- 4D *Adverbs*: time and place
- 5D *Connectives*: powerful links between ideas
- 3B *Extract emphases*
- 1C *Repetition*
- 1D Repeated words, phrases, sentences, and ideas often highlight points of emphasis.
Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. [Eph 4:3–6]
- 2D The repetition may not be in exactly the same wordings, and may take both positive and negative forms.
If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. [Php 2:1,2] (See also Jn 15:1–17: abide vs. apart)
- 2C *Progression*
The end of the progression is the emphasized element.
What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Rm 8:31–39]
- 3C *Comparison & contrast*
The common and different elements are the emphases.
Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit.... [Rm 8:5–13] (See also Php 1:15–18.)
- 4C *Teaching & illustration*
The teaching is the emphasis.
Do you not know, brothers— for I am speaking to men who know the law— that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is

released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ,... [Rm 7:1–4]

5C *Question & answer*
The answer is the emphasis. [Rm 8:31–39]

4B *Extract the literary forms*

1C *Simile*

It is a comparison explicitly stated between two things that are basically unlike.
I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; [Hos 14:5]

2C *Metaphor*

It is much like a simile, except that the comparison is implied (rather than actually stated) between two unlike things.
Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness....” [Lk 11:39]

3C *Personification*

A writer speaks about a non-personal or non-living thing as though it were a person.
The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. [Ps 19:1]

4C *Hyperbole*

It is a deliberate exaggeration for emphasis. Both writer and reader should obviously recognize it as deliberate.
Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed. [Ps 119:136]

5C *Interrogation*

It is like a rhetorical question, to which there can only be one obvious answer.
“I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?...” [Jer 32:27]

6C *Irony*

It says the opposite of what it means for getting attention.
Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings – and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! [1 Co 4:8]

7C *Symbolic numbers*

Seven ⇒ related to completion, perfection, and totality
Three ⇒ related to the Trinity
Four ⇒ related to the fullness of the earth or physical creation
Twelve ⇒ related to groups of God’s people
Forty ⇒ related to testing or judgment

8C *Parables*

- 1D It is usually described as a story with the purpose of giving some moral or spiritual truth.
2D It is true to life but not usually as actual occurrence.
3D Parables have at least one of the three elements:
 1E setting
 2E story and
 3E application.
4D It usually has only one lesson.

5D Examples:

1E Mt 13:1–23– the context provides the setting, Jesus tells the story and the application:

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed....” “... This is why I speak to them in parables:... Listen then to what the parable of the sower means:...”

2E Mk 4:30–32– application is not explicitly provided:

Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like,... It is like a mustard seed,...”

9C Allegories

Like parables except that it says explicitly A is B, C is D, and E is F.

“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep....” “... I am the gate for the sheep.... I am the good shepherd....”
[Jn 10]

10C Substitution

1D Substituting the whole with a part

“If you take this one from me too and harm comes to him, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in misery.” [Ge 44:29]

2D Substituting the part with the whole

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.” [Mk 16:15]

3D Substituting the plural with a singular

“... You will not go unpunished, for I am calling down a sword upon all who live on the earth, declares the Lord Almighty.” [Jer 25:29]

4D Substituting the invisible attribute with a visible one

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? [Isa 53:1]

5D Substituting the people with the place they live in

“Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” [Mt 11:21]

5A Exercise on extracting emphases

Identify the type of emphases of the following passages and underline which are being emphasized:

1B A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. [Jn 16:21,22]

2B “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” [Mt 7:24–27]

3B Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even

Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. [Lk 12:27–31]

- 4B Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” [Rm 10:17,18]
- 5B Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. [Jas 3:13–18]

6A Exercise on extracting literary forms

Identify the literary forms of the following passages and rephrase them as faithfully as possible to replace the figure of speech:

- 1B The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. [Jdg 7:12]
[Answer: *thick as locusts* is a simile, and *no more be counted than the sand on the seashore* is a hyperbole.
Rephrase: The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had *densely* settled in the valley. Their camels *were numerous*.]
- 2B When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, “How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!” [2 Sa 6:20]
[Answer: *has distinguished* is an irony.
Rephrase: When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, “How the king of Israel has *shamed* himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!”]
- 3B At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” [1 Ki 18:27]
- 4B Will you torment a windblown leaf? Will you chase after dry chaff? [Job 13:25]
- 5B What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? [Ps 8:4]
- 6B If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. [Ps 139:9,10]

- 7B For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned sacrifices in it to gods that neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. [Jer 19:4]
- 8B The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment. [Pr 10:21]
 [Answer: *lips... nourish* is a substitution.
Rephrase: The words of the righteous help many, but fools die for lack of judgment.]
- 9B What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears. [Hos 6:4]
- 10B I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; [Hos 14:5]
- 11B Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. [Mt 6:34]
- 12B By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [Mt 7:16]
- 13B O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! [Lk 13:34]
- 14B The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" [Jn 1:29]
- 15B When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. [Mt 2:3]
- 16B Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. [Jn 6:54,55]
- 17B Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. [Jn 21:25]
- 18B You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! [2 Co 11:19]
- 19B Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. [Jas 1:15]
- 20B I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues— last, because with them God's wrath is completed. [Rev 15:1]
 [Answer: *seven* is a symbolic number, indicating completeness.
No need to rephrase.]

Chapter 5 Interpretations

1A Objective in doing interpretation

- 1B The fundamental objective in doing interpretation on a passage is to answer the question: “*What does it mean, objectively?*”
- 2B It *must* be built upon a set of well-prepared observations and serves as a stepping stone to personal applications (“*What does it mean to me?*”).

2A Principles of interpretation

- 1B *There is one and only one correct meaning*
 - 1C The correct meaning of the passage is the one as intended by the original author.
 - 2C The writing of the Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and he will never contradict himself by intentionally allowing two different meanings in one writing.
 - 3C If we come up with two different interpretations from the same passage, then they may be both wrong but never both right. So *never* say, “You’re right with your interpretation and I’m right with mine, everyone is entitled to his own opinion!”
 - 4C Every passage carries a meaning. There are no junk words in the Bible. So *never* say, “Oh don’t worry about this phrase, it doesn’t mean anything!”
 - 5C If we cannot agree on one interpretation or cannot come up with any, we should simply acknowledge our limitation. We trust that the Holy Spirit has already revealed to us what we need to understand now, and may choose to reveal more in the future by giving us more wisdom.
 - 6C Different people *often* find different personal applications from the same passage, but it does not change the fact that there is one and only one interpretation.
- 2B *Interpret the Scripture with the Scripture*
 - 1C The original writer is the ultimate authority in explaining his meaning.
 - 2C When the writer explains what he means, either implicitly or explicitly, then the correct interpretation is his explanation.
 - 3C We must support our interpretation with the context of the passage, both internal and external.
 - 4C The strongest support of a passage is the most immediate context, and the ultimate context of the passage is the Bible as a whole.
 - 5C Since the same Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the whole Bible, he certainly did not inspire someone to write something to contradict another whom he also inspired. Therefore, no part of the Bible contradicts with any other parts, even they were written by people of very diversified background.
 - 6C If we come up with two possible interpretations of a passage, then the one that is more likely to be correct is the one that harmonizes more with the rest of the Bible.

3A Guidelines in doing interpretation

1B *Make observations*

Before we proceed, we should have done a well-prepared list of observations that contains

1C The major ideas or events described in the passage

2C The organized details that support, explain, and expand on the major ideas. These include

1D definition of words

2D properly identified sentence structures

3D relationships between elements of the passage based on different parts of speech

3C The emphases in different parts of the passage

4C The identified literary forms

2B *Extract the meanings of the major ideas*

1C Using the list of observations, we rearrange the extracted details, emphases, and literary forms to define the meanings of the major ideas.

1D The details of the passage provide the *grammatical support* of the major ideas

2D The emphases of the passage point to the *intention* of the writer

3D The literary forms *confine* the interpretation to the correct one

2C Using the list of supporting facts (the immediate context, the historical and cultural background, and the definition of words from a Bible dictionary) we further clarify and qualify the meanings of the major ideas.

3B *Extract the reasons and purposes of the major ideas*

1C Ask “*Why does the writer say these things?*”

1D Using the list of observations, we discover why it is necessary and important for the writer to communicate the major ideas to the readers.

2D The use of supporting facts are extremely important in identifying the purposes of the writing.

2C Ask “*Could the writer have said these things differently, and why?*”

1D Using this process of elimination, we further narrow down the exact meanings of the major ideas.

2D We evaluate whether an idea can be phrased differently by one criterion: *Does this rephrasing change the meaning of the idea compared to the original?*

1E If it does, we find out why and highlight the original usage of the sentences

2E If it does not, we go ahead and rephrase the idea in a way that is clearer and plainer.

3D A properly identified literary form can always be rephrased for the purpose of clarification. Also, rephrasing always takes out the drama and color of the original statement. Therefore, after rephrasing a literary form and understanding it, we should always go back and examine why this literary form was used (see exercises on literary forms).

4B *Extract the implications of the major ideas, if any*

1C A statement sometimes (but not always) implies more than it explicitly says. It

is often a result of certain accepted assumptions between both the writer and the readers.

- 2C However, the implications must be subjected to the same tests from the principles of interpretation, i.e., they do not contradict with other parts of the passage and the Bible as a whole, and must be substantiated by the context.

4A Exercises on interpretation based on Rm 3:21–31

1B *Direction:*

- 1C Review the principles and guidelines for doing interpretation.
- 2C Review the list of observations on Rm 3:21–31 (Appendix D).
- 3C Decide whether each of the following interpretations on Rm 3:21–31 is correct.
- 1D If it is correct, decide whether it is an *expressed* or *implied* idea.
- 2D If not, decide whether it directly *contradicts* the passage or it is simply *not there* in the passage. (An idea not in this passage may still be theologically correct.)
- 4C *Hint:* the following 12 statements are equally divided into the above 4 categories.

2B *True/False:*

- 1C Righteousness by observing the law has completely failed, because all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, regardless of race and time.
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]
- 2C Because men are descendant of Adam and Eve, they are trapped by the slavery of sins and are incapable of freeing themselves, so they all fall short of the glory of God, just like Adam and Eve.
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]
- 3C Rm 5:7 says, “Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.” Therefore, there are righteous and good men on earth. So Rm 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” is a hyperbole.
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]
- 4C God failed in his original scheme of trying to save men through justification by observing the law, out of desperation he then let his son die for men as a last resort to save his creation.
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]
- 5C God is just. He demonstrates his justice in his forbearance by not punishing those who have committed sins while not knowing the gospel.
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]
- 6C The reason why God laid the punishment on his son as an atonement sacrifice is because he is just and cannot let sins go unpunished, but at the same time he wants to save sinful men.
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]
- 7C To be righteous must be extremely important that God even eagerly sacrificed his son to restore the relationship with those who believe in him.
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]
- 8C Only Jesus, God's son, is qualified to pay the redemptive price to save all men,

because Ac 4:12 says, “Salvation is found in no one else, there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”
[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]

9C It is possible that not all men will be justified, because God can declare righteous only on those who put their faith in Jesus, and some may choose not to believe in him.

[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]

10C Since God is the one and only God, he justifies all men equally with the same method: everyone who has faith in the redemptive power of his son Jesus will be saved.

[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]

11C Since men cannot obtain a restored relationship with God by observing the law, men should ignore the law and should just emphasize on having faith in Jesus.

[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]

12C Men should not boast about themselves because their salvation is based on having faith in Jesus Christ, and not on their own efforts in observing the law.

[T : expressed / implied] / [F: contradicts / not there]

Chapter 6 Applications

1A Objectives of applications

- 1B The whole objective of studying the Bible is to apply our correct knowledge of God's will in our lives, such that we can live to please Him.
- 2B The task of applications is to seek the contemporary relevance (*here and now*) of ancient texts (*there and then*). It is to answer the questions: *What does the Bible written in ancient time mean to me today? How should I live my life today based on the experience, events, and culture 2,000 years ago?*

2A Principles of applications

- 1B Whenever we share comparable particulars (i.e., similar specific life situations) with the 1st century settings, God's word to the people then is the same as His word to us now.
- 1C If the writer makes an explicit statement of truth or principle that transcends over time and place, then the statement should be taken literally for us today. For examples,
- 1D *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities— his eternal power and divine nature— have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. [Rm 1:20]*
- 2D *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. [Rm 14:17,18]*
- 2C If the writer is addressing directly to a person or a group of people with whom we can readily identify, then his statement to that person(s) can also be addressed to us. For examples,
- 1D *I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. [1 Co 1:10]*
Comparable particular: We may experience disunity and argument among today's churches because of differences in leadership in a way similar to the Corinthians [1 Co 1:11–17].
- 2D *And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. [1 Jn 2:28]*
Comparable particular: Like the reader of John's letter, we are also waiting for Christ's second coming.
- 2B Whenever particulars are not comparable, only the guiding principles behind those commands are applicable to us. In this case, we must consider carefully the larger context of the passage in order to find the guiding principles. For examples,
- 1C *Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. [Gal 5:2]*
Incomparable particular: Since we are not Jews, we do not even think of being circumcised.
Guiding principle: Christ has set us free, therefore, we should not let ourselves be burdened by ritualistic or cultural requirements [Gal 5:1].
- 2C *Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And*

every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head— it is just as though her head were shaved. [1 Co 11:4,5]

Incomparable particular: The culture of women covering their heads is not shared in ours. There was simply no other practice back in Paul's times [1 Co 11:16].

Guiding principle: Judging from the context, Paul was clearly teaching the proper attitudes towards worship, so the guiding principle is that when we worship our Lord, we should promote the true spirit of worship and avoid anything that causes disharmonies in the gathering.

3A Guidelines in drawing application

1B *Do a careful interpretation*

Before we proceed, we should have done the interpretation that contains

- 1C The meanings of the major ideas with the supporting details and the confining literary forms
- 2C The reasons and purposes of the major ideas from both the positive and negative view points
- 3C Any other implications of the major ideas

2B *Determine whether our particulars are comparable with the settings in the passage (principle 1B or 2B)*

- 1C The *major ideas* are usually general statements that are not confined by time, place, or culture. So they can be taken literally. For example, The righteousness from God has been revealed to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of culture, time, or place [Rm 3:21–31].
- 2C The *details* of the passages are sometime supportive statements that the writer draws from the specific life experiences of the people *then and there* to illustrate, explain, or qualify his major ideas. In this case, the major ideas that the details support are the guiding principles. For example, Jews and Gentiles, the circumcised and the uncircumcised are used to represent all men when Paul wants to emphasize that all who believe are justified by faith [Rm 3:21–31].

3B *Determine the boundary of the applications*

From the passage and the context, draw the boundary of the applications. Answer questions like

- 1C Do they apply to Jews only or also to Chinese?
- 2C Is Jesus giving the commands to the twelve apostles only or also to all Christians?
- 3C Does this statement apply only to suffering Christians or also to all Christians and even non-Christians?

4B *Substitute the incomparable particulars with our contemporary ones without affecting the guiding principles*

- 1C Keeping the boundary of the applications in mind, make the Biblical principles personal goals by putting them in the context of our personal relationship with God, our relationships with other people, our present life-styles, and the situations we are now facing.

- 2C As a result, identify whether that particular aspect of our lives now is in line with the Biblical principles.
 - 1D If yes, then give thanks to God for his blessing and continue to consolidate and grow in that aspect.
 - 2D If no, then give thanks to God for revealing this problem, and formulate a course of action to resolve that problem.

5B *Formulate a course of action*

- 1C *Pray* sincerely for the motivation to resolve the problem or to achieve the goal. Consider His grace, His love, and His holiness. “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” [2 Co 5:14,15]
- 2C *Memorize* the key verses that encourage, comfort, and alert us to the goal we want to achieve. “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” [Rm 8:38,39]
- 3C *Examine* ourselves to see if there is any reluctance to pay the price for the growth, and to deal with the reluctance by focusing on the glorious rewards from above. “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” [2 Co 4:17]
- 4C *Persist* in working on the goals as a personal, life-long project to mature in Christ. We may never achieve the ultimate goal, but be persistent to strive after being a better person today than yesterday. Our willingness to get close to God and our faith to rely on Him are what please Him the most. (Consider the Biblical characters like Abraham, Moses, Job, David, Paul, Peter, etc.)
- 5C *Share* your burdens and your joy with your close brothers and sisters to form a mutual encouragement/support group. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” [Eph 4:32]

Chapter 7 Discussion Questions

1A Objectives of discussion questions

- 1B The discussion questions should stimulate and help the group discover the truth for themselves while not forcing acceptance of the conclusions.
- 2B They should guide the group discussion in a systematic way, leading from understanding the true meaning of the passage to applying the knowledge to relevant real-life situations.

2A Structure of a question set

The question set should follow closely the logical sequence of your list of interpretations, with one main question corresponding to each main idea of the passage, and sub-questions reflecting the subordinate details of the main ideas. It looks like:

- 1B *Warm-up questions or remarks* (optional, depending on the level of the group members)
Questions asked or remarks made before reading the passage, leading the group to think in the general direction of the ideas in the passage.
- 2B *Introductory remarks* (a must)
Background information provided by you about the author, place, time, etc. which your group cannot discover from the passage.
- 3B *Main question 1*
 - 1C Observation questions
 - 2C Interpretation questions
 - 3C Application questions (may be moved to conclusion)
 - 4C Summary remarks for idea #1
- 4B *Main question 2*
 - 1C Observation questions
 - 2C Interpretation questions
 - 3C Application questions (may be moved to conclusion)
 - 4C Summary remarks for idea #2
- 5B *More main questions, if any*
- 6B *Summary and conclusions*
 - 1C Correlation questions linking all the main ideas
 - 2C Application questions
 - 3C Summary remarks for the link among the main ideas

3A Nature of questions

- 1B *Warm-up questions or remarks*

- 1C Focus the group into a general direction of the discussion by addressing “*What do we expect to talk about in the group?*”
 - 2C Lay down the hints on the final application questions without giving them away.
 - 3C For example, for a passage on God’s love (e.g., Rm 5:5–8), we can ask,
 - 1D “How did your best friend become your best friend?”
 - 2D “What was the most memorable thing that your best buddy has ever done for you?”
 - 3D “Which song reminds you of your buddies?”
- 2B *Observation questions*
- 1C Refer to known or stated facts, not assumptions based on the facts. The purpose is to reveal “*What does the passage say about this?*”
 - 2C Bring the attention of your group to important details that support and lead to the main ideas, but are *easily missed* in casual reading.
 - 3C Make sure that the facts are gathered before moving on to interpretation. Bible studies often go off tangent when the group start interpreting and sharing before the Scripture is studied.
 - 4C They often begin with words like:
 - 1D “*Who* are the author addressing...?”
 - 2D “*What* phrases or words are used often...?”
 - 3D “*When* did the author refer to... (note the tenses used in the passage)?”
 - 4D “*Where* would this happen...?”
 - 5D “*Why* is every man... (as stated in the passage)?”
 - 6D “*How* did the author intend to solve the problem of...?”
 - 7D “*Describe* the emotional state of...?”
 - 8D “*Summarize* in your own words....”
 - 9D “*Give evidence* of...”
 - 10D “*List reasons*... (as suggested by the author).”
- 3B *Interpretation questions*
- 1C Reveal “*What does it mean?*” by clarifying words, phrases, ideas, intentions, relations, significance, etc.
 - 2C Guide the group to think along three lines:
 - 1D the *definitions* of the main ideas
 - 2D the *intentions* of the main ideas
 - 3D the *implications* of the main ideas
 - 3C Make sure that the interpretations suggested by your group are built upon the facts in the passage and agree with the context and the general teachings of the Bible.
 - 4C They often begin with words like
 - 1D “*What does it mean* when the author chose these wordings...?”
 - 2D “*Could the author have used a different way* to say...?”
 - 3D “*How significant is this idea compared to*...?”
 - 4D “*What principle* does this illustrate...?”
 - 5D “*What does this imply* in the context of...?”
 - 6D “*What has it to do with* the whole situation of...?”
 - 7D “*Why is this idea consistent with*...?”

4B *Application questions*

- 1C Deal with “*What does this mean to me?*” by helping each individual determine what God wants him or her to do and/or change as a result of the study.
- 2C Build up the climax of the study from intellectual understanding of the passage to personal life applications.
- 3C For examples,
 - 1D “Can you think of a similar phenomenon/relationship/concern in the church/fellowship/society today?”
 - 2D “How would you feel or react if Jesus said this to you in person?”
 - 3D “Which part of the passage would stimulate you the most to love God more?”
 - 4D “After knowing God’s sacrificial love for us, what do you want to do in response?”
 - 5D “Can you share with us your own experience or struggle that is similar to that described in this passage?”
 - 6D “How best can we change our attitude to obey and please God?”

5B *Conclusion/summary questions*

- 1C Deal with “*What is the overall picture of the passage?*” by examining the links between the main ideas.
- 2C Put the whole passage in a nutshell so that we can easily remember the main points.
- 3C For examples,
 - 1D “Why did Paul said this point before that point?”
 - 2D “If Paul had left out this point, how would it affect the impact of his message on the reader?”
 - 3D “Why is this illustration the most appropriate for this teaching?”
 - 4D “Can you add or subtract an item from this lists? Why or why not?”
 - 5D “In summary, what is the most important thing that Jesus wants us to do?”

4A **Guidelines for developing a question set**

1B *Do a thorough study*

- 1C Identify and focus on the main lessons of the passage.
- 2C Minor points are interesting, but trying to bring them all out may be distracting and confusing to the major lessons.

2B *Decide the goal of the study*

- 1C Draw solid applications from the main lessons and aim all your questions towards them as the ultimate goal.
- 2C Be sensitive to the spiritual level of your members when picking the depth of applications.

3B *Plan and organize your question set*

- 1C Use your textual outline as a guide:
 - 1D derive your main questions from the main headings
 - 2D derive your supporting questions from the subordinates

- 3D derive your linking questions from the transition between main headings
 - 2C Your questions should flow logically with the sequence of **Observation → Interpretation → Application**.
 - 3C Carefully balance the amount of *O/I/A* questions to suit the level of your group. It is not necessary to (and often should not) have equal numbers of each type of question.
 - 4C Every question should have a definite purpose, and should ultimately lead to the goal of application.
 - 5C When studying narratives or stories, take advantage of the dynamics and the drama:
 - 1D pay attention to the setting and surrounding of the story
 - 2D identify the differences in personality, feeling, emotion, and background among the characters
 - 3D encourage your group to put themselves in the story
 - 4D follow the events and observe the people
 - 5D follow the people and observe their changes
 - 6C When studying letters in the New testament, take advantage of the flow of thoughts and arguments presented by the writer:
 - 1D move from point to point as presented in the letter
 - 2D identify the importance of the sequence of argument
 - 3D bring out the significance of the logic by trying to reverse the order of the points and see what happens
 - 7C The use of negative questions is often a powerful tool in bringing out the positive significance of the passage.
- 4B *Write down your questions*
- 1C Write down as many details as possible the introduction and the summary/ conclusion of your study.
 - 1D memorize the introductory remarks to help you get the study started easier
 - 2D when time is running out, refer to your conclusion/summary to check if the most important points have been covered
 - 2C Highlight or underline your main questions which you must ask to bring out the main points.
 - 3C Be thorough but flexible with the subordinate questions.
 - 1D be ready to expand and break down your sub-questions
 - 1E if your group need more guidance
 - 2E if your group is progressing faster than you have originally planned
 - 2D anticipate answers and have follow-up questions ready
 - 4C Write down some hints (verses and key words) as reminders.
 - 5C Don't refer to other passages unless absolutely necessary to avoid confusing or intimidating the group.
- 5B *Revise your questions*
- 1C Check the wording and length of each question.
 - 1D use common words and avoid spiritual jargons, for example,

- 1E [bad] “In what way does the erudition of the divine sacrificial atonement impact the behavior of evangelical converts?”
- 2E [better] “Knowing that God’s Son died for our sins, how will we live our lives as Christians?”
- 2D if a lengthy question cannot be shortened, maybe you should break it down into two or three
- 3D if a question is too short, maybe it is too simple-minded or needs clarification
- 2C Estimate the time needed for each section.
 - 1D decide the priority of each question, so that when time runs out, you can skip those at a lower priority
 - 2D allow enough time for sharing the application question
- 3C Check the logic and flow of the questions.
 - 1D delete questions that lead to nowhere or to a minor point
 - 2D add transitional questions if the change of thought is too abrupt
- 4C If available, go to a prestudy group and have others evaluate your question set.

Chapter 8 Leading Group Discussion

1A Preparation and Preliminaries

1B *Things to bring*

- 1C Your life message and your zeal in knowing and doing God's word.
- 2C A humble heart. Always be prepared to learn new and deeper truth from the Holy Spirit and from one another.
- 3C Confidence which comes from knowing that you have tried your best to prepare the passage, even though you may not have all the answers.
- 4C Your Bible and question set. Leave commentaries and dictionaries at home. Extra Bibles may be helpful.
- 5C A friendly smile.

2B *Settings*

- 1C The preferred group size is 6 to 8 people.
- 2C Sit in a circle. Members should be able to see and hear each other. Table is not necessary.
- 3C Allow rooms for late-comers. Minimize distraction.
- 4C Start on time.
- 5C Make sure that everyone has a Bible, preferably the same version.
- 6C Make sure that everyone can speak and understand a common language.

3B *Getting acquainted (optional)*

- 1C Make sure your group members know one another. Begin with yourself and share something more than just your name and major (but keep them short). Your group members will follow your model on the content of your sharing.
- 2C Write down the names of your members, don't rely on your memory.

4B *Prayer*

- 1C You pray or ask someone to pray.
- 2C If you ask someone to pray, make sure that he or she will not feel uneasy about it.

5B *Warm-up questions or remarks (Optional)*

- 1C If you are unfamiliar with the group, it is a good idea to find out about their willingness to participate.
- 2C If you choose to ask a question to warm up the group, you don't have to wait for a satisfactory answer before you go on. Your purpose is to get them thinking in a general direction of the study.

6B *Reading the passage*

- 1C Read silently and/or have someone read. Pray in your heart when they are reading. Pay attention if they have finished reading.

- 2C If you ask someone to read,
 - 1D Ask someone who can read well.
 - 2D New members are good candidates, so that they can get familiar with hearing their own voices in front of a group.
 - 3D Tactfully terminate the reading if you find out that this person cannot read well. For example, at an appropriate break point, stop the reading and make a brief remark on the passage he has just read, and then ask someone else to continue the reading.
 - 4D Don't correct their pronunciations, but make sure you know the correct ones.
 - 5D Don't ask each person to read one verse around the room, or tell them beforehand who are going to read what.
- 3C Before you start the reading, you can ask a very general observational question so that they can start searching the text while reading. This question should be broad enough so that they will not become overly selective in their reading.

7B *Introductory remarks*

- 1C Never apologize. Go home and confess to God.
- 2C The introduction should be precise and serves to help understand the passage.
- 3C If your group is studying a series of passages, you may want to remind them of the link between this passage and the last one.

2A Group Dynamics

1B *Every group has dynamics*

Being a group learning process, the effectiveness of your Bible study depends on how much each member is motivated to participate and to contribute his ideas during the discussion. Aim at leaving no one in your group to be a spectator of the study.

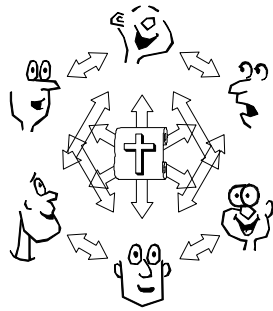
2B *Elements valuable to good group dynamics*

Although group dynamics is different for every group and for every study, there are several areas which can be catalysts to promote fruitful and enjoyable discussions.

- 1C You, the Bible study leader of integrity.
 - 1D Your life message and your enthusiasm.
 - 2D Your preparation, sensitivity, and tactfulness.
 - 3D Your encouragement and acknowledgment of contributions.
 - 4D Your submission to the Holy Spirit, and the resolution of different viewpoints in love and harmony.
- 2C An atmosphere of integrity.
 - 1D How the group arrives at the right conclusion is as important as the conclusion itself. An open and honest atmosphere will promote a fruitful learning process.
 - 2D You should take the lead to be honest. Admit it when you do not know the answer, or when you find out your viewpoint is wrong.
 - 3D The best atmosphere is not when everyone is trying to say the right thing or the wittiest thing, but when they say what they really think. They should feel comfortable to share their opinions, to disagree, to ask questions, and even to admit that they do not understand or are confused. Only when the discussion is sincere and genuine will they come to true convictions.

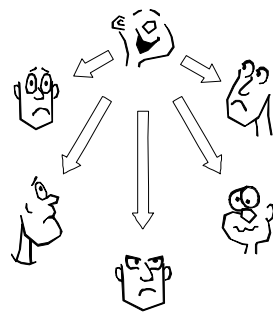
3B *Good Group Dynamics*

1C Good group dynamics:

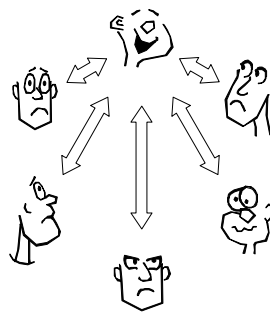


- 1D Atmosphere of integrity
- 2D Discussion focused on the passage
- 3D Participation from everyone
- 4D Genuine application sharing

2C Bad group dynamics:



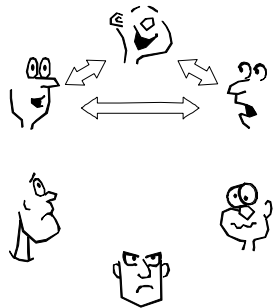
“Lecture”



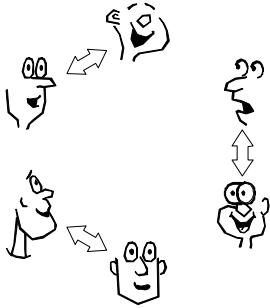
“Examination”



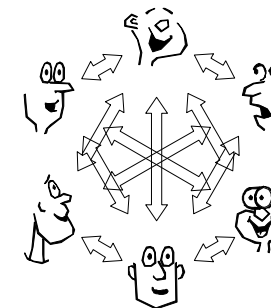
“Duet or duel”



“Talk show”



“Group dating”



“Gossip group”

4B *Guidelines in handling group dynamics*

1C Observe people

- 1D Maintain eye contacts with everyone in your group, not just the active or new members.
- 2D Watch body language. Nod at the one who looks at you (he or she may want to say something but wants some encouragement).
- 3D Listen attentively. Be observant of what people say and use their statements to word your subsequent questions.

2C Observe yourself, too

- 1D Be honest. Admit your errors.
- 2D Be humorous if appropriate.
- 3D Minimize your talking. Give signal rather than call names.
- 4D Do not preach.

- 5D Do not answer your own questions.
- 3C Motivate your members with sensitivity, wisdom, and tactics
[in the following, *him* stands for *him/her*]
 - 1D Member who talks too little or does not talk
 - 1E He may be a new and/or a shy member.
 - 2E Let him read part of the passage, so that he can get used to hearing his own voice in front of the group.
 - 3E Give him the first chance to answer and feel the joy of contributing ideas.
 - 4E Ask his opinion.
 - 5E Provide encouragement by eye contact and a friendly smile.
 - 6E Take advantage of before/after study time to get acquainted with him.
 - 7E Do not be too pushy.
 - 2D Member who talks too much
 - 1E Avoid looking at him.
 - 2E Call others.
 - 3E Explain at the beginning of the study that the goal is to have everybody participate.
 - 4E "Give others a chance."
 - 5E Jump in while his is taking a breathe.
 - 6E Talk to him afterwards.
 - 3D Member who cannot express well
 - 1E Who tends to repeat himself: ask him to summarize his ideas in one sentence.
 - 2E Who tends to mumble: rephrase his answer and ask, "Is that what you mean?"
 - 4D Member who frequently quote other passages
Acknowledge his contributions, and say, "Let us concentrate on today's passage."
 - 5D Member who recites what certain pastor, preacher, or commentator said
 - 1E Ask him to supply evidences found in the passage.
 - 2E Ask him to supply reasons for his conclusions.
 - 3E Use new angles to ask the question, perhaps use a negative question.
 - 4E Ask for his personal opinions.
 - 5E Ask him to share his personal experiences.
 - 6D Member who criticizes or tends to counsel others
 - 1E Jump in and ask him to share about his experience or his opinions.
 - 2E Don't retaliate by criticizing his answers.
 - 7D Member who starts to cry on a touching issue
 - 1E Don't say, "Don't cry, it's no big deal!"
 - 2E Don't ignore him, but don't focus everyone's attention on him either.
 - 3E Acknowledge that the issue is very moving and indicate that it's ok to be emotional about it.
- 4C Handling situations with tactfulness and common sense
 - 1D Silent period
 - 1E Don't panic. Keep cool.
 - 2E When people are thinking, wait with a prayerful heart.
 - 3E When they appear confused, you should restate, rephrase, or rearrange your questions. Use subquestions to extend, clarify, justify,

- and redirect the question.
 - 2D Wrong answer
 - 1E Acknowledge the part which is right. If the answer is entirely wrong, try to figure out what leads him to the wrong answer and ask questions to help him clarify his thinking process.
 - 2E Don't giggle. Don't say, "No, that's not right!"
 - 3E Don't try to shoot it down yourself, ask if others have a different view.
 - 3D Right answer
 - 1E If the answer is correct but incomplete, ask if anyone wants to add to it. Give hints.
 - 2E If the answer is correct and complete, still let the group decide if there is more to add, but do not drag if you know it has been fully explored.
 - 4D Superficial answer
 - 1E Ask them to use creative ways to see and say old truth. E.g., "How would you explain this to a non-Christian?"
 - 2E "Put in your own words..."
 - 3E Ask questions which present different angles to see the same thing.
 - 4E Ask trap questions.
 - 5D Disagreement
 - 1E Capitalize on controversy as an instrument to stimulate discussions.
 - 2E Invite people to join in and take sides.
 - 3E After a while, if the problem is still not resolved, summarize and move to another point. Your summary should cover both the similarities and differences of the viewpoints discussed.
 - 4E Don't personalize the disagreement. Don't fight.
 - 6D Questions from the group
 - 1E Encourage questions from members.
 - 2E When you are asked a question, throw it back to the group.
 - 3E Don't be tempted to answer it yourself.
 - 7D Wild ideas and tangents
 - 1E Ask for Scriptural supports in the passage.
 - 2E Bring them back to the discussion: "Hmm, that's an interesting idea. What about what I've just asked on..."
- 5B *Ending the discussion*
- 1C End on time. Make sure that you have covered all the major lessons of the passage and have time for application and sharing.
 - 2C Summarize the passage to one or two major lessons. Point out again the link between this study and the previous one, as well as the overall theme for the coming study.
 - 3C Ask your group to share about prayer answered since last study as well as new prayer requests.
 - 4C Prayer
 - 1D Offer thanksgivings for new and deeper truth discovered and for the opportunity to study His words together.
 - 2D Express mutual commitment to do His will.
 - 3D Incorporate and echo the major lessons in this study.
 - 4D Ask for wisdom for unresolved problems and further understanding.

- 5D Personal prayer requests.
- 5C Evaluate your study
 - 1D Pass out the *Bible Study Feedback Form*.
 - 2D Point out that it is very important for your growth as a Bible study leader.
 - 3D Don't say that it is a routine or some paper work.

Chapter 9 Rm 1:1–15 Textual Outline

1A [Salutation]

- 1B [The writer] (1) Paul,
 - 1C a servant of Christ Jesus,
 - 2C called to be an apostle and
 - 3C set apart for the gospel of God– (2) the gospel
 - 1D he promised beforehand
 - 1E through his prophets
 - 2E in the Holy Scriptures
 - 2D [the subject: Jesus Christ] (3) regarding
 - 1E [as to his relationship to God] his Son,
 - 1F [his humanity] who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, (4) and
 - 2F [his divinity] who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead:
 - 2E [as to his relationship to us] Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - 1F [because of him]
 - 1G (5) Through him and
 - 2G for his name's sake,
 - 2F we received
 - 1G grace and
 - 2G apostleship to call people
 - 1H from among all the Gentiles
 - 2H to the obedience that comes from faith.
 - 3H [example] (6) And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.
- 2B [The readers] (7) To all in Rome who
 - 1C are loved by God
 - 2C and called to be saints:
- 3B [The greeting] Grace and peace to you
 - 1C from God our Father and
 - 2C from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2A [Prayers]

- 1B [thanksgiving] (8) First, I thank my God
 - 1C through Jesus Christ
 - 2C for all of you,
 - 3C because your faith is being reported all over the world.
- 2B [sincerity of prayer]
 - 1C (9) God, whom I serve

- 1D with my whole heart
 - 2D in preaching the gospel of his Son,
- 2C is my witness how constantly I remember you
 - 1D (10) in my prayers
 - 2D at all times;
- 3B [content of prayer] and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.
- 4B [reason of prayer] (11) I long to see you
 - 1C [objective reason for longing] so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift
 - 1D [purpose of spiritual gift] to make you strong–
 - 2D [effect of spiritual gift] (12) that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.
 - 2C [evidence of longing] (13) I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I
 - 1D [action]
 - 1E planned many times to come to you (but
 - 2E have been prevented from doing so until now)
 - 2D [purpose of action] in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.
 - 3C [subjective reason for longing]
 - 1D [Paul's obligation] (14) I am obligated
 - 1E [according to race] both to
 - 1F Greeks and
 - 2F non-Greeks,
 - 2E [according to wisdom] both to
 - 1F the wise and
 - 2F the foolish.
 - 2D [result of obligation] (15) That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

Chapter 10 Rm 1:16–32 Textual Outline

1A (16) I am not ashamed of the gospel, because

1B [reason 1] it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes:

1C first for the Jew,

2C then for the Gentile.

2B [reason 2] (17) For in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed,

1C a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,

2C just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith,”

2A (18) The wrath of God is being revealed

1B [origin] from heaven

2B [objects] against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

3B [reasons]

1C [background] (19) since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

1D [when] (20) For since the creation of the world

2D [what] God's invisible qualities–

1E his eternal power and

2E divine nature–

3D [how] have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made,

4D [result] so that men are without excuse.

2C [men's actions]

1D (21) For although they knew God,

1E [not do] they neither

1F glorified him as God nor

2F gave thanks to him, but

2E [do]

1F their thinking became futile and

2F their foolish hearts were darkened.

2D (22) Although they claimed to be wise, they

1E became fools (23) and

2E exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like

1F mortal man and

2F birds and

3F animals and

4F reptiles.

3C [God's responses]

1D [to untruthfulness]

1E [God's action] (24) Therefore God gave them over

- 1F in the sinful desires of their hearts
- 2F to sexual impurity
- 3F for the degrading of their bodies with one another.
- 2E [reason] (25) They
 - 1F exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and
 - 2F worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator— who is forever praised. Amen.
- 3E [results] (26) Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts.
 - 1F [women] Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.
 - 2F [men] (27) In the same way
 - 1G the men also
 - 1H abandoned natural relations with women and
 - 2H were inflamed with lust for one another.
 - 2G Men committed indecent acts with other men, and
 - 3G [result] received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.
- 2D [to misjudgment] (28) Furthermore,
 - 1E [reason] since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God,
 - 2E [God's action] he gave them over
 - 1F to a depraved mind,
 - 2F to do what ought not to be done.
 - 3E [results]
 - 1F [in their inner beings]
 - 1G (29) They have become filled with every kind of
 - 1H wickedness,
 - 2H evil,
 - 3H greed and
 - 4H depravity.
 - 2G They are full of
 - 1H envy,
 - 2H murder,
 - 3H strife,
 - 4H deceit and
 - 5H malice.
 - 2F [in their persons] They are
 - 1G gossips,
 - 2G (30) slanderers,
 - 3G God-haters,
 - 4G insolent,
 - 5G arrogant and
 - 6G boastful;
 - 3F [in their actions]
 - 1G they invent ways of doing evil;
 - 2G they disobey their parents;
 - 4F [in their depravities] (31) they are
 - 1G senseless,
 - 2G faithless,
 - 3G heartless,
 - 4G ruthless.
 - 5F [in their attitudes] (32) Although they know God's righteous

decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only

1G continue to do these very things but also

2G approve of those who practice them.

Chapter 11 Rm 3:21–31 Textual Outline

1A (21) But now a righteousness

1B [origin]

1C from God,

2C apart from law,

2B [state] has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

3B [nature] (22) This righteousness from God comes

1C through faith in Jesus Christ

2C to all who believe.

3C [elaborate]

1D [concerning to all] There is no difference, (23) for all

1E have sinned and

2E fall short of the glory of God, (24) and

3E are justified freely

1F by his grace

2F through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

2D [concerning through Jesus] (25) God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement,

1E through faith in his blood.

2E He did this to demonstrate his justice,

1F [why] because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

2F [when] (26) he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time,

3F [goals] so as

1G to be just and

2G the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

4B [implications]

1C [boasting excluded]

1D [question] (27) Where, then, is boasting?

2D [answer] It is excluded.

3D [ground]

1E [question]

1F On what principle?

2F On that of observing the law?

2E [answer] No, but on that of faith.

4D [principle] (28) For we maintain that a man is justified

1E by faith

2E apart from observing the law.

2C [all men included]

1D [question]

1E (29) Is God the God of Jews only?

2E Is he not the God of Gentiles too?

2D [answer] Yes, of Gentiles too,

- 3D [ground] (30) since there is only one God, who will justify
 - 1E the circumcised by faith and
 - 2E the uncircumcised through that same faith.
- 4D [practice]
 - 1E [question] (31) Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith?
 - 2E [answer]
 - 1F Not at all! Rather,
 - 2F we uphold the law.

Special notes on Rm 3:21–31

- 5B (21)... known, *to which the Law and the Prophets testify*.
A lonely subordinate is merged with a high level element.
- 6B (25) *God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement...*
An element that is not subordinate nor parallel to its immediately preceding element, but is subordinate to an earlier element [(22)... *through faith in Jesus Christ...*]
- 7B (27) *Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded.*
Question & answer are always parallel to form a set.
- 8B (27)... *On what principle?... on that of faith.*
A question-&-answer set can have two or more questions and two or more answers. Also, a question-&-answer set needs not be parallel to another question-&-answer set, such as the preceding one.
- 9B (29) *Is God the God of Jews only?...*
Same as 4B.

Chapter 12 Rm 3:21–31 Observations

1A Supporting external facts

- 1B It is part of the letter written by Paul to the believers in Rome as a substitute for his personal visit.
- 2B According to *New Bible Dictionary*,
 - 1C The word *righteousness* probably derives from an Arabic root meaning *straightness*, leading to the notion of an action which conforms to a norm.
 - 2C One basic ingredient in the OT idea of righteousness is relationship, both between man and man and between God and man.
 - 1D Referred to relations between men, righteous action is action which conforms to the requirements of the relationship, and generally promotes the well-being and peace of the community.
 - 2D Similarly, concerning relationship with God, righteousness implies a correct relationship to the will of God which was particularly expressed and interpreted by Israel's covenant with God.
- 3B This passage follows immediately after Paul establishes his point that no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law (3:20).

2A Major ideas

- 1B In this passage, Paul talks about the righteousness from God that has now been made known (3:21).
- 2B He explains in details two important concepts about this righteousness from God: its nature and its implications (outline 1A3B and 1A4B).
- 3B Concerning its nature, Paul makes and explains two important points:
 - 1C it comes through faith in Jesus Christ (3B1C) and
 - 2C it comes to all who believe (3B2C).
- 4B Concerning its implications, Paul also makes and explains two important points:
 - 1C boasting (on observing the law) is excluded (4B1C) and
 - 2C all men (being treated equally) are included in this plan (4B2C).

3A Details

- 1B Definition of words
 - 1C *righteousness*: as given in *New Bible Dictionary*.
 - 2C *righteousness from God*: the main theme of this passage.
 - 3C etc....
- 2B Core elements (3:21,22)
 - 1C *Subject*: Paul emphasizes that *God*, and not the *law*, is the origin of this righ-

teousness.

2C *Verb:*

1D Paul uses *comes* in the active voice, instead of *is obtained from* or *is acquired by*, to emphasize the importance of the role of the subject.

2D *Comes from* is used instead of *flows out of* to emphasize that it is a deliberate action.

3C *Object:* to all who believe, both Gentiles and Jews.

4C etc....

3B Parts of speech

1C *Tenses:*

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ (3:22) is in the present tense, while the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (3:24) is in the past tense – the historical redemptive act was done once, and yet the righteousness through faith is a timeless truth.

2C *Connectives:*

... from God... through faith... to all... (3:22) indicate a relationship among God, faith, and all men– God is the originator, faith is the channel, and all men are the recipients.

4A Emphases

1B Repetition

There is no difference, for all have sinned... (3:22,23)– *All* is being repeated negatively as *no difference*, and thus the totality of all mankind is emphasized.

2B Question & answer

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. (3:27)– The emphasis is placed on *boasting is excluded on the principle of faith*.

5A Literary form

... since there is only one God, who will justify the *circumcised* by faith and the *uncircumcised* through that same faith. (3:30)– *Circumcised* and *uncircumcised* are substitutions for *Jews* and *Gentiles* to emphasize the difference between the two groups: with the covenant of God and without. Paul is making the point that even with this difference, they are all similarly justified by faith.

6A etc.

Chapter 13 Rm 5:1–11 Textual Outline

1A [Peace with God and joy]

1B [reason] (1) Therefore, since we have been justified through faith,

2B [consequence]

1C [peace] we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom we have gained access

1D by faith

2D into this grace in which we now stand.

2C [joy]

1D [objects of rejoicing]

1E And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (3) Not only so, but

2E we also rejoice in our sufferings,

2D [reason for rejoicing in suffering] because we know that

1E [suffering leads to hope]

1F suffering produces perseverance;

2F (4) perseverance, character; and

3F character, hope.

2E [hope because of love] (5) And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love

1F into our hearts

2F by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

3E [love demonstrated] (6) You see,

1F [timing]

1G at just the right time,

2G when we were still powerless,

2F [action] Christ died for the ungodly.

3F [contrasts]

1G [men]

1H (7) Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man,

2H though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.

2G [God] (8) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

3D [reason for rejoicing in hope]

1E [condition] (9) Since we have now been justified by his blood,

2E [deduction] how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

3E [reason]

1F [condition] (10) For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son,

2F [deduction] how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

4E [consequence] (11) Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Chapter 14 Rm 5:1–11 Sample Question Set

1A [O] What does the word *since* in v 1 indicate?

- 1B [O] What are the consequences of having been justified through faith (v 1)?
- 2B [I] Do these consequences happen as a natural result of having been justified? Or are they something that the Roman Christians should work on? Why?

2A [O] Why do we rejoice in our sufferings (v 3)?

- 1B [O] Why does this hope as a result of suffering does not disappoint us?
- 2B [I] Generally speaking, what kind of hope is a disappointing hope?
- 3B [I] Why does having God's love in our hearts (v 5) make this hope *not* a disappointing one?
 - 1C [O] How has God poured out his love into our hearts?
 - 2C [O] What distinguishes God's love from ordinary love?
 - 3C [into our hearts]
 - 1D [I] Could Paul have said "... because God has poured out his love into our *minds*" instead of "... into our hearts?" Why?
 - 2D [I] Can we use our minds (our logic and reasoning) to accept this kind of love? Why?
- 4B [I] So in summary,
 - 1C [I] What can we say about God's love and our sufferings?
 - 2C [I] How would you respond if someone says, "If God really loves me, why does he let me suffer?"
 - 3C [A] Share with us some of the ways that help you rejoice even when life is not going well.

3A [O] Why do we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God?

- 1B [O] What do the future tenses used in vv 9 and 10 (*shall we be saved...*) indicate?
- 2B [I] Is this "hope of the glory of God" the same "hope" that does not disappoint us in v. 5?
- 3B [O] How does the condition *having been justified* lead to the deduction that *we shall be saved from God's wrath*?
- 4B [wrath and glory]
 - 1C [I] How is God's glory and God's wrath related, since both of them are in the future?
 - 2C [I] Could Paul have said "And we *shall have no fear for the wrath of God*" instead of "and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" in v 3? Why?
- 5B [death and life]

- 1C [O] Can *reconciled through his death* (v 10a) and *saved through his life* (v 10a) exist independently? [I] Why?
- 2C [I] Can you find a stronger reason to assure us that we can really rejoice in the hope for the future?

4A So in summary,

- 1B [I] how do *rejoicing in our sufferings* (which is motivated by a hope that does not disappoint) relate to *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God* (which is assured by Christ's life)?
- 2B [A] What personal experience do you have that has suffering, hope, and joy all existing at the same time?

Chapter 15 Answers to Exercises

1A Chapter 4, 6A

In order to rephrase figures of speech as faithfully as possible, the immediate contexts must be considered carefully.

- 1B At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” [1 Ki 18:27]
- 1C Literary form: the words of Elijah are *irony*.
- 2C Context: Elijah was so confident about winning the contest that he had his offering and the wood completely drenched before calling on God’s fire [1 Ki 18:33–35]. His ironic challenge here was another indication of his confidence.
- 3C Rephrase: At noon Elijah began to taunt them. “*It’s useless to shout any louder!*” he said. “Surely he is *not* a god! Perhaps he is *not* deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is *not* sleeping and *need not* be awakened.”
- 2B Will you torment a windblown leaf? Will you chase after dry chaff? [Job 13:25]
- 1C Literary forms: both questions are *interrogations*. “Windblown leaf” and “dry chaff” are both *metaphors*.
- 2C Context: Even though Job was experiencing the greatest disaster of his life, he knew that he would be delivered from his present suffering and that his case would be vindicated [Job 13:15–19]. So Job knew that God would not completely destroy him.
- 3C Rephrase: You *will not* torment a *person shaken like a windblown leaf*. You *will not* chase after a *person broken like dry chaff*.
- 3B What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? [Ps 8:4]
- 1C Literary form: both questions are *interrogations*.
- 2C Context: The author was considering the majesty of God’s creation [Ps 8:3] and men, in comparison, became insignificant.
- 3C Rephrase: Man is *too insignificant for you to be* mindful of, the son of man *to care for*.
- 4B If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. [Ps 139:9,10]
- 1C Literary form: the first “if...” is a *metaphor* and “your hand” and “your right hand” are *substitutions* for God.
- 2C Context: The author was describing how the Lord completely understood him whenever, wherever, and whatever he was doing and thinking [Ps 139:1–4].
- 3C Rephrase: *Even if I could fly with well rested wings*, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there *you will* guide me, *you will* hold me fast.
- 5B For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned sacrifices in it to gods that neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. [Jer 19:4]

- 1C Literary form: “filled this place with the blood...” is a *hyperbole*.
- 2C Context: The wrath of God against the evil doers was serious [Jer 19:3,6]. So the hyperbole used here was to attract attentions.
- 3C Rephrase: For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned sacrifices in it to gods that neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have *in this place killed many innocent people*.
- 6B What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears. [Hos 6:4]
- 1C Literary form: both questions are *interrogations*, “Ephraim” and “Judah” are *substitutions* for the people living in the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah), and “morning mist” and “early dew” are *similes*.
- 2C Context: The disappointment of God about the people of both kingdoms was severe to the point of desperation and punishment [Hos 6:5].
- 3C Rephrase: *There is nothing I can do with you, people of Ephraim. There is nothing I can do with you, people of Judah. Your love goes quickly away like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears.*
- 7B I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; [Hos 14:5]
- 1C Literary form: “dew,” “blossom like a lily,” and “like a cedar” are all *similes*, “Israel” is a substitution for the people living there, and “he” is a substitution for “they.”
- 2C Context: God would heal and love the people who returned to Him [Hos 14:1–4]. So the “dew” used here, like “lily” and “cedar,” carries a positive connotation, as oppose to the “dew” used in 6:5.
- 3C Rephrase: I will be *the nourishment* like the dew to *the people of Israel*; *they will grow* like a blossoming lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon sending down roots *they will become strong*;
- 8B Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. [Mt 6:34]
- 1C Literary form: the second “tomorrow” and “each day” are *personifications*.
- 2C Context: Jesus was teaching about the priorities in life, that seeking his kingdom and his righteousness are more important than worrying about material needs [Mt 6:31–33].
- 3C Rephrase: Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for *we will worry about it then. We have enough trouble each day.*
- 9B By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [Mt 7:16]
- 1C Literary form: “their fruit” is a *metaphor*, and both questions are both *metaphors* and *interrogations*.
- 2C Context: Jesus was warning about false prophets and the way to identify them [Mt 7:15–20].
- 3C Rephrase: By their *accomplishments* you will recognize them. *Just like recognizing*

trees by their fruits, people do not pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles.

- 10B O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! [Lk 13:34]
- 1C Literary form: “Jerusalem” is a *substitution* for the people living there, “as a hen gather...” is a *simile*.
- 2C Context: This was Jesus’ reaction to some Pharisees who wanted Jesus to leave that place [Lk 13:31].
- 3C Rephrase: O *people of Jerusalem, people of Jerusalem*, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings *to protect them*, but you were not willing!
- 11B The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” [Jn 1:29]
- 1C Literary form: “Lamb of God” is a *metaphor*, which is one of the exclusive titles for Jesus.
- 2C Context: John the Baptist was preparing the way and expecting the prophesied Messiah, Jesus, the “Lamb of God.” In the Bible, the first use of lamb to represent Jesus appears in Isa 53:7, which was quoted in Ac 8:32. John the Baptist used the term twice [Jn 1:29,36]. Peter used it once in his letter [1 Pe 1:19]. Most frequently, the word “lamb” appears 29 times in Revelation, and all refer to Jesus.
- 3C Rephrase: The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the *one sacrificed like a lamb*, who takes away the sin of the world!”
- 12B When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. [Mt 2:3]
- 1C Literary form: “Jerusalem” is a *substitution* for the people living there, and “all” is a *hyperbole*.
- 2C Context: King Herod heard that there was a king of the Jews born in his jurisdiction [Mt 2:1,2].
- 3C Rephrase: When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and *many people in Jerusalem* with him.
- 13B Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. [Jn 6:54,55]
- 1C Literary form: “eats my flesh” and “drink my blood” are both *metaphors*.
- 2C Context: Jesus was teaching the crowd who came to him because he had just fed 5000 people [Jn 6:10–12], and he knew their motive [6:26]. He took up the issue of food and taught them a lesson based on it [6:32–35, 47–51]. He said, in particular, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” [6:35].
- 3C Rephrase: Whoever *comes to me and believes in me is like eating my flesh and drinking my blood, for I am like the bread of life, and he will have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For coming to me and believing in me will truly satisfy one’s hunger and thirst.*

- 14B Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. [Jn 21:25]
- 1C Literary form: “even the whole world...” is a *hyperbole*.
- 2C Context: John was concluding his writing.
- 3C Rephrase: Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that *much room would be needed* for the books that would be written.
- 15B You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! [2 Co 11:19]
- 1C Literary form: “you are so wise” is an *irony*.
- 2C Context: Paul was defending his ministry and warning against false prophets who tried to destroy his reputation [2 Co 10:10,11]. He was concerned that the Corinthians were easily led astray by the false prophets [11:3,4].
- 3C Rephrase: You gladly put up with fools since you are so *foolish!*
- 16B Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. [Jas 1:15]
- 1C Literary form: “has conceived,” “gives birth,” and “is full-grown” are *personifications*.
- 2C Context: James was describing the process of trials and temptations [Jas 1:13,14].
- 3C Rephrase: Then, after desire has *accumulated*, it *leads* to sin; and sin, when it *is committed*, leads to death.

2A Chapter 5, 4A

1C	T: expressed	5C	F: not there	9C	T: implied
2C	F: not there	6C	T: implied	10C	T: expressed
3C	F: contradicts	7C	T: implied	11C	F: contradicts
4C	F: contradicts	8C	F: not there	12C	T: expressed

Chapter 16 Bible Study Feedback Form

Leader: _____ Passage: _____ Date: _____

Key: 1 = Disagree 2 = Neutral 3 = Somewhat agree 4 = Agree 5 = Totally agree

*Contents: **This Bible study...***

1. clearly identified the major ideas in this passage 1 2 3 4 5
2. examined the details of the passage supporting the major ideas 1 2 3 4 5
3. covered thoroughly all major ideas 1 2 3 4 5
4. presented the major ideas in a logically connected fashion 1 2 3 4 5
5. wasted time dealing with ideas not related to the passage 1 2 3 4 5
6. allowed discussion on real-life applications 1 2 3 4 5
7. stimulated you to think about your relationship with God 1 2 3 4 5

*Techniques: **The discussion questions...***

8. were easy to understand 1 2 3 4 5
9. were logically connected 1 2 3 4 5
10. stimulated thinking (instead of asking for “yes-no” answers)..... 1 2 3 4 5
11. were too difficult 1 2 3 4 5
12. were too simple-minded 1 2 3 4 5
13. followed through on answers from the group 1 2 3 4 5

*Group Dynamics: **The Bible study leader...***

14. was sincere and honest 1 2 3 4 5
15. maintained eye contacts with group members 1 2 3 4 5
16. stimulated discussions among the group members 1 2 3 4 5
17. encouraged quiet members to speak 1 2 3 4 5
18. controlled talkative members from dominating 1 2 3 4 5
19. gave positive feedbacks to the group’s answers 1 2 3 4 5
20. prevented the discussion from drifting to unrelated topics 1 2 3 4 5
21. was judgmental on members’ answers 1 2 3 4 5
22. was too dominating (talked too much) 1 2 3 4 5
23. was too passive (talked too little) 1 2 3 4 5

Comments, suggestions, or encouragements:
