



**Deshen
School
Of The Spirit**

The Topical Bible Study

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OBJECTIVE

Understand the basic principles for effectively studying what the Bible has to say about a particular topic

The Inductive Bible Study Method

- We just completed the Course titled “Introduction to the Inductive Bible Study Method”
- We used the word “method” to describe the systematic and orderly way of effectively studying the Bible
- This “method” is not one of the methods along side others such as the Topical Bible Study Method
- Rather, it is a comprehensive method that is part of different methods such as topical, devotional, book study, etc

Approaches to Bible Study

- I will use the word “approach” here to refer to the different ways you may want to study the Bible based on what you plan to study
- Different approaches(can also be called methods)
 - Devotional study: study a verse or two for a devotional
 - Topical study: find out what the Bible says about a topic
 - Book study: find out the general message of a book
 - Biographical study: study what the Bible has to say about a person
 - Word study: how the Bible uses a particular word
 - Chapter study: just like a book study, the general message of a chapter
 - Etc

Method and Approach

- Method vs Approach
 - Distinction made here mainly for ease of understanding
- Method:
 - will be reserved for the Inductive Bible Study Method, which is a comprehensive hermeneutical method for studying the Bible
 - Our preferred method for its simplicity and comprehensiveness
 - It can adapted for any approach: devotional, topical, book, etc
- Approach:
 - Will be used to describe the different approaches one can take in studying the Bible based on the reason for the Bible study
- Topical Bible Study approach: focus of today's lesson

What is a Topical Bible Study?

- Studying the Bible with the intent to find out everything the Bible has to say about a particular topic of interest
- Major key words
 1. Everything
 2. Topic
 3. Bible

Why is the Topical Study Important?

- R.A Torey recounted the story of D.L Moody who studied grace and could not wait to pour it out on a stranger he found on the street!
- Four simple thoughts on why this is so important: experience, wisdom, foundation, armor
- Experience:
 - For your spiritual growth and experience of God in the scriptures
 - Along with devotional Bible study
 - Knowledge is incremental, the more you know the better
 - Topical study: tells you all God said about that topic

Divine Wisdom & Foundation

- Divine wisdom
 - Topical study equips you to think about a topic the way God thinks about it
 - It equips you with divine wisdom, the mind of God in an area
 - You do not know in bits but the totality of the scriptures
- A sure foundation
 - The sure foundation for what you should believe about different aspects
 - Many of our doctrinal headaches will be resolved in the individual believers will be empowered to study the topics for themselves
 - They will be well armed to properly analyze doctrines, creeds or teachings handed to them

An Armor to Engage in Warfare

- If you are sick, do a topical Bible study on healing
 - At the conclusion of the study, something will be stirred inside of you!
- If you are broke, study what the Word says about finances
- You are confused about speaking in tongues?
 - Put down those messages you are hearing
 - Put down that book on speaking in tongues
 - Take a break from what your pastor is teaching
 - You have heard enough what others are saying....get in yourself
 - Dig into the Word of God in a topical study to see FOR YOURSELF
 - This is the attitude that is missing in the Church today amongst the believers in the pews

Characteristics of the Topical Study

- Systematic
 - Your workflow should be organized and methodical
- Intentional
 - Plan to study every major topic, but choose your topics carefully
 - There are topics at specific seasons that would be most impactful
- Comprehensiveness
 - Seek to know the whole picture, all God has said about it
- Accuracy
 - Every scripture you use should be accurately interpreted
 - The health of the whole picture depends on the health of its individual verses

Topical Bible Study: Steps

1. Identify the topic
2. Bible dictionary review
3. Review of Bible verses
4. Lexical information
5. Arrange your findings
6. Applications from your study

Step 1: Identify a Topic

- Choose a topic
- Most impactful topics will be those that are most pressing in your heart at that time or relates with a circumstance in your life
- Some topics can be arranged in single words and others cannot
 - Faith is easy as a single topic
 - Salvation, for example, will require you to also search related words such as atonement, redemption, etc
- Plan to study major Christian topics such as faith, grace, the Holy Spirit, the soul, salvation, etc
- Also contentious topics such as tongues or tithes : make sure you study these too

Step 2: Review Bible Dictionaries

- This is a critical first step
- It provides a quick overview of the topic
- Bible dictionaries (English)
 - They would go through the entire Bible and gives you an overview of what the Bible has said about that topic
 - Different from commentaries
 - You will quickly learn the nuances, find direct and indirect references, etc
- Plan to review at least 2-3 Bible Dictionaries
- Free Logos software has two free
 - Eaton's
 - Lexham Bible Dictionary
- Write down important points ...

Step 3: Review Bible Verses

- Three parts to this step
 1. Locate and assemble the verses
 2. Identify key verses that will require more detailed study
 3. Analyze the verses
- Locating and assembling the relevant verses
 - You do not need to read the entire Bible!
 - Resources now available you can use: concordance, topical bibles, Software
- Concordance: list all the occurrences of a word in the Bible
 - Limitation: will not list verses where the topic is discussed indirectly without mentioning the specific term
 - Gives you direct verses only
- Topical Bibles: gives you direct and indirect references
 - Indirect references: eg discusses faith but does not use the word “faith”
 - Examples: Nave’s and Torrey’s
- Softwares today: make life easier. Logos is an example I recommend

Step 3b: Analyzing the verses

- Once you have assembled the verses, you need to find out what each verse says about that topic in its **context**
- It is not an exhaustive study of each verse, because in some cases you might have more than 300 references and that will be too tedious
- The goal: determine what that verse tells you about the topic
 - Maybe that one line it adds to your understanding of the topic
- Here, the principles you learned in the Inductive Bible Study Method
 - Observation and interpretation

Step 3c: Analyzing the verses

- Some verses will not require more in depth study, their meaning and contribution to the Topic might be straightforward
- Other verses will require more in depth
- Finally your key verses: might need even more study after you have completed the Topical Study!
- The key
 - Time efficient: do not spend your entire life studying just one topic!
 - Do not be distracted if you find other interesting facts: note them down for study later and move on
 - Accuracy of the meaning of each verse is key
 - Summary: be efficient and accurate

Step 4: Lexical Information

- In Step 2, we used Bible dictionaries(English dictionaries)
- A lexicon is simply a dictionary of the original languages that is Hebrew and Greek words
 - Classic English Dictionaries: explain the English word eg spirit
 - Greek lexicon will explain the Greek root word “pneuma”
 - Hebrew lexicon will explain the Hebrew root words ruach and neshama
- Lexical studies will be important for some topics
 - Eg if you are study the term “spirit”, it will be important to know the lexical meanings of the words in Hebrew and Greek
- Logos Free version has a Free lexicon
- I often use: BDAG, Louw-Nida in Greek, HALOT in Hebrew, etc (paid)

Step 5: Arrange your findings

- As you go through each of the steps, you write down your findings
- Then arrange and group your findings into categories as appropriate
- Arrange your findings in a final outline as appropriate
- Take a deep breath, and see for yourself the great work you have just done and your life will never be the same again when it comes to that topic!

Step 6: Application of Your Study

- Remember Application from the Inductive Bible Study Method
- Personal application and how to teach others
- Determine areas you still have questions (gaps in your understanding)

Optional steps depending on the topic

- There are other parts of the Topical Study you may have to perform depending on the Topic
- Theological overview
 - It might be important to have a brief review of Theological material on the topic
 - Eg if you are studying the soul, you might want to have a quick review of the Theological background
 - I find the Lexham Survey of Theology in Logos extremely helpful, one page condensed summaries of critical Theological material
 - You do not have to read an entire book or a long chapter
- Cultural Concepts
 - If you are studying something like Baptism, it will be very important for you to know the cultural context of the word as used then

Ready for An Assignment?

- Choose a simple topic that has been a challenge to you
 - Something that is posing difficulty to you
 - Simple enough that you can easily perform
- Eg: Simple topics that are often confusing to many Christians, because they are hearing so many interpretations
 - The baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - Speaking in tongues
 - Are you bold and courageous enough? Then dare to study tithing for yourself! 😊
- Do not rush, might take 2-3 months or longer!
 - Once completed, send to me at patrick@patrickoben.com

Resources and Getting help

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Resources and Help

- DeshenSchool.com has the PDFs and Videos of this lesson and prior Courses



ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS COURSES DESHEN STORE MY ACCOUNT

Online Courses

- Forums: Available to get help as needed. I will be monitoring the Forums to provide support as needed

- Reach out and ask for help if you get stuck!





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