

Week 4: Bible Study Methods Study Guide

Week Four: Integration

(1) Read and discuss Reasons to Study the Scriptures.

Reasons to Study the Scriptures

Knowing Scripture is pivotal to the walk of a Christian. The Bible indicates that Christians can have a close knowledge (“epiginosko”, *Greek*) of God. This knowledge comes from familiarity with God’s Word. Such knowledge has a tremendous benefit in life by allowing people to judge reflexively what is good or bad to avoid problems that complicate life (Hebrews 5:11). In addition, it is through God’s Word that Christians are led by the Holy Spirit; Romans 8:14: “ago” (*Greek*) means leading based on what is learned, and Ephesians 6:17 describes the Holy Spirit’s power being accessed in part through God’s Word.

Further, although not studied yet in great depth, some scientific evidence points to the advantage of knowing Scripture in life. Prior research suggests that performing the activities associated with church attendance, which may include listening to Scripture readings, reciting liturgy, hearing sermons, and by implication receiving some level of religious knowledge, was associated with enhanced well-being in Christians in general or in elderly Christians [1, 2, 3]. In addition, increased well-being was found in African Americans who participated not only in church attendance, but in many of the activities around church attendance, which included reading religious books, listening to religious television and radio [4].

More recently, Stewart and associates demonstrated that glaucoma patients, who indicated they read the Holy Scriptures, expressed greater personal well-being as noted by better coping, more positive attitudes, greater belief in God and a belief that God assisted with their treatment [5]. In addition, this same article noted that knowledge of salvation by grace and security of salvation, representing a basic level of Christian knowledge, were associated with enhanced characteristics of personal well-being, including comfort, peace, contentment, joy, purpose and community involvement. Further, research conducted at Grace Community Church (Bartlesville, Oklahoma) indicates that Scripture reading, as well as the frequency of Scripture reading, was associated with enhanced personal well-being (internal data, Teleios, Inc.).

Further, Stewart and associates in a review of the medical literature have shown that several key attributes which the Bible notes that we should gain in our lives such as forgiveness, gratitude, hope, and empathy, promote general wellbeing as well as pro-social and positive relational behavior. The authors commented that these attributes could be learned by education and were fostered through the faith community (internal data, Teleios, Inc.)

In summary, studying the Bible may provide:

- Cultural literacy
- Better learning skills
- Instructions how to help others
- Information about Jesus and God
- Wisdom to live our lives
- Better personal well-being and health

(2) Open e-Sword or <http://biblesuite.com> to Ephesians Chapter 1. Review homework assignment to record observations, interpretations and applications for verses 1-8.

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(3) Using Ephesians 1:1-8, complete Step 4 of the Inductive Bible Study Method. Record integrations in Column 4 of the attached worksheet.

Inductive Bible Study - A Systematic Approach – Step 4

IV. Integration: “where does it fit?”

a. Definition

- i. Integration is the climax of the inductive process. This brings Scripture knowledge together into a topical form that is applicable to every day conversation and problem solving.

E.g., using the first 3 steps of Bible study methods in a verse by verse study probably would not help a person with a marriage or relationship problem. However, integrating Bible passages about marriage (such as Ephesians 5:21-33, Matthew 5:27-32, and I Corinthians 7) into a topical format would be beneficial.

Bringing diverse Scripture passages together topically helps to organize and complete knowledge of Scripture for effective access and communication.

b. Goal

- i. Develop a biblical theology (i.e., topical knowledge of Scripture)
- ii. Develop a biblical view of life
- iii. Generalize the topic and information in the verse or section

c. Process

- i. Generalize the passage or verse to a single topic
 1. A passage may have more than one topic (e.g., Ephesians 1:13-14 could be integrated into passages about the Holy Spirit or assurance of salvation)
- ii. Integrate the general topic with other Bible sections about the same theme to build a topical knowledge of Scripture

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d. Tools:

- i. e-Sword: use Bible search function  in tool bar at top of page to find verses using the same words
- ii. <http://biblesuite.com>: Select Concordance from the drop-down list
 in the upper right side of the page
- iii. Case study: Ephesians 1:3-14
This section presents many amazing aspects of salvation and confirms that it is based on faith alone.
Integrate with Ephesians 2:7-10 and Romans 3:22-25 and 10:9 for the process of salvation.
Integrate Ephesians 1:7 with Romans 3:24 to explain redemption.
Integrate Ephesians 1:4-5 (spiritual position as holy and adopted) with Ephesians 1:10-12 (everlasting salvation).

This completes this Bible study methods course. Thank you very much for your participation. We hope you have found it helpful and useful in your future pursuit of studying the Scriptures. Please forward any comments or questions to your teacher or Bill (wcstewart@live.com) or Jeanette (jeanetteastewart@hotmail.com) Stewart.

¹ Fry PS. Religious involvement, spirituality and personal meaning for life: Existential predictors of \psychological wellbeing in community-residing and institutional care elders. *Aging Ment Health* 2000;4:375-387.

The article indicates that well-being is positively correlated with social interaction through church and church functions. The article also suggests that church members actually demonstrate a positive effect on the well-being of others.

² Ortega ST, Crutchfield RD, Rushing WA. Race differences in elderly personal well-being: Friendship, family, and church. *Res Aging* 1983;5:101-118.

This article suggests a positive relationship between tools provided by Christian faith and well-being. These tools may involve community (which relates to church attendance), hope, meaning systems, behavioral constraints and elements of church practice (which could also include service and knowledge).

³ Perry BGF. The relationship between faith and well-being. *J Relig Health* 1988;37:125-136.

The results note that personal meaning, involvement in formal religion, participation in spiritual practices, importance of religion, degree of comfort received from religion, inner peace, and accessibility to religious resources were significant predictors of well-being. This article is relevant to church attendance and may also be relevant to knowledge.

⁴ Levin JS, Taylor RJ. Panel analysis of religious involvement in African Americans: Contemporaneous vs. longitudinal effects. *J Sci Study Relig* 1998;37:695-709.

⁵ Stewart WC, Sharpe ED, Kristoffersen CJ, Nelson LA, Stewart JA. Association of strength of religious adherence to attitudes regarding glaucoma or ocular hypertension. *Ophthalmic Res* 2011;45:53-56.