

The Biographical Method of Bible Study



Psalm 119:18 "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

We will cover three main things today for this method:

- What the Biographical Method of Bible Study Is
- How to use this study method and what we need to do it.
- Biographical study example.

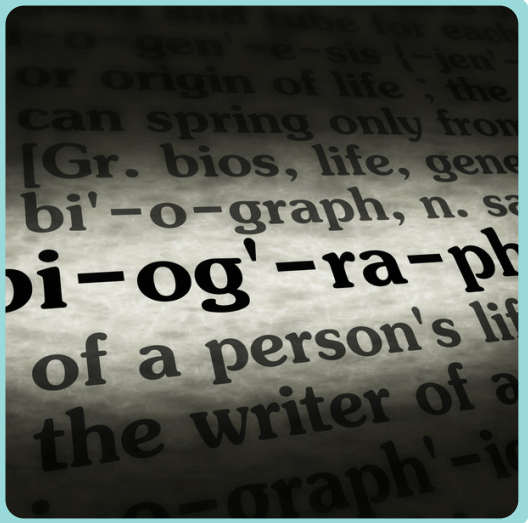
DAY 16

Why do we need to meditate on the Bible?

The Biographical Method of Bible Study is where we pick an individual from the Bible and we study his or her life to gain perspective, Bible truths, life lessons and applications from them.

This should be a simple and very effective method for us in today's culture because the majority of what we read, and watch is centered around a main character's life.

This method will give us greater insight into a person's life which allows us to understand why they would say/write or do certain things that we see in the Biblical narrative. It also can give a deeper understanding of some Biblical truths that we can and should apply to our lives.



How to Use the Biographical Method

CHOOSE

01

Choose an individual from the Bible for your study (see the list at the bottom of the notes for a selection of people from the Bible) and find all the passages of scripture that reference that person.

- Remember that a person can be referred to by their proper name but also in ambiguous references. (ie: Jesus' mother vs. Mary). A concordance is useful for where their proper name is mentioned.

OBSERVE

02

Read and reread every passage in which that person is mentioned or ambiguously mentioned and when you're done READ IT AGAIN.

- The point is to look for key things each time you read the passage. Focus on one thing each time. For example, the first time you can note your first impression of the person, the second could be an outline of the person's life. Thirdly you could obtain some insights into the person's life. The possibilities are endless.
- My personal recommendation is to shoot for 30-50 TOTAL INDIVIDUAL observations about that specific person. Once you've done that you're good to move to step 3.

RECALL

03

Recall what you have gained or learned. These should be listed out in your observations.

- I usually pick three to five MAIN ideas and really focus in on those, but you can pick as many as you would like.
 - What you will find is that the life that person lived reflects a Biblical truth that is good and applicable for our lives.

Apply these truths to your life. James says that to read the Word and not apply it is like looking at a mirror and immediately forgetting what you look like. IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. Paul said in his letter to Timothy that the Word of God is USEFUL, but it can't be unless we USE it.

- When looking at the observations you've made and are picking through them, look closely at the ones that apply to you. Some of these you may already be doing or living and some you may need to get better at. Either way, God's word is only useful to us, when we APPLY IT.

SHARE IT

05

I was told a long time ago that you don't really understand something until you can teach or share it SIMPLY. What I have found is that I typically get a greater insight into something once I do share it with someone. So the last step of this method is to go tell someone what you have learned and watch as God opens both of your eyes to the infinite truth and life found in His Word.



Example of the Biographical Method:

01

Choose a person

- Lydia
- Proper reference: **Acts 16: 11-15, 40**
- Ambiguous reference: **Philippians 4:2-3** – “women”



02

Observations

- She was one woman in a group of women who had gathered at the Jewish place of prayer by the river. **(v.13-14)**
- She was from Thyatira. **(v.14)**
- She was a seller of purple goods. **(v. 14)**
- She was a “worshipper of God” of “one who feared God” **(v.14)**
- The Lord opened her heart while listening to Paul talk about Jesus. **(v.14)**
- She committed her life to Jesus publicly. **(v.15)**
- She led her entire household to follow Jesus and be baptized. **(v.15)**
- She was a leader. (see last observation and the 3rd observation) **(v.15)**
- She was humble **(v. 15)**
- She was a good salesperson **(v. 15)**
- She was well off or wealthy **(v. 15)**
- Paul and Timothy considered her “faithful to the Lord” **(v.15)**
- Lydia became/was a great source of aid to Paul in Philippi **(v. 40)**
- Lydia’s house was the first house church in Philippi. **(v. 40)**
- Lydia and Lydia’s household were important partners with Paul in spreading the gospel throughout Europe. **(Philippians 4:2)**

03

Recall

- Your profession/job is not holding you back from telling people about Jesus/spreading the Gospel.
 - Lydia's skillset and means acquired from her profession made her the perfect person to launch the Philippian church and spread the Gospel in the region. It gave her a platform that others did not have.
- The position of your heart matters when listening/or reading His word.
 - Neither God nor Paul forced Lydia to hear what Paul was saying. It says the Lord "opened her heart, to pay attention." That's why we pray before we read God's Word. We want God to position our heart to pay attention to what we are reading.
- Like Lydia, if we are humble and open to God, our resources, skills, and influence can and will be used by God to further His Kingdom on Earth. Her home, household, leadership, skillset, and wealth were all used to bring the good news to that area.

04

Apply

- As a Pastor, this doesn't apply, but as a Coach at my gym it does. Me coaching doesn't hold me back from being able to spread the gospel, but it gives me a platform to do it better because I get to be around people from all walks of life.
- As a Pastor this one really applies because we can often read the Bible to be able to preach something and not just to receive the life it brings. I must always ask God to open my heart to His word.
- I can now begin to take inventory of all the gifts, talents, and resources God has given me and be intentional about using them for his Kingdom.

05

Now share it!

What is your one takeaway from this session?

