

Open My Eyes

A Study for Youth on Studying the Bible

Treasures are not for the fainthearted, and Bible study is hard work. But prayer, careful reading, and meditation, combined with good Bible study skills produce a bountiful harvest of truth and understanding. *Open My Eyes* is a curriculum for senior high youth on how to study the Bible. It focuses on the different genres of biblical literature and the process of inductive Bible study, and provides opportunities to practice the skills of observation, interpretation, and application. The end goal is that students might understand God's Word as the biblical authors intended, and begin a life-long journey of learning to know and treasure God through studying and applying His Word to their everyday lives.



Lesson 1: Your Word is Truth: The Authority of the Bible

Memory Verse: Psalm 119:160

The Sovereign God is the Author of the Bible; therefore, it is true and authoritative in all its parts.

The starting point of this curriculum is the truth of the authority of the Bible. Because the Sovereign God of the Universe is the Author behind the authors of the Bible, the Bible is true in all its parts and completely reliable. The internal agreement of Scripture gives evidence that this is a divine book, inspired by the Holy Spirit of the Living God. This first lesson ends with the sober warning that God's authoritative Word cannot be changed, questioned, or disobeyed without grave consequences.

Lesson 2: Open My Eyes: The Clarity of Scripture

Memory Verse: Psalm 119:18

The Bible is a clear book that the Holy Spirit uses to enable ordinary people to know God.

God is not a far-off distant deity, but He wants to be known by man. Therefore the Bible, the revelation of God Himself, was written to all people and all generations. It is clear, written to be understood by ordinary people, yet the truths of the Bible are spiritually discerned by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 3: Able to Make You Wise: The Necessity and Sufficiency of Scripture

Memory Verses: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible is necessary and sufficient for salvation, spiritual growth, and guidance.

Answering the questions, "Is there more than one way to God? Isn't it enough to be sincere in whatever faith you choose?" this lesson emphasizes the insufficiency of sincerity and highlights the need for truth—reliable, historical truth found in a unified book, inspired by the Holy Spirit. As such, the Bible is necessary not only for salvation but also for maintaining spiritual life and for knowing God's will. It is also the sufficient source of truth, containing all we need for salvation and faith, and must not be added to.

Lesson 4: I Will Meditate: Studying the Bible*Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 2:15*

Both studying the Bible through the help of the Holy Spirit and meditating on memorized verses are crucial to understanding the truths of the Bible.

A haphazard approach to reading the Bible often results in overlooking large portions of the Bible and missing its overall structure. But, a plan or system for Bible reading and study can help one to avoid these pitfalls. However, a plan is not a sufficient guide to understanding the truths of the Bible. Understanding is the result of a combination of a redeemed heart, diligent study, and dependency on the Holy Spirit. Only then can we truly discern the author's intended meaning of a passage and glean the spiritual truths that encourage us to grow. Meditation on the Word through Scripture memory is a further means of growth.

Lesson 5: These Are Written: Overview of God's Redemptive Plan*Memory Verse: John 20:31*

Understanding the connections between the Old and New Testaments and the continuous plan of God reveals Jesus, the central focus of the Bible.

What is the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament? What overarching structure ties them together? What is the central message of the Bible? These are some of the questions answered in this lesson. Students will discover that the Old Testament informs the New Testament; the New Testament interprets the Old Testament. The Bible is one continuous, interconnected story with a central message as God's plan and purposes progressively unfold. Ultimately, the whole Bible is about Jesus. It was written that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God and receive life in His name.

Lesson 6: Observe: Questions*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:24*

Prayer and careful observation of the text through asking questions are critical to good Bible study.

Although the first step to good Bible reading and study is prayer, God has also given us "techniques" to use that are helpful in understanding the Bible. One such technique is careful observation of the text, including developing the skill of asking questions of the text. To do such, requires us to be purposeful and active when approaching a Bible text.

Lesson 7: Observe: Historical Context*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:25*

Knowing the historical context is important in understanding a text.

In this second lesson regarding observation of the text, students will learn the importance of the historical context in which the Biblical authors were writing. Understanding the author's situation, the historical setting of the book, and the customs of the time can be a key to understanding a passage. Students will be taught to look for the context within the biblical book, as well as in outside resources.

Lesson 8: Observe: Immediate Literary Context (Part 1)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:26*

Checking the context of a word, verse, or paragraph in the Bible is of critical importance, because failure to do so can lead to error.

Words are in sentences; sentences are in paragraphs; paragraphs are in chapters; chapters are in books; books are in the Book. All of these contexts must be examined in order to determine the meaning of a text. The Bible is easily misunderstood if a word, verse, or paragraph is taken out of context. In this lesson, students will be taught that "Context is king!"

Lesson 9: Observe: Immediate Literary Context (Part 2)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:27*

To correctly interpret a Bible passage, the author's intended meaning must be understood through exploring the context.

Continuing the teaching of the previous lesson, this lesson instructs students to understand the author's purpose in writing in order to understand the meaning of a verse. A warning is also taught: Christians can be deceived in their understanding of the Word if they do not carefully study the Bible.

Lesson 10: In the Beginning: Old Testament Narratives*Memory Verses: Psalm 77:11-12*

Bible narratives reveal God's character, His purposes, and His involvement with man, and have been written for our instruction.

The narratives of the Bible show us that God is a living God, who is involved in the lives of His people daily. History is HIS story and reflects God's character and purposes. To reduce the Old Testament stories to moral lessons or to allegorize them without warrant is to err in reading the Bible. In this lesson, students are taught to read the Bible within the context of creation, sin, redemption and the return of Christ.

Lesson 11: Observe: Grammar (Part 1)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:28*

Studying the grammar in a Bible passage is an aid to better understanding the text and knowing God.

In this lesson, students will learn that grammar is not just for English class, but is a means to better understanding the Bible. Identifying nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives is a tool we can employ to pursue truth, and to know God so that we may worship Him.

Lesson 12: Observe: Grammar (Part 2)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:29*

Studying the grammar in a Bible passage is an aid to better understanding the text and knowing God.

This lesson continues where the previous lesson leaves off. Students will add more parts of speech in marking up a passage to determine the meaning of the text. By the end of this lesson, students should come to the conclusion that "grammar matters!"

Lesson 13: Hear, O Israel: The Law*Memory Verses: Deuteronomy 10:12-13*

The Law was a binding covenant between God and His people, which reveals His character and His will.

Students are taught in this lesson that the Law has implications for us today. Although the ceremonial and civil law do not directly apply to us today, the moral law and the principles behind the Law still have application to us. God's Law is a reflection of His character and His will, and contains a description of the means by which God could pardon sin. Applying the rule that "Context is king!," students learn that the Law cannot be separated from its historical and theological context.

Lesson 14: Observe: Literary Techniques*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:30*

Identifying the literary techniques of repetition, listing, and rhetorical questions in a passage helps us discern its meaning.

Biblical writers employed literary techniques deliberately in order to communicate the truth more clearly and add strength to their words. In this lesson students will explore the use of repetition to establish a theme, lists to group thoughts or show progression, and rhetorical questions to add emphasis.

Lesson 15: Observe: Figurative Language (Part 1)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:31*

Figurative language in the Bible communicates spiritual truth powerfully to our hearts, but it must be handled carefully.

This is the first of a two-part lesson on figurative language. Bible writers used both literal and figurative language to communicate their message. They used figurative language to make their points more forceful, to communicate spiritual truth in a known context, and to create an emotional response. This lesson focuses on similes, metaphors, personification, anthropomorphism, and hyperbole.

Lesson 16: Observe: Figurative Language (Part 2)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:32*

Figurative language in the Bible communicates spiritual truth powerfully to our hearts, but it must be handled carefully.

This lesson continues the instruction on figurative language introduced in the previous lesson with further practice. Students will also learn that specific rules regarding figurative language must be followed for correct interpretation.

Lesson 17: LORD, Our LORD: Biblical Poetry*Memory Verse: Exodus 15:2*

The Bible uses poetry to engage the heart because man was created not just to know God, but to love Him as well.

Students look at the account of the crossing of the Red Sea in the historical narrative of Exodus 14:26-31 and in the poetic form of Exodus 15:1-6 in order to understand the power of poetry to stir the heart. In addition to identifying the previously studied figurative language forms, they will also learn about parallelism in Hebrew poetry. The different kinds of Psalms are also explored.

Lesson 18: Seek Wisdom: Wisdom Books*Memory Verse: Proverbs 3:7*

In the wisdom books, the Bible reveals true wisdom through statements of general truth, and through the overall themes of the book.

This lesson explores the genre of wisdom books. Students discover the meaning of wisdom in Proverbs and are given tools for understanding the proverbs. Emphasizing the need to put wisdom passages in the context of the whole book, students chart the beginning, conflict, climax, and resolution of the book of Job.

Lesson 19: Observe: Classification and Clauses*Memory Verses: Psalm 119:33*

Classifying statements can encourage application.

In this lesson, students are taught to identify independent and dependent clauses and the benefit of identifying clauses in interpreting scripture. Classifying statements in Scripture is also discussed.

Lesson 20: Observe: Connections*Memory Verses: Psalm 119:34*

Discovering the connections between thoughts can unlock the meaning of a text.

In this lesson, students learn to identify connecting words in order to discover the connections between thoughts in a passage.

Lesson 21: Observe: Logical Connections*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:35*

To correctly understand a passage, it is important to observe the connections, check the context, and follow the author's flow of thought.

Continuing the teaching on understanding connections between thoughts in a passage, students are given tools to follow the author's flow of thought.

Lesson 22: Thus Says the Lord: Prophecy—Forthtelling*Memory Verse: Micah 7:18*

In the context of the immediate present, distant future, and far distant future, the prophets denounced sin and preached repentance, while always revealing a message of hope.

The prophets were messengers of God forthtelling His message of repentance. Their oracles pronounce God's judgment on Israel and Judah, but also contain a message of hope. Students are taught how to understand the prophetic message through the prophets' lens of the immediate, the distant, and the far distant.

Lesson 23: The End Shall Come: Prophecy—Foretelling*Memory Verse: Revelation 3:5*

Through apocalyptic literature reveals future events, it should be read looking for main ideas and the revelation of Jesus.

Apocalyptic literature contains both literal and symbolic language. The imagery, dreams, and visions that appear in apocalyptic literature make it hard to understand. Students are instructed to be tentative in assigning meaning to symbols that are not explained and to focus on main ideas rather than a chronology of end-times events. Most importantly, students are urged to seek Jesus in reading the book of Revelation.

Lesson 24: Broader Literary and Theological Context*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:36*

A passage must be understood in the broader contexts of its chapter and book, of the whole Bible, and of man's fallen condition and redemption.

This lesson focuses on understanding Scripture in its broad context, as well as its immediate context. This skill is taught by looking at the books of Habakkuk and Jonah, and by understanding how to read a text in light of Luke's words about Jesus in Luke 24:27—And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Lesson 25: Observe: Structure*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:37*

To understand the author's intent and flow of thought, it is important to observe the structure of the text.

Students are taught in this lesson to discover the structure of a passage by reading it several times, looking for transition markers to break the text into passages, and assigning a title to each passage. Instruction is given on how to find the main point of a passage.

Lesson 26: Observe: Flow of Thought (Mapping)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:38*

To correctly understand a passage, it is important to observe the connections, check the context, and follow the author's flow of thought.

In this lesson, students are taught to discover the flow of thought in a passage through the use of mapping and then given the opportunity to practice this skill.

Lesson 27: Observe: Flow of Thought (Outlining)*Memory Verses: Psalm 119:39-40*

Outlining is a useful tool for understanding the author's flow of thought.

In this lesson, students are taught to discover the flow of thought in a passage through the making an outline, and then given the opportunity to practice this skill.

Lesson 28: The Word Became Flesh: The Gospels*Memory Verse: Mark 5:19b*

The gospels reveal the person and redemptive work of Jesus through the point of view of each individual human author.

The gospels record the life of Jesus. However they are not biographies, nor strictly chronological accounts of the life of Christ. They are God's message to His people given through the gospel writers to tell the good news of redemption through His Son. The stories of Jesus and the record of his teaching are often arranged topically to present to us who Jesus is and what He has done for us. In this lesson, students will explore the similarities and differences between the gospels to discover the individual author's audience and purpose. In the process, students will glean understanding on how to interpret the gospels.

Lesson 29: And He Told Them a Parable: Parables*Memory Verse: Luke 8:10*

Parables reveal one main spiritual truth to believers through the use of examples in the physical world.

This lesson explains Jesus' use of parables and teaches students how to read a parable to interpret its meaning.

Lesson 30: Grace Be With You: Letters*Memory Verses: Jude 1:20-21*

The letters must be understood within their historical and literary context, and in combination with the rest of the Bible.

The letter format of greeting, body, and farewell is explained in this lesson, as well as specific instruction on how to determine the author's meaning and purpose in writing his letter.

Lesson 31: Interpret: Principles for Interpretation (Part 1)*Memory Verse: Psalm 25:5*

The Bible is rightly understood through the help of the Holy Spirit, who works alongside sound interpretive principles.

The Bible is a spiritual book and must be spiritually understood through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. In addition, God has given us sound principles of interpretation to help us rightly interpret the Bible and avoid falling into error. In this lesson, students are taught four keys to interpreting the Bible revealed in Psalm 25:5, as well five interpretation principles. Opportunity is given to apply these principles of interpretation.

Lesson 32: Interpret: Principles for Interpretation (Part 2)*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:99*

The Bible is rightly understood through the help of the Holy Spirit, who works alongside sound interpretive principles.

Continuing the teaching from the previous lesson, students are taught three more principles of sound interpretation and given the opportunity to put these principles into practice.

Lesson 33: Interpret: Use the Bible to Interpret the Bible*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:125*

Scripture is the primary tool for interpreting Scripture.

This lesson impresses on students the most important principle of interpretation—to use the Bible to interpret the Bible. In order to do this, students are given two more principles of interpretation and the opportunity to apply these principles.

Lesson 34: Interpret: Discovering the Principles*Memory Verses: Colossians 1:9-10*

Biblical principles are deduced from Scripture and are applicable to all people in all cultures at all times.

Students are taught in this lesson to find the underlying Biblical principle which is applicable to all people in all cultures at all times. These principles are gleaned from the text and should be verified by other scriptures. Opportunity is given to students to discover the principle in several texts.

Lesson 35: Apply and Respond*Memory Verse: James 1:22*

Obedience to Scripture requires us to discover personal application to a text and to act in response to the application.

The inductive Bible study steps of application and making a response are taught in this lesson. Students are shown two methods of determining a personal application of a text, and then are impressed with the need to be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer.

Lesson 36: Strive, Lest You Fail to Enter*Memory Verse: Hebrews 4:7b or Hebrews 4:11*

The Word of God brings salvation when it is received in faith by those who are diligently striving to enter God's rest.

The final five lessons of the curriculum focus on presenting the work of the Word in salvation and presenting a gospel message. This lesson shows the effectiveness of the Word of God in penetrating man's heart and the warning not to harden your heart. The lesson ends with an explanation of what it means to strive to enter God's rest. These truths are learned by employing the inductive Bible study method focusing on finding logical connections, finding the main point, mapping a passage, and making a flow of thought chart.

Lesson 37: You Must Be Born Again*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:41 or John 3:3b*

Saving faith can only come as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing about new birth.

The lesson opens by discussing the two responses to Jesus recorded by John—acceptance and rejection. The responses of “many,” Nicodemus, and the scribes and Pharisees are examined. Students are given the opportunity to mark a passage to discover the meaning of genuine belief.

Lesson 38: Presumption or Repentance?*Memory Verse: Romans 2:4*

God mercifully withholds judgement and extends His grace toward men to give them the opportunity to repent.

Students put their knowledge of interpreting parables into practice through discerning the meaning of the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree. In the process, they learn the difference between presumption and repentance, the purpose of God's kindness, the consequence of a failure to repent, and the righteousness of God's judgment.

Lesson 39: Remember Me*Memory Verse: John 6:37*

God is at work in the lives of those He effectually calls to bring them to salvation.

Through looking at various passages, students are acquainted with the process of salvation— election, the gospel call, regeneration, conversion (repentance and faith), justification, and adoption. They also not only look at the responses of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, but also the context of this historical narrative. The lesson concludes with the truth from John 6:37 that Jesus accepts all who come to Him.

Lesson 40: The Delight of My Heart*Memory Verse: Psalm 119:42 or Jeremiah 15:16*

God's words are sweet to those who have a close relationship with Him.

God's promise of either blessing or curse in Deuteronomy 30:15-18 and the conditions for each are illustrated as fulfilled in the life of Jeremiah and his fulfilled prophecy concerning Judah's destruction. Through examining various texts, students are shown that God keeps His Word and that God's Word sustains His people in the midst of difficulty and trial. In the application section, students are asked to examine their heart attitude toward the Word of God.

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