

“HOW TO CHOOSE A BIBLE STUDY” CHECKLIST

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Ask Jesus to help you with all of the following steps to choosing a Bible study for yourself or for a group. Depend on Him to show you what to do. He is faithful!

CHOOSE A BIBLE STUDY NOT A POPULAR BOOK STUDY

- Look for a prepared Bible Study that covers portions of the Bible (whole books or sections of the Bible) in an organized fashion. These workbooks or study guides are scripted to help you learn by reading the Bible verse(s) then answering specific questions based on what you just read.
- Look for a Bible study workbook that focuses more on what you are learning from your study of the Bible passages than on reading commentary from the author.
- Look at the format of the study. Can the questions be used as a guide for leading the discussion? A well-written Bible Study guide will make it easier for you to learn how to lead a Bible Study.
- *Don't choose a popular book containing some Bible verses in it that may have a leader's guide in the back. That is not a Bible study. Those can be valuable learning tools but not as a Bible study.*

CHOOSE AN “INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY”

There are two methods of Bible Study —inductive and deductive.

- The **Inductive Process** follows three steps: observation, interpretation and application. The process is more easily understood by answering three questions:

1) *What does the passage say? (Observation: what's actually there)*

2) *What does it mean? (Interpretation: the author's intended meaning for his/her audience)*

3) *How do I live this out in my life? (Application: making it personal)*

This is the best way to study the Bible. Look at what's there. Learn what it means and teaches you. Then, live it out in your life.

- The **Deductive Method** starts with a topic or theme then looks for verses in the Bible that match what you are wanting to know. There are two cautions about using this method of Bible study:
 - *Caution #1:* This method can be used to selectively choose Bible verses to prove anything that someone wants to prove.
 - *Caution #2:* This method feeds the “look-imagine-see” way of looking at the Bible. One *looks* at a verse or passages, *imagines* what they want it to say, and then “*sees*” what they have imagined. Many types of false teaching have started with this kind of “look-imagine-see” process.

The deductive method is not a reliable Bible Study method. Be aware that sometimes popular topics use this method. Check the front of the study guide to see if it says it follows the inductive process.

All Joyful Walk Bible Studies are “Prepared” and “Inductive” Bible Studies.

CONSIDER THE TIME YOU HAVE TO STUDY OR THAT YOUR GROUP TO MEETS

➤ For yourself:

- Do you have time to work on a lesson 4-5 days per week? You can find many Bible Studies that are divided into daily bites for you to do.
- Does your season of life give you limited time to work on a lesson? Choose a shorter study—something that can be completed in one or two sittings. Then, you won't get behind or discouraged when you can't keep up with the study. Shorter studies are also great for summer because you can feel more relaxed trying to get through it.

➤ For a group:

- Do you have 1½ to 2 hours? You can likely cover one lesson per session without rushing it.
- Do you have only an hour or less? Choose a shorter study or a study that can be divided into two sessions. You don't want to feel rushed trying to get through all of the questions in a short time. You want the group time to be a learning experience, not just a challenge to get through it.

CONSIDER YOUR FAMILIARITY WITH THE BIBLE

➤ Are you new to the Bible or will your group members be mostly those new to the Bible?

- Look for a Bible study designed for those who are new to the Bible or beginners at studying the Bible. See my post on [HELPING BIBLE STUDY NEWBIES](#) for additional insight.
- Look for basic lessons with simple questions and applications that are easy-to-understand.

“GRACEFUL BEGINNINGS” STUDIES are designed for anyone new to the Bible.

- ✓ Are you a new Christian? Begin with ***A Fresh Start***. This will give you confidence that you are heading in the right direction.
- ✓ Do you need to get to know Jesus better? ***Painting the Portrait of Jesus*** covers what Jesus says about Himself in the gospel of John.
- ✓ Do you need to know more about the character of God? ***The God You Can Know*** teaches how to trust God as your loving Father.
- ✓ Do you deal with a lot of fear? ***The Walk from Fear to Faith*** teaches how to trust God with your fears.
- ✓ Do you feel lost in the New Testament letters? ***Grace Overflowing*** gives an overview of all of Paul's letters and how each teaches something special about Jesus.
- ✓ Do you need to have confidence in Jesus' love? ***Satisfied by His Love*** is a new study that affirms Jesus' love in your life.

Find *Graceful Beginnings Bible Studies* at melanienewton.com/free-bible-studies.

- **Do you (or will your group members) already have some experience studying the Bible?** You have lots of options. Just make sure they follow the Inductive Bible Study Method as described above. Consider *Joyful Walk Bible Studies* for growing Christians.

Check out [“JOYFUL WALK BIBLE STUDIES”](#) for growing Christians.

- ✓ Are you dealing with a lot of fear in your lives, or do you need perseverance to face challenges with strong faith? Two Old Testament studies are particularly good for this. ***Everyday Women, Ever-Faithful God*** (Old Testament women) and ***Profiles of Perseverance*** (Old Testament men).
- ✓ Do you want to study the life of Jesus? Choose ***Heartbreak to Hope*** (Gospel of Mark).
- ✓ Have you been in church for a while but still don't understand all that Jesus did for you? Work through the ***Graceful Living*** study to learn the daily benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection as well as your new identity in Christ, freeing you to live a new life with confidence and joy. Also in a daily devotional format, ***Graceful Living Today***.
- ✓ Do you need to get a good handle on God as creator and sustainer? ***Connecting Faith to Life on Planet Earth*** takes you through Genesis 1-11 thoroughly and includes competent scientific and historical information that supports what the Bible actually says.
- ✓ Are you needing some joy in your life? ***Knowing Jesus...Knowing Joy!*** Is a study of the book of Philippians.
- ✓ Are you looking for adventure with a purpose? Work through ***Radical Acts*** (the book of Acts) or ***Live Out His Love*** (New Testament women) which will prepare you to share your faith with others around you. ***The God-Dependent Woman*** (2nd Corinthians) will lead you on adventure as you learn to rely on God more than on yourself.
- ✓ Are you surrounded by false teaching and need to hang on firmly to truth? Work through ***Healthy Living*** (Colossians and Philemon), ***Adorn Yourself with Godliness*** (1 Timothy and Titus), or ***Perspective*** (1 & 2 Thessalonians).
- ✓ Are you thinking about growing old and how to stay faithful to Jesus as you do so? ***To Be Found Faithful*** would be perfect for that.

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CHOOSE SOMETHING THAT INTERESTS YOU AND WILL GROW YOU IN YOUR FAITH

- **What would be the best focus for you in your life right now or for your group?** Consider what you have already studied and what might be the best thing to build onto that. Choose your Bible study based on these.
- **What will make you passionate about the study so that you will want to dig in and learn for yourself?** It's important that you feed yourself from the Word of God before you try to lead others in a discussion. And, the joy of what you are learning will be infectious to those in your group.
- **Are you putting together a new group?** It's best for you to just choose the study and run with it rather than trying to please everyone in the group. You can't please everyone anyway!

BE CAREFUL ABOUT CHOOSING A VIDEO-DRIVEN STUDY

Wonderful gifted teachers have made their messages available through Bible Studies that have accompanying videos. You can always learn something from gifted Bible teachers. But, when it comes to choosing a Bible Study for yourself or for your group, here are some questions to ask and things to consider before choosing a study that requires watching a video to complete it:

- **Does the study lead everyone to dig into the Bible for themselves to learn?**
 - Is the personal Bible study time actual study of the Bible according to the inductive process or does it contain mostly thought and reflection questions?
 - Can someone learn from the Bible passage through the study without watching the video at all? If yes, sounds like it might be a good study. If no, avoid it.
- **Will the cost for purchasing the videos and books be easily shared by the group members?**
 - Video-driven studies are convenient but can be expensive. You must still purchase a workbook for every participant plus buy access to the videos.
- **Will the technology be a frustration for you?**
 - You must depend on technology to work perfectly every time to watch videos. Will that be a challenge for you? Will it fluster you if showing the video doesn't work during your group time?
- **Will watching the videos limit group interaction if time is short? Or, can group members watch the videos on their own?**
 - It is very hard to find a video-driven study that can be used in an hour or less during a typical lunch hour at work or during an evening study at the end of a hard work day. The videos are generally too long to allow for much group discussion at all.
 - It's hard to build community when you are just watching someone else talk. And, watching a video together is not a good substitute for interaction within the group.
 - Can the group members watch the videos on their own time through an app or website and then share what they learned during group time? This is the better way when it comes to building community within the time limits that you have.
- **As leader, will you feel restricted to focus your discussion on whatever is taught in the video?**
 - It is better if you can focus on what your particular group needs the most from the study.
 - Again, look at the personal study portion to see if it covers the passage well.

The video should be like “icing on the cake” not the cake itself.

Remember to ask Jesus to help you choose a Bible study for yourself or for a group. Depend on Him to show you what to do. He is faithful!

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Have you finished a
Joyful Walk Bible Study?

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Now
on

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Please share about this resource on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and more places so that others can learn “How to Choose a Bible Study.”



Melanie Newton helps women learn how to study the Bible for themselves through her *Joyful Walk Bible Studies*. She also teaches online courses for anyone to grow their Bible-teaching skills to help others—all with the goal of getting to know Jesus more along the way. She has lots of resources available on her website melanienewton.com for you to use in your life and ministry. Melanie believes that it's always the right time for a Dr. Pepper, that her family is the greatest, and being outside for even a few minutes is a daily necessity. Woohoo!

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