

Small Group Leadership

Summary of Five Bible Study Methods

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Purpose for this Document

The content of this document covers 5 of 12 different Bible Study methods from the Rick Warren Book "*Bible Study Methods*", which you can find in the church library. The information here is intended to be "**cliff notes**" for **small group leaders** who want to lead discussions on the Bible itself.

The notes contained in this document summarize only the 5 most common methods for Bible study. You may find that, once you scan these notes, you want to get the book and read a little more about the method you have chosen. There are 7 other options in the Rick Warren book not covered here.

Method 1. Chapter Summary

- See page 49 in *Bible Study Methods* book
- Example: Group studies Chapter 2 of the Book of James
- Bonus Question – how many chapters are there in the Bible? (1,189)
- Method – Read the chapter several times and outline the relevant C’s:
 - Caption
 - Contents
 - Chief People
 - Choice Verse
 - Crucial Words
 - Challenges
 - Cross-References
 - Christ Seen
 - Central Lessons
 - Conclusion(s)
- Pros/Cons
 - Good method for those new to Bible Study
 - Easy to learn and prepare
 - Not a lot of other reference tools needed
- Similar to ABCDE method
- Refer to sample and blank forms in the book, pages 57-60

Method 2. Character Quality

- See page 61 in the *Bible Study Methods* book
- Qualities could be positive or “corrective”
- Examples of Character Qualities:
 - Positive: Humility, Faithfulness, Contentment
 - Corrective: Rebelliousness, Pride, Fear
- Method: Select a character quality
 - Name it
 - Name its opposite form
 - Study the word as described in the dictionary
 - Cross-reference that word in the Bible
 - Perform a brief biographical study of those who have shown that character quality

- Let each person in the group:
 - Find a memory verse related to that quality that best fits their needs.
 - Select an application for practicing that quality.
 - Write a personal illustration of how they will practice it.
- Pros/Cons of this Method:
 - Good for all kinds of audiences, regardless of age, background, length of time as a Christian
 - Requires potential use of more reference sources
- Refer to page 70 for a list of potential qualities to study
- See page 71 for an example of a completed study, and page 75 for a blank form your group can copy and use.

See Appendix C in the book, page 259, for an exhaustive list of Character Qualities that might be considered

Method 3. Thematic Study

- Refer to page 79 in the *Bible Study Methods* book
- This method uses a predefined question or small number of questions to uncover what God has to say about a topic. Involves the use of questions starting with:
 - What?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - Why?
 - How?
 - Who?
- Examples of a Thematic Study:
 - What does God hate?
 - What are the fruits of the Spirit?
 - What are the traits of a wise man?
 - Why does God allow suffering?
- Approach: The method/questions are:
 - Choose a theme
 - Decide on 2-3 key questions (fewer if the theme is broad)
 - Look up and list the relevant thematic verses or passages
 - Ask the “W” questions as you review verses
 - Draw conclusions
 - Have each attendee write out a personal application

- Pros/Cons
 - Few other tools or reference sources required
 - Good for broad topics
 - Good for use with mentor/mentee relationships
- Example completed form on page 88, and blank form on page 92

Method 4. Biographical Study

- Refer to page 97 in *Methods* book
- Examples: the life of Abraham or Ruth
- Method: Select a person to study and then delve into what made that person a spiritual success or failure (usually both!)
 - List and read references about them (both Bible and other books/tools)
 - Note your comments/impressions
 - Make a chronological outline if needed
 - Note insights into the person (their personality, situation, influences)
 - Note their character qualities
 - Identify how other Bible truths are revealed in the person's life
 - Summarize the lessons learned
 - Write a personal application
- *Read and study what the Bible has to say first*, then read the other books
- Pros/Cons
 - Good for teaching scriptural concepts where there may be common weaknesses in the group
 - Often requires additional reference materials (other books, maybe a Concordance)
 - Requires that everyone read and prepare ahead of time
- Refer to:
 - Page 107 for a sample of a completed form, and page 111 for the blank form.
 - Appendix D, page 262 for a potential list of characters to study
 - Page 255 in the book, Appendix B, for discussion questions

Method 5. Topical Study

- Page 115 in the Methods book
- Examples of a topical study: Prayer, the Family, Being a Godly Spouse
- Method: Allows systematic, balanced, thorough review of what the Bible (or OT or NT) has to say about a topic *so that verses are understood in context of all that God has to say about it*
 - List the words related to the topic you have selected
 - Write down the Bible references for that topic
 - Study the passages and verses
 - Compare and group the references
 - Condense the concepts into an outline
 - Draw conclusions
- Pros/Cons
 - Good for groups with common interests or issues
 - Reveals great doctrines of the Bible
 - Can require more preparation time and review of third-party resources
- Refer to page 122 for an example of a completed study and page 129 for a blank study form

Last, But Not Least...

Please send any ideas for improving this document to choy@willowdalechapel.org.