



Examine the Bible passage.

- ✦ Read through the entire section at least once without interruption.
- ✦ Now look for details. In a story (narrative) you pay close attention to people, places and events. But in a letter (exposition) you pay close attention to terms, ideas and concepts. As you read Paul's letters, concentrate on following his train of thought.
- ✦ Look for repeated words or phrases. These are important clues (key words) that will help you understand what the writer wants to convey.
- ✦ Find the definition of words that are unclear to you. If you don't understand what the word means, you won't understand how the writer is using it.

Investigate the Bible passage.

- ✦ In a New Testament letter, most of your investigation will focus on words and terms. Word studies trace the meaning of a word and how and where it is used throughout the Bible. A Bible concordance and dictionary are essential for this. Cross-references help you find the original Greek or Hebrew word throughout the Bible. Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (found in most bible programs) tracks a specific word or phrase through the bible for a broader context.
- ✦ If you have the time and resources, you may also want to see what you can learn about the people, places and customs you read about.

Imagine the Bible passage.

- ✦ Imagination helps us to grasp the truths Paul writes about. For example, Paul's vivid description of spiritual armor (Ephesians 6) shows us how to resist the enemy in battle.
- ✦ Imagination helps us see ourselves in the conditions or circumstances Paul addresses.

Some practical suggestions to keep your notes organized and easy to use.

- ✦ Give a brief descriptive title to each section of the Bible passage you study.
- ✦ Use the "working-text" provided in the printed lesson to jot down notes, questions and definitions. Jot down where you found it for the benefit of the group.
- ✦ Develop your own personal system for gathering information (color codes, symbols, marking, etc.). Use whatever you find helpful, but don't spend more time coming up with a system than you do on the Bible study.