

# Bible Study Methods

## EXPLORE

What did God say?

### The Big Picture

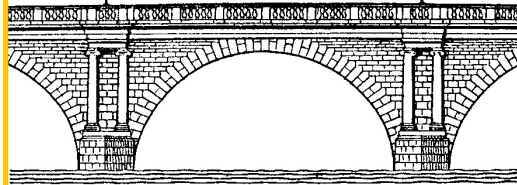
*historical/cultural context  
literary context  
redemptive context*

### The Passage

*make observations  
analyze the structure  
study key words  
compare translations  
consult commentaries  
outline the passage*

### Author's Big Idea (ABI)

## CONNECT



How do I cross the theological and cultural bridge to our world?

### Identify Discontinuities

*culture  
people  
redemptive history*

### Identify Continuities

*triune God  
people  
redemption  
ethics  
fallen conditions  
redemptive solutions*

### Theological Big Idea (TBI)

## APPLY

How do I respond to what God is saying?

### Fallen Condition

*How does this passage expose my/our fallen condition?*

### Redemptive Solution

*How does this passage point me/us to the grace that God provides?*

### Personal/Corporate Response

*How does God want me/us to respond to him from this passage?*

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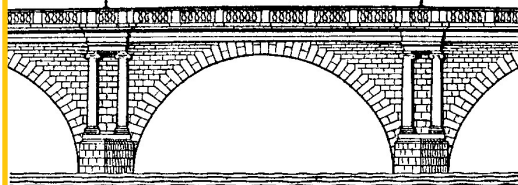
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How do I respond to what God is saying?

### Fallen Condition

*How does this passage expose my/our fallen condition?*

### Redemptive Solution

*How does this passage point me/us to the grace that God provides?*

### Personal or Corporate Response

*How does God want me/us to respond to him from this passage?*

### Observation Categories

- key words/phrases
- connectives
- contrasts
- comparisons
- repetition
- lists
- advice
- commands
- warnings
- promises
- reasons
- results
- cause/effect
- progression of ideas
- illustrations
- images
- metaphors
- questions
- grammar
- tone
- cultural discontinuities
- other Scripture (quote/allusion)
- pivot point
- literary structure

adapted from Oletta Wald, *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*, re. ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), 18-19.

### ECA Elements: Guardrails

**Author's Big Idea (ABI):** *What was the author saying to the original audience?*

- 3rd person/past tense
- preserves language of the passage
- addresses all the most important ideas of the passage

**Theological Big Idea (TBI):** *What is God saying in this passage?*

- 3rd person/present tense--God is subject of sentence
- timeless (omits elements that are specific to context)
- addresses all the most important ideas of the passage

**Fallen Condition (FC):** *What does this passage reveal about human nature that requires the grace of God?*

- may be first or third person
- may focus on a more specific aspect of the passage?
- "3am-compliant"

**Redemptive Solution (RS):** *What does the passage reveal about the God who redeems?*

- God is subject of sentence
- provides needed grace (not just expectation) in light of FC
- present in passage or in immediate vicinity
- "3am-compliant"

**Response/Application:** *How will I/we respond to the realities I've discovered in the passage?*

- first person (I or we), present or future tense
- flows from FC/RS; specific and actionable (dance steps)

### Things to Consider

- Where is the music of the gospel in this passage? Where do I see dance steps?
- If a NT passage, where do I see the tension of "now" and "not yet"?
- If this were the only portion of Scripture I had, what would I learn about God, humanity, and the story of redemption?
- As I apply the passage, what is there for me to do, be, see, or set as a goal?
- As I apply the passage, what might I consider for my own life as well as for communities of which I'm a part?
- As I apply the passage, where must theological truth give way to righteous action?
- How might application of this passage differ for those to whom I minister?

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