

The Chapter Summary Method

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Week 4
Bible Study Methods
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Introduction

The Bible, since it is a collection of stories (narratives), history, letters, and poems, was not originally written with chapter and verse divisions. Those were added in 1228 by Bishop Stephen Langton. While some of the divisions are arbitrary and interrupt the flow of a writer's message, generally they provide good breakpoints that are helpful in Bible study.

Definition

Read a chapter of the Bible through at least 5 times; then write down a summary of the central thoughts.

Why this method?

1. The method is easy to learn. Once you memorize the 10 basic steps, you can begin.
2. The method doesn't take much time. Depending on the length and content of the passage. For example, it is pretty easy complete this type on historical narratives (OT, Gospels, Acts). The Psalms, Prophets and doctrine letters are little more difficult. Some of the proverb chapters this is downright impossible.
3. This method does not require any outside helps or reference tools. This is a good method to use anytime you have a piece of paper and a Bible. You can use it whenever you have some extra time to spend (Dr's Office, airport, Lunch hour)
4. This is a good method to use if you are engaged in a rapid reading survey through the Bible.
 - a. If I am preparing for a class, I like to use this to get a general overview of the book before I go back through using the Chapter Analysis Method (to be discussed later)

The Ten Steps (the form)

Read

- Before starting this form, READ through the chapter at LEAST 5 times.
 - Helps you really get acquainted with a chapter of the Bible.
 - The more times you read a chapter, the more alive it comes to you
- Read it in a Bible without Notes – if you try to use this method by reading a Bible in which you have made notes (or a Study Bible in which commentary is provided), you will have a tendency to read those, and thus, concentrate on the same ideas. Let God speak to you in a fresh way
- Read it without stopping. During the first few readings, don't stop in the middle of a chapter. Don't start your note taking yet. Your goal is to feel the flow of the chapter. Don't be concerned with the details at the outset.

- Read it aloud, but quietly, to yourself. This helps concentration. It helps focus you on the words. Also, all of the writings in scripture were written to/for an ILLITERATE population. They were designed to be read aloud.
- Read it in several different contemporary translations. This gives you additional insights as you see how each different translator rendered the original writings.

(VIDEO HERE)

Caption

- Give the chapter a short, descriptive title. The shorter the title, the more likely you are to remember it.
- In fact, if you use this method on every chapter in a selected book, you can remember the whole contents of that book by memorizing your titles.
- The title should be between 1 and 5 words.
- Try to be creative, because creative titles are easier to remember (John 4 **Well-Well** because the two key events are the woman at the well and the healing of a nobleman's son.)
- I like alliterations - Rev. 6 might be **Six Seals Separated** because the first six seals are opened

Contents

- Describe, summarize, paraphrase, outline, or make a list of the major points.
- Method will depend on literary style of the chapter and your own preference
- Since I am analytical, I like to do OUTLINES
- Andy, because he is a story teller, will probably like to paraphrase
- Some people might even like to draw a picture, write a poem or song from a chapter.
- DON'T try to interpret the chapter, you are just observing its contents here.

Chief People

- List the most important people in the chapter.
- Ask questions, Who are the main people?
- Why are they included?
- What is significant about them?
- Write down your reasons for choosing these people.
- No need (usually) to write down everyone (especially true with genealogies)

Choice Verse

- Choose a verse that summarizes the whole chapter OR one that speaks to you personally.
- Sometimes there is a verse that summarizes the writer's argument (I Cor. 13:13)
- Some chapters may not have a KEY verse.
- Sometimes you may want to pick a verse from which you will be writing your application.

Crucial Word(s)

- Write down the key word or words of the chapter.
- Many times it will be the one(s) used most frequently (“faith” in Hebrews 11)
- Sometimes, it may only be used once

Challenges

- List any difficulties you may have with the passage.
- Are there statements you don’t understand? Is there a problem or question you would like to study further?
- Often while doing a chapter summary study, you get ideas for other studies.
- Let’s say you see a certain word, you might take note of it and then do a WORD STUDY (coming up later) on that word.
- A question of a doctrinal matter might motivate you to do a TOPICAL STUDY on that teaching.
- Don’t be afraid to not know right now. It’s OK to be ignorant.

Cross-references

- Using the cross-references in your study bible, look up other verses that help clarify what the chapter is talking about.
- Ask the question: What else in the Bible helps me understand this chapter?
- Cross-references are important because they help you to see the Bible as a whole.
- We will look more in-depth at Cross-References when we do the chapter analysis method.

Christ Seen

- The entire Bible is the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus used the OT to teach his disciples about himself. (LUKE 24:27, ACTS 8-Ethiopian Eunuch)
- Be alert for statements that teach you something about Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or God the Father. Ask yourself, “What can I learn about the nature of Christ from this chapter)
- This may be the most difficult step to complete, especially in some of the OT passages where symbolism is used

Central Lesson

- Write down the major principles, insights, and lessons you learned from the chapter.
- Why does God want this chapter in the Bible?
- What does he want to teach me from this chapter?
- What is the central thought the writer is try to develop?

Conclusion

- This is the **APPLICATION** portion of your study.
- 4 “P’s” still apply – Personal, Provable, Possible, Practical