

The Chapter Analysis Method

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Week 11

Bible Study Methods

Randy Bowman

Introduction

The third stage of studying a book of the Bible is to do a chapter analysis.

Definition

Chapter analysis involves gaining a thorough understanding of the material of a chapter of a book by looking carefully at each paragraph, sentence and word in an intensely detailed and systematic manner.

Why this method?

It is one of the best ways to learn scripture on your own and to really get into the “meat” of the Word.

The form

Write out a chapter summary

- Read and reread the chapter many times (at least 5).
- Make some observations
- Describe the general contents (don't interpret)
- Some methods:
 - o Paraphrase it
 - o Outline it
 - o Rewrite it
 - o Use the Chapter Summary Method on it.

List your observations

This begins your “verse-by-verse” analysis of the chapter. You look in detail at every sentence and word and write down everything you see.

The idea is to saturate yourself completely with the contents of the passage. You don't want to overlook anything.

Why we overlook stuff:

1. We rush through the passage too quickly. Slow down and don't indulge in speed reading.
2. We don't write down our conclusions. “A pencil is the best eye.”

3. We give up too soon. The longer we squeeze a lemon, the more juice we get out of it.

Ask lots of questions.

To help you in your observations use the Handout.

Ask interpretation questions

Now that you have observed all you can, you are ready to move on to interpretation. This step involves asking questions about meaning, then trying to find answers to them. Usually this means asking a lot of what and why questions.

- Why did the writer say this?
- What is the meaning of _____?
- What is the significance of _____?
- What is the implication of _____?
- Why is this important?

Never think any question is too silly or dumb.

Always write down every question, even though you may not find your answer.

The more questions you ask, the more you will draw out of the text.

List any difficulties you have in understanding what is being said.

Find the answers.

1. Check the context. Often answers are found in verses preceding or following the text. Always interpret in light of the context.
2. Define words or phrases being used. Make sure you understand exactly what the word means by looking it up in a Bible Dictionary, Word Study or English dictionary.
3. Study the grammar and structure of the sentence.
4. Compare several translations of the text
5. Keep the background (historical, cultural, geographic, economic, social, and political) in mind.
6. Compare the text to other passages of Scripture.
7. Finally, consult a commentary (last resort).

Correlate your chapter with other Scriptures

Find cross references by following these systematic steps:

1. Find cross-references in the same book. (Internal correlation)
2. Find cross-references from the same author (intranternal correlation)
3. Compare with references from the same testament (external correlation)

4. Finally, compare all of scripture (total correlation)

Types of Cross-references

1. The Pure (or parallel) Cross-reference – The reference says almost exactly the same thing as the verse you are analyzing
2. The Illustrative Cross-reference – The type involves an event or a person that illustrates what the verse you are studying is saying
3. The Contrasting cross-reference – This type says the opposite of why your verse says. It may look like a contradiction, but is actually approaching the subject from a different point of view.

List some possible applications

These are just possible. We will pick one for Step Seven.

Write down some concluding thoughts

Review the previous steps and draw some conclusions. These could be further observations, some interpretations, themes you discovered, possible topics and people you want to study in the future...etc...

Write out one application