

The Bible Conversations Series

Study & Discussion Guides Format Overview

Each week of every study & discussion guide follows the same inductive study format:

- ❖ **OBSERVATION** — This step is aided by the **Observation** chart for recording basic facts (who, where, when), key words, and a brief summary of the week's assigned passage. Strictly informational, this step requires multiple readings of the passage and is focused on noticing details from the text.

WEEK #1 ~ JOHN 1

OBSERVATION

Read John 1, observing and noting the who's, where's, when's, and key words. Using just stated facts from the passage, write a brief summary of the assigned text.

WHO	
WHERE	
WHEN	
KEY WORDS	
SUMMARY	

- ❖ **INTERPRETATION (Part 1)** — Two pages in the weekly study guide are devoted to various activities that aid in accurate biblical **interpretation** of the assigned text. Each week's passage is broken down into two divisions. The first task is to provide titles for each of these sections, followed by determining the key verse for the entire passage, noting how God is revealing Himself, tracing the key theme, and recording personal observations or questions from the text. Whereas the **Observation** step is informational, the **Interpretation** step begins the process of moving knowledge to action, or from the mind...to the heart!

INTERPRETATION

✦ **TITLES**

JOHN 1:1-18 — _____

JOHN 1:19-51 — _____

- ✦ **KEY VERSE:** Identify the key verse of this passage, explaining why you chose it. (**Memorize it???**)

- ✦ **KEY ATTRIBUTES:** Record attributes of or truths about God, Jesus, and/or the Holy Spirit.

Most meaningful attribute in my present circumstances: _____ Why?

- ✦ **KEY THEME:** John 1:14 teaches that Jesus, who is God, became fully human and dwelt among people on earth. Developing this truth, John's Gospel emphasizes the two natures of Jesus. From this week's text, note how Jesus is revealed as distinctly God and/or how He is portrayed as decidedly relational in His humanity.

- ✦ **OTHER INSIGHTS:** Note how your observations/interpretations contribute to your understanding or curiosity of the assigned passage. Do you have any questions you'd like to explore further with the group?

STEP 2: Interpretation (Part 1) for John 1

- ❖ **INTERPRETATION (Part 2)** — The second page of the **Interpretation** step in the weekly study is called “Wrestling with the Word.” In “Unlocking Meaning,” each week’s lesson assigns four key words from the passage to investigate, with a bonus bullet for exploring another word of choice. The lower half of the page focuses on cross-referencing. The verses chosen in the sample below all relate to John the Baptist. Again, a bonus bullet is provided to encourage exploration of another cross-reference(s) of choice.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD

✦ **UNLOCKING MEANING** : Look up the following words in a Greek lexicon (e.g., blueletterbible.org), noting how the definitions enhance understanding of the text. Consult other Bible translations, a Bible dictionary, or concordance to discover how else these words are used in Scripture. The blank bullet is provided to add a word study of your own.

- **Word** [(1:1) *logos* ~ g3056] + Bible dictionary

- **Darkness** [(1:5) *skotia* ~ g4653]

- **Baptizing** [(1:25) *baptizō* ~ g0907]

- **Followed** [(1:37) *akoloutheō* ~ g0190]

-

✦ **MAKING CONNECTIONS** : The Bible is its own interpreter. Look up the following cross-references. How do these texts enhance understanding of this week’s study passage? The blank bullet is provided to add a cross-reference study of your own. (Online cross-reference tool: blueletterbible.org)

- **Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 3:1-17; 11:7-18; Mark 1:2-11; Luke 1:5-25,39-44, 57-66, 80; 3:1-22**

-

- ❖ **APPLICATION (Part 1)** — After noting facts (**Observation**) and discerning the biblical meaning (**Interpretation**), it is time for **Application**—allowing the Word to transform thinking, attitudes, affections, and actions. In other words, it's time to LIVE the Word. Each week, there are two **Application** pages like the one below, one for each of the two divisions. A truth (biblical principle) from the division is stated, followed by "Examining the Word" and "Examining My Heart" questions that relate to the given principle. "Examining the Word" insures that the more personal applications are well-grounded in the context of the passage (see [our blog](#) article). "Examining My Heart" includes various springboard questions to aid self-examination and move head knowledge to heart knowledge.

APPLICATION - John 1:19-51

- **TRUTH: Jesus came into the world to save sinners.** (Cf. Luke 5:32; John 12:47; Romans 5:6-10; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 John 3:5)
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**
 - ✦ **EXAMINING THE WORD** — What does John the Baptist mean when he refers to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"? Include principles or quotations from the following passages in your answer: Exodus 12:1-30; Leviticus 5:5-6; 17:11; Isaiah 53:5-12; Hebrews 9:11-22; 1 Peter 1:18-19; et al.
 - ✦ **EXAMINING MY HEART** — Tragically, in today's preaching and worship music, the mention of sin is increasingly rare. For what reasons might churches be avoiding the topic of sin? How does neglecting the teaching about sin affect the message and meaning of the gospel? In my own life, how important is it for me to remember that Jesus came into the world to save me from my sins? Reflecting on the passages listed on the top of the page, how might I express gratitude to the Lamb of God?

❖ APPLICATION (Part 2) — “So What?”

The grand finale of the **Application** step is the “**So What?**” page. While there is just one Truth—God’s Truth, from immutable biblical principles come a variety of applications. The first two pages of the application step are more scripted, but the “**So What?**” page gets out of the Spirit’s way and allows HIM to identify the point HE is trying to make from the Bible passage in our thinking, hearts, and lives.

The one who diligently studies all week, **observing, interpreting,** and seeking **application** through hard work and prayer will be rewarded on the “**So What?**” page with a customized **application**. Only the Spirit knows exactly what He expects now, and this page encourages careful listening to His leading.

SO WHAT?

Reflect on and note how the Lord has used John 1 to shape your thinking, stir your heart/soul, and/or prompt you to action. What are you taking away from your interaction with these living words? What response is required of you now to really LIVE this week’s text?

Prayer is a powerful resource when desiring to change. We cannot grow apart from the power of God. How can your Bible Conversations group most effectively intercede for you this week as you endeavor to LIVE John 1?

❖ APPLICATION (Part 3) — Prayer

The lower portion of the **"So What?"** page acknowledges that growth apart from the power of God is impossible. Through the **"So What?"** page, the Holy Spirit has likely revealed an area of needed growth. After the necessary steps of confession and repentance, the task now is to turn to the Lord in prayer, asking for His help. Only in Him can we hope to truly apply the principles revealed to us through the week's lesson. In addition, if you are studying with a group, this is the point in which intercession from the Body of Christ happens. How encouraging and truly helpful to be praying for one another!

PRAYER REQUESTS

~

DATE: _____

NAME	DESIRED SPIRITUAL GROWTH & OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS

A Prayer Requests page is included at the end of each week's lesson.

❖ REVIEW

The inductive Bible Study method has three steps—**Observation**, **Interpretation**, and **Application**. The Bible Conversations Series employs this three-step study method in the following weekly format:

✦ **OBSERVATION:** The Observation Chart for recording the facts of the passage

✦ **INTERPRETATION:**

- ▶ **Part 1** = Two division titles, key verse, key attributes, key theme, and insights
- ▶ **Part 2** = “Wrestling with the Word” (Word studies & Cross-Referencing)

✦ **APPLICATION**

- ▶ **Part 1** = One application page per division (Examining the Word & Examining My Heart)
- ▶ **Part 2** = The “So What?” page, an opportunity to reflect on and note how the Lord has used the week’s passage (i.e, the big takeaway) and how the Spirit is prompting transformation of thinking, attitudes, affections, or actions.
- ▶ **Part 3** = Prayer—includes confession, repentance, and a request for God’s help to change

❖ FINAL THOUGHTS

You might be thinking, “Wow! This is a lot of work!” You are 100% correct, but it really does not take that much time if you do a little bit each day. There are seven pages in each week’s lesson. A reasonable, achievable goal would be to just do a page each day of the week.

Many Christian publishers, appealing to the “too busy” consumer have put out resources that require far smaller time investment, but are these publications really that effective? These days, do we look around in astonishment at the impressive maturity of people claiming to be Christian? Sadly, the church is overwhelmingly undernourished and floundering in biblical illiteracy.

We are in a spiritual battle, and we cannot expect to stand firm apart from the equipping that comes from time (lots of time) spent in the living Word of God. Moreover, doesn’t the Lord deserve more of our time? Where are our priorities? Does He not say to “Seek first the Kingdom?”

There are 1,440 minutes in each day. Does it please the Lord when we grab a “Five Minutes with Jesus” devotional and check the box for having spent time with God? Five minutes is .347% of our day—not even 1/2 of a percent.

So why not take your Bible study to the next level with the Bible Conversations Series? Better yet, why not grab a friend, your spouse, or another family member to join you in earnest pursuit of dynamic spiritual growth? Then come together at the end of each week’s study to share and pray for one another. You will find that the “sacrifice” you think you’re making to put Him first will end up being the biggest blessing of your life!

Now, may the Lord bless your desire to know and love Him more as You seek Him through His life-giving, heart-changing Word. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.