



How to study the Bible inductively

DISCOVERING
*Hidden
Treasure*
In The Bible

Mark C. Yang, Ronald A. Ward

**"Experiencing the Lifegiving Power
of God's Word"**



Mark C. Yang (left) graduated from the college of arts of Seoul National University in Korea. He met Jesus personally in his college days and received God's calling as a full-time servant of God for campus missions in UBF. He pioneered Korea University and served as senior pastor of An Am UBF for 30 years. He came to America as a missionary in 2006 and has been working as a Bible teacher in Chicago until now. He obtained a doctoral degree in missiology from Fuller Theological Seminary.

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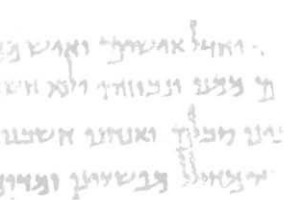
DISCOVERING HIDDEN TREASURE IN THE BIBLE

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“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field.
When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy
went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

[Matthew 13:44]

Preface

We authors, Mark C. Yang and Ronald A. Ward, formed a close friendship as we worked together on the UBF Headquarters Bible study team in Chicago, which started in 2007. At that time, a few missionaries and American leaders gathered to study the Bible in order to prepare Bible study materials for the UBF community. We met regularly every Monday and at times even daily for an entire week or two.

We respect the Bible as the living words of God and believe that only the word of God has power to transform people's lives. People seek revival, both as individuals and as communities. In order to revive, it is common to think about establishing dynamic programs which are attractive to young people. Of course, we need good programs. But we should remember that revival does not come from programs. Revival comes from the words of God, which are living and active. The words of God have power to transform people's lives from the inside out. When we accept the word of God as it is, God revives us (1Th 2:13). Revival comes not from human effort but from God through his word. That is why we try to let the Bible speak to us as it is. We need to hear what the Bible actually says and understand it. For this purpose, we study the

Bible inductively.

As we have studied the Bible, we realized that it is important to see each book of the Bible from a bird's eye view. To do this, we have developed a process for making introductions.

1) We read the book out aloud as a team from beginning to end. Sometimes we read it ten times, sometimes 20 times or more. 2) Then, we divide the book into paragraphs and give titles to each paragraph and write them down. We call this "factual study." 3) After factual study, we develop an outline in order to see a bigger picture of the Bible book as a whole. 4) Then we identify the genre and style of writing. 5) Next, we consider who the author is, when and where the book was written, and its intended audience. 6) Then we research the historical, geographical, and church background. 7) With great care and prayer, we try to discover the main theme of the book and the author's purpose in writing. 8) As we study, we find unique characteristics of each book and record them. To do that, we pay close attention to repeated words, contrasts, comparisons, relationships, and emphasis. 9) At last, we can discover the purpose of our own study of the book. 10) Finally, we attach the outline we had made earlier and a

helpful map.

This process of making an introduction is based, as much as possible, on direct observation of each book of the Bible, as we study it in various versions, especially the NIV, ESV, KJV, and NASB. When needed, we also refer to other resources, such as those found in Logos. We authors made an introduction to the book of Ruth following this process. We also made study questions, study notes, and messages (see Part II. An Inductive Study of Ruth).

After making the introduction, we divide the book into lessons that can provide a basis for Sunday messages, weekly study in small groups, and Bible conferences. For each lesson, we need to make study questions. We design the questions to follow the inductive Bible study method: observation, interpretation, and application.

We learned this method from Missionary Sarah Barry, the co-founder of UBF. She learned it during her master's study at the Biblical Seminary in New York before going to Korea as a missionary in 1955. In Korea, she studied the Bible inductively with many college students who were thirsty to hear God's word. She helped them to read, study and understand the

Bible for themselves. The result was very great. The late Dr. Samuel Lee, the founder of UBF, was also inspired to study the Bible inductively. He applied this method to his message writing and daily devotional preparation. Studying the Bible inductively became a foundational, important practice in UBF.

In the course of studying the Bible this way, we tasted that the words of God are as sweet as honey. We were very much encouraged by the words of God and strengthened. Of course, we had to follow some basic guidelines in order to work together effectively. 1) Respect others' opinions. 2) Don't insist on one's own idea. 3) Listen to others' opinions very carefully. 4) Produce the best material possible through brainstorming—for the glory of God and the benefit of God's people. We formed a friendship based on the words of God, crossing cultures and age differences, respecting each distinct personality.

This book is the fruit of our friendship formed during Bible study together. We have worked and prayed together, believing Jesus' words: "Truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for them by

my Father in heaven" (Mt 18:19).

As we have studied the Bible, we realize that the Bible contains the greatest treasures. We find heavenly joy through Bible study. We pray that through this material, many people may discover the hidden treasures in the Bible and find great joy. Also, we pray that people may find the secret of how to study the Bible independently. This book is intended to be a guide in developing one's personal Bible study. It is also designed to help those in small groups, as they study the Bible together, to discover its hidden treasure.

We are very thankful to the late Dr. Samuel Lee and Missionary Sarah Barry, who gave us good examples of how to study the Bible. They respected the Bible as the very words of God. They listened carefully to God's word and put it into practice with all their hearts. They grew in the love of God and the character of Christ and became good shepherds for God's people. We have been greatly influenced by their lives, as they followed the example of Christ.

We are thankful to our fellow UBF HQ Bible study team members who have participated in this ministry over the years. Pastors Mark Vucekovich and Teddy Hembekides have

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worked together with us very faithfully from the beginning to the end. Along with them, missionaries David Kim and Joshua Hong and the late Dr. Paul Chung began the Bible study team, and later Dr. Augustine Suh and Dr. Paul Koh joined.

Dr. John Jun and Pastor Abraham Kim fully supported us during their tenures as UBF General Directors. Pastor Moses Yoon, the current General Director, and Pastor Moses Kim, the Korea UBF Director, also support us at present. We express our deep gratitude to Barnabas (Sung Young)Suh, who translated the material into Korean, and to Dr. Paul Hong, who encouraged us in many ways. Most of all, both of us are thankful to our wives, Missionary Anna Yang and Dervilla Ward respectively, whose patient and prayerful support have enabled us to devote ourselves to Bible study.

We pray this book may help many people study the Bible deeply, experience the life-giving power of God's word in their own lives, and discover the greatest treasure: Jesus Christ. May the kingdom of God be advanced through Bible study.

– February 17, 2022 Chicago, Illinois, USA
Mark C. Yang, Ronald A. Ward

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PART 1

How to Study the Bible Inductively

There are numerous treasures hidden in the Bible. The greatest treasure is God himself (Gen 15:1). Through Bible study, we can encounter the Triune God: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and have fellowship with him. ... As we come to know him, we also come to know our true identity and our meaning and purpose in life. We will find stores of wisdom that guide us to a vibrant, dynamic, and fruitful life.

introduction

The Kingdom of God is Hidden Treasure

Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a hidden treasure. The treasure is so valuable that it is worth any investment to obtain. But this treasure is hidden. This treasure will be given to anyone, but only those who seek it diligently will find it. Treasure hunts are exciting. But they require an investment of time, energy, and all kinds of resources. When the man in Jesus' parable found the treasure, he was filled with joy. This joy is inexpressible, heavenly joy. It is not a temporary joy but everlasting joy. This joy empowers us to invest everything we have in obtaining the treasure. Finding the treasure is one thing, but possessing the treasure is another. To obtain the treasure, the man needed to buy the field it was buried in. It was costly: he had to sell everything he had. Yet, he did so without any hesitation or regret because it was worth it.

God Himself is the Greatest Treasure

As the treasure is the kingdom of heaven, the Bible is the field where this treasure is hidden. There are numerous treasures hidden in the Bible. What kind of treasures can we find? The greatest treasure is God himself (Gen 15:1). Through Bible study, we can encounter the Triune God: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and have fellowship with him. We can discover his character and personality and come to know what he has done, how he is working today, and his plan for the future. There are so many promises he has made that we can claim by faith. As we come to know him, we also come to know our true identity and our meaning and purpose in life. We will find stores of wisdom that guide us to a vibrant, dynamic, and fruitful life. It is so exciting to discover these treasures.

Correctly Handle the Word of Truth

There are many ways to engage in Bible study. The approach one takes makes a significant difference. One of the key verses for guiding Bible study is 2 Timothy 2:15: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (ESV). The key word of this verse is *handle*, which comes from the Greek word ὀρθοτομέω (orthotomeo).

It is actually a combination of two Greek words: *orthos* (where we get the words *orthodox* or *orthopedic*), which means “straight,” and *temno* which means “to cut.” It was used in the first century to refer to cutting a path through a forested area. This verse essentially says that we should cut a straight path to the truth. In other words, we should give accurate instruction—to teach correctly or to expound rightly to convey the meaning of Bible truth in contemporary times. In this, we should do our best to present ourselves to God as his approved worker, who does not need to be ashamed. This applies to our personal Bible study, one-to-one or group Bible study, and public preaching—such as the Sunday message or conference messages. To correctly handle the word of truth, the inductive Bible study method is very effective; it helps us experience the lifegiving power of God’s word.

1 chapter

The Significance of Inductive Bible Study and Its History

There are many ways to study the Bible, and there are many excellent study aids available to help us with specific books of the Bible. But the most important thing is to read the Bible for ourselves first. We should first discover what the Bible truly says, what it means, and how we are to apply it to our life. Inductive Bible study guides us very well in doing this.

Read the Bible Carefully First

The Bible is God’s word to us. God speaks to us, like a Father to his children, and guides us into an intimate relationship with him so that we may grow in his image. God loves us, and he wants us to understand the way of salvation and a life that pleases him. He wants us to find the way of blessing and avoid the tragedy of going astray so that we can experience a happy, fruitful, and victorious life.

Though God speaks to us, we need to learn how to listen to His word in the Scriptures. This is very important. In the Scriptures, we can find salvation and the way to a meaningful and fruitful life (2Ti 3:15). Bernard Ramm says, “Everything essential to salvation and Christian living is clearly revealed in Scripture.”¹ The biblical authors wrote in a straightforward and direct manner so that readers would understand their message and live accordingly. However, the Bible was originally written in foreign languages to people who lived a long time ago in different parts of the world. Statements that were quite clear to the initial readers may not communicate clearly to us at all.² We need spiritual insight and guidance to truly understand it.

The Bible has been read and studied by countless people

1 Bernard Ramm 1970: 105.

2 Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr. 2004: 213.

for many centuries. There are many ways to study the Bible, and there are many excellent study aids available to help us with specific books of the Bible. But the most important thing is to read the Bible for ourselves first. We should first discover what the Bible truly says, what it means, and how we can apply it to our life. Inductive Bible study guides us very well in doing this.

A Brief History of Inductive Bible Study

The history of Inductive Bible Study can be traced to the end of the 19th century through the work of William Rainey Harper and Wilbert Webster White.³ Harper was a Biblical scholar and a professor at Yale University and the founder of the University of Chicago. He was concerned about the influence of “higher criticism” in seminaries throughout the United States. “Higher criticism” focuses on examining source documents of the Biblical text to determine who wrote it, when it was written and where. This view emphasizes the human origin of Scripture, rather than the divine. It sees the Bible as merely written by humans, to be analyzed using human reason, and not as the inspired word of God. It would undermine the divine authority of the Bible and lead to skepticism regarding the creation and miracles,

³ Bauer, David R., and Traina, Robert, 2011: 1-2.

the incarnation of Christ, and the resurrection.

In contrast, Harper respected the Bible as the God in its final form. He believed that it should be read directly and be allowed to speak to each person in the church as a whole. Building upon Harper’s teaching, associate White, emphasized that the focus of Inductive Bible study should be on personal spiritual formation and preaching and teaching within the church. When he founded The Biblical Seminary in New York. This was a scholarly nexus for inductive Bible scholars. At the seminary, Robert Traina, who was influenced by F. F. White, began to teach Inductive Bible study as well. Peterson and Dr. Sang-geun Lee learned Inductive Bible study from him, as did Sarah Barry, the co-founder of UBF. She introduced it in Korea when she went as a missionary in 1955. She studied the Bible inductively and taught many college students who were thirsty for God. She helped them to read, study and understand the Bible for themselves. The effect was very great. Dr. Sang-geun Lee, the founder of UBF, also was inspired to study the Bible inductively. He applied this method to his Sunday School and Daily Bread writing. Inductive Bible study is the most important principle on which the UBF mission was founded.

The main requirement in learning to study

inductively is the willingness to slow down and accurately observe what the Scripture is saying. Inductive Bible study uses the Bible itself as the primary source of information about the Bible. Commentaries, books, tapes, and other information about the Bible are consulted only after we have made our own thorough examination of the Scripture.

Pastor Ron Ward and Pastor Mark Yang worked very diligently in developing and using the inductive Bible study method. They spent many hours developing inductive Bible study for personal use, and for teaching and training our staff. The book *Discovering Hidden Treasure in the Bible* is the fruit of their many hours of labor to dig out the treasures in the Bible. Those who read and study this book may learn how to find the hidden treasures of truth in the Bible and correctly handle the word of truth.

- Sarah Barry, General Director Emeritus, UBF

This book explains in detail the inductive Bible study methodology. In addition to its intellectual approach, it teaches the importance of the reader's attitude and spirituality. Along with Bible interpretation methods, it also provides directions for a personal application and spiritual growth. As mentioned in the book, the purpose of Bible study is to know the Triune God - to know Jesus and grow in His image. I believe that the greatest blessing God gives us is when each of us is clothed with Jesus Christ's noble image, when we study the Bible in the right way, receive what we have understood, and teach it. For this purpose, I highly recommend this book, which offers insightful and practical Bible study methods.

- Pastor Moses Yoon, UBF General Director

A profound and captivating step-by-step experiential, comprehensive and often visual manual on "How To Study The Bible Inductively." Its authors, Pastor Ron Ward and Dr. Mark Yang, are two of the most inspiring and well trusted pastors, mentors and Bible teachers in our world-wide Christian community. Their labor in producing this reflective guide is extensive and enlightening for students as well as teachers of God's word. It is my privilege to recommend it to our own community, the church at large and to all who seek the treasures of God's Word.

- Pastor Teddy Hembekides, UBF North America Coordinator

\$22.50



ISBN 978-89-86788-15-0