INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Observation. Interpretation. Application.

Compiled by Amy Stevens
INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

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Titus Project
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MUCH OF THE MATERIAL IN THIS BOOKLET ORIGINATES FROM “The Basics of Bible Study”, the method of Bible study used by YWAM’s School of Biblical Studies, founded by Dr. Ron & Judy Smith. The material has been simplified and/or revised to fit the needs of a broader audience.

I pray that you will be blessed as you study the Word of God and apply it to your life.

Amy Stevens
September, 2000
2 APPROACHES TO BIBLE STUDY

DEDUCTIVE APPROACH

- In the deductive approach, one comes to the text with a thesis and then seeks out passages to support that thesis.

- One has already, to a certain extent, drawn conclusions before reading the whole text of Scripture in context.

- One is dictating to the Scriptures, rather than letting the Scriptures speak.

INDUCTIVE APPROACH

- In the inductive approach, one lays aside preconceived ideas and first lays a groundwork of observations.

- Conclusions are drawn from what one has observed. A thorough examination of the content becomes the basis for one’s conclusions.

- One is letting the Scriptures speak for themselves.
Inductive Bible Study

Pray. The Holy Spirit is your teacher.

Think for yourself.

Don’t rely on other people.
Let the text speak for itself.

Conclusions come from what you have observed.

3 Steps of Inductive Bible Study

1. Observation: _______________________________________________________

2. Interpretation: _____________________________________________________

3. Application: _______________________________________________________

**WHAT IS OBSERVATION?**

- Observation is the first and foundational step of the Inductive Method.
- Observation is not determining what the text means, it is simply looking to see what it says.
- Observation helps one to become familiar with the text before we move on to interpreting it.

**The motto of Observation is:**

“Look, Look, Look, until looking becomes seeing”

**CONTEXT**

Before we start taking a detailed look at the text, it is important to first get the big picture.

- If studying a book, read through the whole book in one sitting.
- If studying a particular passage, look at the surrounding context.

**OBSERVING THE TEXT:**

Doing Observation is like being a detective. In order to crack the case, you first need to lay the groundwork and gather clues.

In order to understand passages of Scripture, we first need to gather the facts and lay a thorough groundwork in Observation before moving on to Interpretation.

Observation questions are like keys that open up the text and help us really see what is going on.

On the following page is a list of questions that will aid you in your Observation.
## OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. Repeated Words / Phrases / Ideas / Themes
2. Key Words
3. Who
   - people: main characters, people groups, etc.
   - pronouns
4. When
   - time elements
   - verb tenses
5. Where
   - geographical locations
   - general "locations"
6. Contrasts
7. Comparisons
8. Commands (Includes Advice, Promises, Warnings, Predictions)
9. Conditional Statements
10. Connectives
11. Atmosphere, Mood, Emotion
12. Figures of Speech
13. Lists
14. Illustrations
15. Emphatic Statements
16. Progression
   - progression of events
   - progression of thought, author’s logic
### Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Repeated Words / Phrases / Ideas / Themes</th>
<th>[faith] [righteous] [faith] [grace] [Jesus] [faith] justify [faith]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Look for words, phrases, ideas, and themes that are repeated throughout the book. These will show you the big picture and main emphasis of the book and also things that the author is concerned about. | Galatians, Romans: **Justification**
Hebrews: **Perfect** |

### Example

- **Galatians, Romans:**
  - **Justification**
- **Hebrews:**
  - **Perfect**

### 2. Key Words

Key words are those words with meaning that are essential to understanding a passage. Key words are often repeated.

- **Galatians, Romans:**
  - **Justification**
- **Hebrews:**
  - **Perfect**

### 3. Who

- **People:** main characters, people groups, etc.
- **Pronouns:** I, he, they, you …

  - **1 Peter 1:1**
    - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the exiles of the dispersion…“
  - **1 Thessalonians 4:13**
    - “But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep…”
  - **Mark 13**
    - Interchange between you & they.

### 4. When

- **Time elements:** Look for time elements or specific dates given in the book.
- **Verb tenses:** Observe past, present, and future tenses.

  - **Galatians 1:18**
    - “Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days.”
  - **Ephesians 2:1-2**
    - “And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked…”
  - **Acts 20:29-31**
    - “I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.”

### 5. Where

- **Geographical locations**
- **General “locations”**
  - Observe locations such as heaven, earth, etc.
  - Observe direction: north, east, south, & west.

  - **Acts 16:6**
    - “And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.”
  - **Ephesians 2:6**
    - “…and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus…”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Contrasts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Contrasts are things that are opposites. Contrasts are often identified by the conjunction “but”. Also look for broader contrasts such as contrasting ideas, character, actions, people, etc.</td>
<td>Titus 1:16&lt;br&gt;“They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Comparisons</strong>&lt;br&gt;Comparisons lay things or people alongside of each other and show how they are alike or not alike. These things can be shown to be similar to each other, or one can be shown to be better than the other. Another type of comparison is when something is compared to how it should be.</td>
<td>Psalm 42:1&lt;br&gt;“As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after thee O Lord.”&lt;br&gt;Hosea 13:3&lt;br&gt;“Therefore they shall be like the morning mist or like the dew that goes early away, like chaff that swirls from the threshing floor or like smoke from a window.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Commands</strong>&lt;br&gt;Include:&lt;br&gt;• Advice&lt;br&gt;• Promises&lt;br&gt;• Warnings&lt;br&gt;• Predictions</td>
<td>2 John: 10-11&lt;br&gt;“If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. Conditional Statements</strong>&lt;br&gt;Statements where the promise is dependant on an action.</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 28:1&lt;br&gt;“And if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Connectives</strong>&lt;br&gt;A connective is a word that connects two statements or ideas together.</td>
<td>2 Timothy 3:1-2&lt;br&gt;“So put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander.”&lt;br&gt;Philippians 3:2-3&lt;br&gt;“Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil-workers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh; for we are the true circumcision…”&lt;br&gt;Nehemiah 9:26-27&lt;br&gt;“Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebelled against thee and cast thy law behind their back and killed thy prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to thee, and they committed great blasphemies, therefore thou didst give them into the hand of their enemies…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Example</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 11. Atmosphere, Mood, Emotion       | **Philippians 4:1**  
*Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.*  
**Lamentations 1:2**  
*She weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies.* |
| Observing the author's emotion or general feeling of a book or passage. Atmosphere/mood/emotion can be: joyful, sorrowful, angry, loving, rebuking, beseeching etc. | **Philippians 4:1**  
*Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.*  
**Lamentations 1:2**  
*She weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies.* |
| 13. Lists                           | **Galatians 5:22**  
*But the [fruit of the Spirit] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.* |
| A list is 3 or more items that fall under a certain category. | **Galatians 5:22**  
*But the [fruit of the Spirit] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.* |
| 14. Illustrations                   | **Titus 1:12**  
*One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’*  
**2 Timothy 4:7**  
*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* |
| Observe illustrations the author uses:  
- Quotes  
- Metaphors, analogies  
- Personal experience  
- Everyday life situations  
- Past history | **Titus 1:12**  
*One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’*  
**2 Timothy 4:7**  
*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* |
| 15. Emphatic Statements             | **Amos 9:13**  
*Behold the days are coming, says the Lord…*  
**Matthew 19:23, 28**  
*Truly say to you…* |
| Observe words that add extra emphasis to what the author is saying. | **Amos 9:13**  
*Behold the days are coming, says the Lord…*  
**Matthew 19:23, 28**  
*Truly say to you…* |
| 16. Progression                     | **Ephesians:**  
Ch. 1-3 = Theology / Teaching  
Ch. 1-4 = Application |
| Progression of events  
Progression of thought, author’s logic | **Ephesians:**  
Ch. 1-3 = Theology / Teaching  
Ch. 1-4 = Application |
INTERPRETATION

What does it mean to the Original Audience?

What is Interpretation?

- Interpretation is not asking what it means to us today, but what it meant to the original hearers or readers.
- Interpretation involves understanding the author’s viewpoint, as well as the viewpoint of his audience.

Understanding the historical context is essential to good interpretation. Imagine yourself thousands of years back in time. Put yourself in the shoes of the Original Audience. Try and see the book or passage through their eyes.

Historical Context:

- Who is the Original Audience?
- What is the cultural, political, social, and geographical situation of the Original Audience?
- What did the Original Audience think or believe? What is their religious background?
- What is happening in history or in their church at this time?
- Is the audience facing any problems? Are they struggling with something? What are their strong points?
- Why was the book written?

Why? The bridge between Observation & Interpretation is the question: WHY? Take your observations and ask: WHY? Why are these words repeated? Why are these people mentioned? Why was this command given? Etc.
1. What are the author’s concerns?
2. What are the original audience’s concerns, questions, struggles, strengths and/or weaknesses?
3. Ask: WHY?
4. Ask: What does this mean?
5. Ask: What does this imply?
6. Ask: What is the significance?

Interpretation **BUILDS** on the foundation of Observation.
Thorough Observation results in better Interpretation.
APPLICATION

How do the timeless truths apply today?

WHAT IS APPLICATION?

- Application is the **GOAL** of Bible study!
- As God teaches us His Word, we want Him to work in our hearts. The study of Scripture should result in changed lives.

**James 1:22-25**

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing.”

APPLICATION is the “So What” of Bible Study

After observing and interpreting, we should ask ourselves, “So what?” What am I going to do as a result of what I have learned? It is time to move what we know from our heads to our hearts, and act upon it.
APPLICATION QUESTIONS

You may ask the following questions to apply the overall truths of a whole book or a specific passage. Please spend quality time on this step, pray and ask God how He would have you respond. Remember, our lives are to be changed as a result of our time spent in God’s Word.

1. What are the basic timeless truths in this book or passage?
2. How do these truths apply to my life? Be specific.
   - What am I to believe? Do I need to change anything I have previously believed?
   - Are there attitudes or actions that I need to change?
   - How does this truth encourage me? In what areas am I specifically encouraged?
   - What do I see about the character of God? How does this aspect of God’s character speak or minister to me?
3. What specific steps or actions can I take to carry this application out?

Commit your application to the Lord in prayer.

Other Questions for Consideration:

- What have I learned about myself from my study? What have I learned about others? What impact does this have on my life?
- What can I learn about my relationship with God? Is there anything that needs to change in my relationship with Him?
- Is there anything that needs to change in how I relate to others?
- How am I challenged or encouraged by the lives of the people in the Bible? What can I learn from them? Is there anything I can identify with in their lives?

Follow through. Let’s not look into the mirror of God’s Word, go away and forget what we look like. Let’s put feet on our faith!
Once you have done the steps of Observation and Interpretation, you are now ready for the final stage of Bible study - Application. Remember that this is the goal of studying the Bible. As God teaches us His Word, we want Him to change our lives.

Now that we've made it to the Application step, how exactly do we go about it? How do we make the jump from the Original Audience (2000+ years ago) to the 21st century? Below are some helpful application principles that will aid us in applying Biblical truths to our lives today.

**UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINAL SITUATION**

**God's Word is Timely**

God spoke to specific situations, problems, and questions. Throughout Scripture, God becomes personally involved in people's lives, speaking directly to their needs in ways that are appropriate to their situations. This is good because we are given examples which are concrete rather than abstract. However, the concrete nature of Scripture also creates problems. Our situations, problems, and questions are not always directly related to those of the Bible. Therefore, God's Word to the Original Audience does not always seem immediately relevant to us.

**Timely, yet Timeless**

Just as God spoke to the Original Audience, so He still speaks to us throughout the pages of Scripture. Our job is to find out how to apply those passages that seem outdated and irrelevant, those which are so timely they seem to have lost their timeless dimension, and discover a universal dimension in the problems they faced and the solution God gave them.

**Crossing the Barriers**

**Time Barrier:** We often lack important information regarding the historical context into which the Bible was written. Unless we have some understanding of the historical background, we may read what the author is saying, but have no idea as to why the author said it and what relevance it has for us today.

**Cultural Barrier:** Bible events took place in many different cultures. Many customs and beliefs we read about may seem strange to us since they are so far removed from the 21st Century. It is important to understand the culture that passages of Scripture were written into in order to evaluate it's meaning for us today.

**Geographical Barrier:** As we learn about biblical geography, many Bible passages take on new meaning. A good Bible atlas or Bible dictionary can also supply valuable information about unfamiliar places.
**Determine the Timeless Truths**

**Issues Addressed: Local/Universal? Temporal/Timeless?**

- A “cultural statement” is an expression that can be understood only within a certain cultural context and/or period of time.
- A “timeless truth” is one of God’s principles that stands true regardless of differing times and cultures.

Following is a list of commands and practices that appear in the Bible. Your task is to determine which ones apply at all times in all places, and which are merely temporary, needed at one particular time in one particular place but not necessarily applicable at other times and in other places. Think about each one, then mark a “P” beside those that are permanent, and a “T” beside those that are temporary. (Some may not be so easy.)

**Old Testament**

1. Remember the Sabbath (Ex 20:8)
2. No person shall eat blood (Lv 17:12)
3. You shall not wear a garment made of two kinds of fabric (Lv 19:19)
4. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot (Dt 19:21)
5. You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Lv 19:18)

What principles did you use to determine whether these are temporary or permanent?

**New Testament**

1. Greet one another with a holy kiss (Ro 16:16)
2. Eat what is set before you asking no questions (1 Co 10:27)
3. Observe the Lord’s Supper (1Co 11:24)
4. Be circumcised (Ac 15:50)
5. Anoint the sick with oil (Ja 5:14-15)
6. Remember the poor (Ga 2:10)
7. Sell lands and houses when one becomes a Christian (Ac 4:32-37)
8. Permit no woman to teach men (1 Ti 2:12)
9. Wash each other’s feet (Jn 13:14)
10. Beware of dogs (Php 3:2)

What principles did you use to determine which are permanent and which are temporary?
Old Testament Commands

Right or wrong, many often assume that some OT commandments no longer apply to us, while on the other hand, we feel certain that others are valid for today. To properly determine which are valid we need to understand some basic facts about the OT.

1. The OT contains over 600 different commands (mostly in the Pentateuch).
2. The OT is the record of God's covenant with Israel.

**Guidelines for Applying OT commands:**

1. Is the command restated in the NT?
2. Is the command revoked in the NT?
3. What is the principle behind the OT command?

Although we are no longer under the Old Covenant, we need to remember that the laws of the Old Covenant reflect God's character. Therefore, the principles behind these laws should still be valid, even though some specific expressions of the laws may be obsolete.

New Testament Commands

Much of the teaching of the NT can be applied directly to us today, but sometimes a biblical teaching is directed so specifically to the culture of the ancient world, that another culture cannot understand it. As previously stated, we need to evaluate whether specific statements are cultural and temporary, or timeless; spanning across all ages. We should understand that every cultural expression in the Bible is the result of some timeless principle. And even though a cultural expression cannot be carried over directly to another culture, the timeless truth behind it can. Just because it is cultural does not mean it can be ignored.

Applying Biblical Examples

There are many excellent examples in the Bible. The difficulty however, is knowing which examples we are to follow and which we should avoid. Information the author gives us about the example will determine our application. (Be careful not to make examples out of those the author did not intend to function as examples. Often, especially in the historical narratives, the author is just telling the story like it is, stating history - not intending that we should follow all that these people did.)

- **Explicit Examples:** The author tells explicitly whether a person or group is good or bad.

- **Implicit Examples:** There are no explicit statements about whether the actions of the example are right or wrong, but the author gives implicit approval or disapproval of what is done. Other types of examples: When Biblical examples contain neither an explicit or implicit evaluation of a person's actions, we need to rely on truths or principles taught elsewhere in Scripture. The Biblical authors expect us to have at least a basic knowledge of God's Word. In the OT, it is assumed that the reader is familiar with the Law. In the NT, we are expected to know something about Christian theology and ethics. The authors expect us to know enough to draw our own conclusions.

Applying Biblical Promises

Because we are no longer under the Old Covenant, we cannot assume that promises of that covenant directly apply to us. In fact, most of them do not. Such promises are usually associated with the blessings God promised the people of Israel if they obeyed His Law. Before applying a Biblical promise, we must identify the person or group to whom the promise was originally given. We cannot ignore the Original Audience and historical context of these books without serious danger of misapplying what we read.
Categories of Promises Directly Intended for Us:

1. Promises that are universal in scope
2. Promises given to the church
3. Promises given to other groups to which we belong

Conditional or Unconditional
Once we conclude that a promise applies to us, we must also ask whether its fulfillment is dependent in any way on our actions or attitudes.

Promises vs. Principles
A principle is not the same as a promise. A principle is usually based on who God is - and God never changes. But a promise is based on what God has said He would or would not do. Both the conditions and the recipients of His promise have sometimes changed greatly from the Old to the New Covenant.

Promises vs. Proverbs
In spite of appearance, most proverbs are not promises. They are wise sayings or principles that are generally true of life. Those who follow the advice given in Proverbs will have wisdom for dealing with the practical areas of life.

**Apply These Truths to Your Life. Be Specific.**

- ASK: What are the basic timeless truths in this book or passage?
- ASK: How do these truths apply to my life? Be specific.
- ASK: What specific steps or actions can I take to carry this application out?
This guide is designed to help you study through a book Inductively on your own. Decide on a book of the Bible that you want to study. It is best to start with smaller books and work up to the larger ones. Have a special notebook or folder to record your notes and insights. May you be richly blessed as you dig into the Word of God!

Read Through the Book
Read through the entire book aloud, in one sitting.

Context & Big Picture
- Write down the main idea or big picture of the book.
- Write out the main idea of each paragraph in a concise phrase.
- Write an outline for the book.
  - See Structure & Composition (pg. 25).
  - Consider the type of literature (historical, narrative, epistle, wisdom, etc.).

Observe the Text
Go through the Observation questions (pg. 10).
Observe all those that are relevant to the text.
Remember, it is essential to lay a thorough foundation in Observation if you are going to have good Interpretation and Application.
Historical Background

Study the historical context.
Travel back in time. Find out as much as you can about the Original Audience. The more you can find out about the situation of the Original Audience, the better able you will be to interpret.

Interpret the Text

Bombard the text with WHY questions.

Start with an Observation you have made and ask an Interpretation Question:
- Repeated word/phrase/idea: Why repeated?
- Key words: Why key? What do they mean?
- Who: Why is this person or group mentioned?
- Contrasts / comparisons: What is the significance? Why is the contrast or comparison made?
- Commands: Why given? What do they imply?

Apply What you Have Learned

Spend time reflecting and meditating on what you have learned. Ask God to speak into your life. Ask God to change you through His Word.

Go through the Application Questions and apply the truths you have learned personally in your life (pg. 17).
On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions. First, find what you can straight from the text. Give Scripture references when possible. You may then use external sources – reference books, Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, etc. to gather extra evidence. Give credit to all sources used.

Author & Audience
1. Who wrote the book?
2. To whom was the book written? (Original Readers)
3. When was the book written?
4. Where was the book written from?

Historical Context

New Testament:
1. Historical Setting of the Original Audience?
   - Culture?
   - Religious situation/background?
   - Political/geographical situation?
2. Who makes up the church?
3. What is happening in the church at this time?
   - Strengths & Weaknesses?
   - Problems, struggles, questions they may have been asking?

Old Testament
1. What is God doing in Israel’s history at this time?
2. What is the religious, social, and political situation at this time?

Type of Literature
1. What type(s) of literature is the book composed of?

Survey of Book
1. What is the main idea of the book?
2. What is the major reason that the book was written? (Author’s goal/purpose in writing)
Levels of Structure

Words in phrases —> Sentences —> Paragraphs —> Segments —> Sections —> Divisions —> Books —> OT & NT

Kinds of Structure

Consider the following structural arrangements when working through your outline.

1. **Geographical**: places (Acts, Joshua)
2. **Chronological**: time and events (Genesis, Luke)
3. **Biographical**: persons (Judges, Ruth)
4. **Topical**: ideas (Jeremiah, Matthew)
5. **Logical**: progression of thoughts or ideas (Romans, Galatians)
6. **Epistolary**: letter (Ephesians, Philemon)
7. **Anthology**: collections (Proverbs)

Laws of Composition

The composition of a book reflects the author’s style – how the author expresses himself/herself or arranges his/her material. These following compositional considerations are to be discovered from the text, not imposed upon it.

1. **Comparison**: alike (Romans 7:1-6)
2. **Contrast**: unalike (Acts 4:36-5:1)
3. **Repetition**: recurrence (“holy” in Leviticus / Paul’s testimony in Acts)
4. **Principality**: emphasis and de-emphasis [attention to what’s and isn’t stated] (Gospels = note the amount of space devoted to the last week of Jesus’ life)
5. **Continuity**: progression (the three “lost” parables in Luke 15)
6. **Climax**: everything builds to a high point (Job, Revelation, Ecclesiastes)
7. **Radiation**: central point or theme and everything ties into it (Philemon 10 / Philippians 2:1-11)
9. **Cruciality**: pivotal or turning point (Mark 8:27-30 / 2 Samuel 11-12)
10. **Harmony**: unity, everything fits together (Hebrews = centers around the superiority of Christ)
11. **Interrogation**: asking of questions (Romans 6-7 / Habakkuk / Malachi)
12. **General to Specific**: (1 Corinthians = book begins by talking about wisdom in general terms and then moves into the specific lack of wisdom in the Corinthian church)
13. **Problems to Solution**: (1 Corinthians)
14. **Theological to Application**: (Galatians)
A figure of speech is a literary mode of expression in which words are used out of their literal sense to suggest a picture or image. A form of expression in which words are intentionally used in other than a plain or literal way so as to produce fresh, vivid, or poetic effects. (Websters)

**Simile:** A direct comparison of two things that are essentially different. Characterized by use of: *like, as, so.*
- Mt 23:27 “Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs…”
- Rv 1:14 “His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like burning fire”

**Metaphor:** An implied comparison between two objects without the use of like, as or so. Asserts that one thing is another.
- Mt 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth”
- Jn 10:9 “I am the door”

** Allegory:** An extended metaphor that has the form of a story.
- Ga 4:21-31 Hagar & Sarah…
- Ezk 24:3-5 Jerusalem —> pot

**Analogy:** A rather full comparison showing several points of similarity between unlike things.
- Jn 15.1-9 Vine and branches
- Eph 5.21-33 The body & the church

**Irony & Sarcasm:** Irony is stating one thing, but implying something different or meaning the exact opposite. When used to taunt and ridicule, irony is called Sarcasm.
- Jdg 10.14 “Go and cry to the gods whom you have chosen. Let them deliver you in the time of your distress.”
- 1Co 4.8 “Already you are filled! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings!…”

**Personification:** The attribution of life or human qualities to inanimate objects. The representation of an object as if it were a person.
- Lv 18.25 “Land vomited out its inhabitants”
- Pr 1.20-21 “Wisdom cries aloud in the street; in the markets she raises her voice…”

**Apostrophe:** Addressing or speaking to things, abstract ideas or imaginary objects.
- 1Ki 13.2 “O altar, altar…”
- Jr 22.29 “O land, land, land…”
- 1Co 15.55 “O death, where is your sting?”

**Hyperbole:** Exaggeration, not with the intent to deceive, but to emphasize and intensify an impression. An exaggeration to make or reinforce a point.
- Mt 5.29 “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away…”
- Ga 4.15 “You would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me”
**Rhetorical Questions:** Questions posed for which the author doesn’t expect or wait for an answer.
- Hab 2.18 “What profit is an idol when it’s Maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies?”
- Mt 7.16 “Are grapes gathered from thorns?”
- Ecc 2.24-25 “…This I saw also is from the hand of God; for apart from him, who can eat or who can have enjoyment?”

**Litotes:** The use of understatement. A phrase that understates or lessens one thing in order to magnify another. The opposite of hyperbole, often used as irony.
- Ac 21.39 “Paul answered, ‘I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city…”
- Ac 14.28 “remained no little time with the disciples”

**Metonymy:** The substitution of one term for another - usually a closely associated term.
- Lk 16.29 “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.”
- Ro 3.30 “Circumcision” for “Jews”

**Synecdoche:** Part of something is mentioned, but the whole is meant.
- Ja 4.8b “Cleanse your hands”
- Pr 10.6 “Blessings are on the head of the righteous”

**Eponymy:** a sub-division of synecdoche in which an individual stands for the whole nation.
- Hs 11.2 “Ephraim has encompassed me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit…”

**Merismus:** a combination of parts of the whole to express totality.
- Ps 72.8 “May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth!”

**Euphemism:** The substitution of a mild, indirect or vague expression for a harsh, blunt one. A cultured or less offensive way to state something. Euphemisms are used to indirectly discuss such topics as bodily functions, anatomy, reproduction, death, etc.
- Jn 11.11 “Lazarus has fallen asleep”
- Jdg 3.24 “…he is covering his feet in the upper chamber”
- Ge 4.1 “Adam lay with his wife Eve and she became pregnant…”

**Anthropomorphism:** The practice of describing God in human terms as if he has hands, feet, a face, etc.
- Ex 15.8 “…blast of thy nostrils”
- Jn 10.29 “…no one is able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand”

**Idiom:** An expression belonging to a particular language that cannot be understood by the individual meaning of the terms.
- Ac 26.14 “It hurts you to kick against the goads”
- Ac 2.46 “breaking bread”
- 1Ki 18.46 “gird up your loins”

**Type:** A type prefigures something or someone to come. A prefiguring symbol such as an OT event (or person) prefiguring an event (or person) in the NT. It is best to have the type explicitly mentioned in the NT.
- 1 Co 5.7 – OT passover lamb typified Christ, the sacrificial lamb.

**Symbol:** Something that stands for another meaning in addition to its ordinary meaning. It is usually a visual image that represents an invisible concept. In interpreting symbols one is not free to impose his own interpretation but he must discover the author’s intention by taking into consideration: the culture, principles of interpretation, the overall message of the book, and in many cases the author’s own specific definition.
- Rv 1.12,20 – 7 lampstands —> 7 churches; 7 stars —>angels of 7 churches
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