

Inductive vs. Deductive Bible Study

Inductive Study is about letting the text speak to you. IE: careful word by word, phrase by phrase study of a passage, uncovering the intended meaning as it relates to its original audience hearing, and understanding the author's original intent.

Deductive Study is about you making the text speak to your pre-existing understandings. IE: you start with an idea or a purpose, then you search the text in various places to find supporting evidence in scripture to uphold your original idea.

Inductive Example: A inductive study might start with carefully reading the account of the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12. By observing the details (the disciples, the rooftop, the paralyzed man, the healing), as well as Jesus' words and statements, you can arrive at a general understanding that this was done to demonstrate that it is God's power that forgives sins and God's power to heal. The conclusion would be that if only God forgives sins, and only God heals, Jesus must indeed be God.

Deductive Example: A deductive study might start with the statement that "Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice for sin." Then, you would search the bible for passages that prove your point, and also demonstrate Jesus's role as the ultimate sacrifice, such as Hebrews 10:12 or John 10:18.

[illegible]

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, broadly defined, encompasses the methods of interpretation. The following four primary methods are generally used: literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical

Methods:

- **Literal Interpretation:** This method seeks the "plain meaning" of a text, focusing on the historical and cultural context.
- **Moral Interpretation:** This approach aims to extract ethical lessons or guidance from the text.
- **Allegorical Interpretation:** This method interprets the text on a deeper, spiritual or symbolic level beyond the literal meaning.
- **Anagogical Interpretation:** This method sees biblical events as prefigurations or foreshadowings of eternal realities or the afterlife.

A general process of hermeneutics involves:

1. **Understanding the Context:** This includes the historical, cultural, and literary (genre) context, as well as the time frame when it was written, who the author was, who it was written to, what language it was written in, what did the author originally intend, what did the original readers understand it to mean.
2. **Making Observations:** Identifying key elements, details, and figures of speech metaphors and idioms within the text.
3. **Understanding the original (correct) purpose and meaning:** This is the gold standard. This is the single most important part of interpretation.
3. **Making Personal Application:** Applying the interpreted meaning to your own life and circumstances. (this is for personal purposes only, not to be imposed on anyone else, and not to be confused with the actual meaning of the text).
