

PRINCIPLES

Read, Read, Read. Study methods are great only after reading and rereading the passage. Try different versions or listening to audio.

Prayer and Patience. Pray for God's guidance before, during, and after you study. Be patient, knowing we can't rush His Word.

Stay on the line. Be careful not to take away from Scripture, going below the line into lawlessness or to add to Scripture, going above the line into moralism.

Text and Framework. We all bring frameworks such as politics, theology, family background, or gender. We can't avoid this but where the text (Scripture) and our framework disagree, the Text is supreme.

PROCESS

Observation

1. Context

A. Biblical Context. Look up cross references to books that were already written that the author/audience would've had.

B. Historical Context. Who was writing? When? Where? What was going on? Study Bibles may provide this information.

C. Literary Context. Consider the surrounding chapters and the theme of Psalms.

2. Text

A. Psalm Type: Lament, Penitential, Praise, Thanksgiving, Law, Wisdom, Confidence, Royal, Historical, Prophetic, Imprecatory. (See the Psalms Study Guide in your notebook.)

B. Pray the Psalm. Make it a personal prayer for you/someone else.

C. Questions/Definitions. Jot down questions you have or words you need to define.

D. Poetic Devices.

i. Repetition. Look for repeated words or ideas.

ii. Imagery. Look for images (e.g. rivers, animals, moths, etc.).

iii. Parallels. Look for ideas that repeat, contrast, or compare in the passage or in lines (e.g., Ps. 18:4; 18:27; 103:13).

iv. Transition Words. Look for if/then, for, therefore, because, likewise, or but to show the author's point or clue you in to the shift.

v. Descriptions of God. Look for descriptions of his character or work.

E. Speaker's Attitude. Describe the speaker's feelings/mood.

F. The Shift. Look for changes in pace, attitude, imagery, grammar (such as *I to You/Lord*), or content. The shift points to meaning/purpose.

Interpretation

1. Main Point/Theme. What's the main message of the author in one sentence? What 's the main theme (salvation, kingship, refuge, etc.)?

2. Gospel Connection

A. Where does this fit in the big story of Scripture? Redemptive History: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation.

B. How does the complete work of Christ change or enrich the main point of this passage?

C. Promise/Fulfillment. Is there a promise or prophecy in this passage that is fulfilled with Christ?

D. Cross References. Check later Old Testament and New Testament cross references to see if this passage is cited, quoted, or drawn upon.

E. Biblical Themes. Is this part of a theme in the Bible that we see from beginning to end (e.g., kingship, wicked vs. righteous, judgment, salvation)?

Application

1. What does this teach me about God?

2. How does this change my view of myself?

3. What should I do in response?

4. Why is it this required response difficult to do?