

### 3. Section Studies and Inductive Bible Study

#### Review Step 2: Identify a Theme

What were your themes?

What was your main point?

1. Jonah
2. Ephesians
3. Psalm 22

\*Principle: Use the language of the text for the language of your theme and main point.

#### Spiritual Postures of Interpretation

##### a. Good paradigm: Fruits of the spirit.

These are not the original meaning—I've taken liberty to interpret them out of context.

- Love: Loving God with all your heart and mind through study.
- Joy: The Word should bring you delight.
- Peace: It will bring you peace.
- Patience: Study, reading, and meditation takes a lot of patience.
- Kindness: This means "Uprightness in one's relations with others." Treat it right, like you would be treated.
- Goodness: This means "You're interested in the welfare of others," for their good. It's good for you, and won't be harmful.
- Gentleness: Be humble with it. From Isaiah 66:2, "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."
- Faithfulness: Be diligent and faithful in your study of it.
- Self-control: This is the idea of controlling your emotional impulses to do something important. Bible study can be hard, but control yourself, at times denying your negative impulses, to connect with God in his Word.

##### b. God's Word is authoritative and inspired.

- 2 Timothy 3:16–17: "2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

### c. Read with an obedient heart.

- 1 Samuel 3 // 1 Samuel 3:10: The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

## Assign Step 3: Make Structural Divisions

### Principles of Structural Divisions

- There’s surprising structure in the Bible in every genre:
  - EXAMPLE: Isaiah has 66 chapters (39 in first half, 27 in second half)
- Structure makes a text richer and come alive, not more wooden and dead.
  - EXAMPLE: Romans 1–8 has a narrative substructure
    - 1 World before Israel was founded is ruined
    - 2 Israel is ruined
    - 3 We’re all ruined!
    - 4 Abraham’s faith, righteousness, and justification
    - 5 Death reigned from the time of Adam to Moses through sin
    - 6 Israel under captivity and being set free
    - 7 Wandering in the desert
    - 8 Promised land
- Your structural divisions should span the entire book and point back to the main theme of the piece. If not, then rework your theme.
  - EXAMPLE: Gospel of Matthew: The Lost Sheep of Israel are a part in chapters 2–18, but that’s not the main point. The main point is going out—and the climactic ending of Matthew 28 doesn’t include lost sheep.
- There’s not just “one way” to do it; this is a journey of discovery.
  - EXAMPLE: You might use language of the main them of Matthew: “King” or “Lordship” or “Discipleship”
- Play with the divisions, and as you’re learning count on drafting and reworking your entire outline at least once.
  - STORY: My reading through Jonah this time was pretty funny when I had messed up the order.

### Step 3 Introduction From the Guide

Dividing your book into parts helps you see the flow and progression of the book. Once you make the divisions, focus on just one subsection of your book. You will use this subsection for conducting a word study in Step 4.

### a. Make Section and Subsection Divisions

- Definitions:
  - Section divisions are three to five parts of your book

- Subsection divisions are three to five parts of your sections.
- Results vary from person to person how to divide a certain book into parts, so don't worry about finding the "one way" to do this. Your divisions serve as a tool to help you better understand the macro-view in its major parts.

### Process:

- Read the whole book again, still in raw format, dividing it into three to five major sections. Do this with your printed-out version that has no chapters, verses, or headers, using a pencil to divide the book into sections.
- Then, scanning the book as a whole, divide each of the three to five major sections you created into three to five subsections
- Once you've drawn the lines, then go back through and make a chart, with chapter and verse numbers:
  - Make a chart that shows your sections and subsections (see the example below). While you will mark the divisions on your raw copy, use a Bible with chapters and verses so you can write the exact citations for the sections and subsections of your chart.
  - Name each section and subsection with a topic header that calls back to the main theme.
- Theme of Matthew: The Kingdom of God in the person of Jesus.
- Main point of Matthew: Jesus inaugurates the kingdom of God through his ministry on earth as he trains up his Jewish disciples to send them out to make disciples of all nations.

Example Structure of Matthew						
P R O L O G U E 1:1–25	The Reign of God: <i>Jesus' Ministry to the Sheep of Israel</i> 2:1–18:35			The Reign of God: <i>Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem</i> 19:1–28:15		C O M M I S S I O N 28:16–28:20
	His Ministry Begins 2:1–4:16	His Fame Spreads: <i>He Preaches, Heals, and Exorcizes</i> 4:17–9:38	His People Learn Their King 10:1–18:35	The Vineyard of the King 19:1–20:34	Victory in the City of the King 21:1–28:15	

## b. Focus on One Subsection

Subsection divisions help you focus on a particular passage of the Bible. You are now ready to understand the parts in light of the whole! The parts then give you more insight into the book as a whole as well.

- Read slowly through your subsection, writing your questions and observations.
- Read through the subsection again to identify a few topics that interest you.
- From this subsection, select one to three verses that are the most interesting, confusing, or convicting to you personally.
- Write down as many observations and questions about your verse(s) as possible.
- Make a few conclusions about what you think your passage says about God, people, and obedience based on the immediate context of your subsection and the book as a whole.

## Coming next: Steps 4 and 5: Word Study // Exegesis and Application

### Principles for Section Divisions based on genre

- Narrative: Jonah
  - Opening (you might see hints in the opening of the main theme)
  - Challenges
  - Climactic point
  - Falling action
  - Resolution
- Prose: Ephesians
  - Introduction (you'll see hints in the intro and blessing of the main theme)
  - Blessing
  - Theology
  - Practical
  - Conclusion
- Poetry: Psalm (Walter Brugemann): Movements or waves of:
  - Orientation (you can see hints in the opening lines of the main theme)
  - Disorientation
  - Reorientation