



Introduction

In reality, when we first began Walk with the Word, it did not provide either Bible studies nor Bible study aids, but mainly revolved around a reading schedule and the information in the book "[The Walk](#)" to explain how to synchronize all the ministries in one's church so as to coordinate them with that reading plan. The assumption was that the small group and Sunday School teachers would create corresponding studies in concert with the reading plan in the character and example of the Sunday morning pulpit ministry. We quickly learned, however, that we had overestimated the ability of the Bible study skills not just of the average congregant in the pews or those in teaching positions, but even those of the staff coming out of seminary.

Our first efforts concentrated on conducting seminars to train people in the use of the [Inductive Study Approach](#), but it did not take long to realize that there was also a need to provide Bible studies as examples of that technique. So each time we go through the reading schedule, we add studies, each of which we've actually used in our own small groups. And as recommended in *The Walk*, a small groups coordinator may also be someone in your organization who has the ability to produce Bible studies for others, but ultimately we are most pleased when someone "graduates" from using our studies to producing them on their own.

As can be seen in the [Reading Matrix](#), each week's reading in the [Master Reading Plan](#) shows the studies available for the assigned range of Scripture. We have yet to produce a study for every single chapter of the Bible so there will seem to be gaps, but there is usually more than one study for each week's reading. For those simply looking for a study for a particular Scripture or book of the Bible, there is a sorted list for both [Old Testament Bible Studies](#) and [New Testament Bible Studies](#).

Our Basic Format

Our number one concern is to study God's Word within context, resisting the urge to take a single verse, or even just a part of a verse, out of the greater passage it is found in, always maintaining that Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. Therefore we usually handle the natural paragraphs or sections into which the greater teaching is naturally organized rather than hyper-analyzing individual lines. This also helps maintain the proper understanding of individual words, phrases and

idioms by retaining the attention on the context in which they are used. To reinforce this, parallel Scripture is often cited within the study to reinforce the right meaning by using God's Word to properly interpret God's Word.

After the leader opens with prayer and the brief introduction to the overall lesson, each section of the Scripture to be studied is first located to the left in the main body of the study with the associated examination to the right. Because we employ the Inductive Study Approach, which begins by asking the 5 "w's" and the "h" (who, what, where, when, why and how), the main body is presented in a question and answer format to facilitate group interaction. It is most important to remember, however, that the goal is to determine what God is saying through His Word regardless of how we might feel, and not, "This is what it means to me".

Intermixed with the questions may be observations and points for the leader to interject in order to more fully explain what is taking place, and ultimately at the end of each section is usually found the final application to suggest the greater spiritual meaning as to what to personally do with the Scripture.

These application points are captured in a fill-in-the-blanks group handout. In the sidebar to the left of the introduction under "Group Handout" a "Master" is provided with the blanks filled in for the leader, and a corresponding "Group" with blanks for participants. These print on a standard 8-1/2" by 11" page, usually with two handouts on each "Group" page which can simply be cut in half and distributed as needed. The idea is to fill in the blanks of the main teaching point at the end of each section so that the participant can later study the same Scripture again with the main points to remind them of what was covered and how. This also acts to bring a closure to each section and the overall lesson.

Also in the left sidebar parallel to the introduction will be the whole study for download under "Download the Study Notes", and for each corresponding book of the Bible from which the study derives a "Study Bookmark" is available which outlines the whole book. (These are often given out at the beginning of a multi-week study of a particular book.) The "4 per page" option prints on a standard 8-1/2" by 11" page and can be cut into 4 individual bookmarks which are easily kept in one's Bible. Some studies have specific aids also appearing in that upper left sidebar.

A Typical Example

This is what a typical group study might look like:

1. Distribute any bookmarks, study materials and/or group handouts.
2. Open with prayer.
3. Begin with the introduction.
4. Have someone read the Scripture for the next section.
5. Guide the group discussion with the corresponding questions, answers and points.
6. Conclude each section with the fill-in-the-blanks application on the group handout. This concluding point is designed for a moderated discussion of how to personally apply the greater lessons of the study.
7. At the end of the lesson, conclude with prayer.

Customizing a Study

Note that whereas the study notes are available in the Acrobat Reader format (or “pdf”) which is more difficult to edit, they are also provided in the very easy to edit Microsoft Word format. This enables the leader to insert their own additional material as they see fit.

Those new to creating a completely original Bible study from the ground up may ease into it by first using these studies in concert with their own occasional changes or additions, and over time gain confidence in assuming more and more experience until achieving the milestone of writing an entirely independent study. But even should someone choose to just use the studies provided by Walk with the Word, always first and foremost adhere to the primary rule that your role is to keep the group discussion focused on how to apply God’s Word personally and to refrain from diversions into personal opinion. The goal is to hear God speaking through His Word, not to use it to express our own words or feelings.

A Recommended Resource

For those who would like to delve further into the Inductive Study Approach, we highly recommend [Intensive Care Ministry’s online study course](http://www.IntensiveCareMinistry.org).