

SEARCHING FOR TREASURE

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PLAN OF ACTION:

BIBLE CHARACTER STUDY

So far we have examined Bible Study from many different angles. We have talked about how to observe, interpret, and apply, we have looked an in-depth verse analysis, we have studied the *ABC Method* , the *Search the Scriptures* and most recently the *Topical* approach. Now we are going to look at the last method: *Bible Character Study*.

The Bible is full of very interesting accounts of the lives of many different people. Many of their stories are colorful and intriguing. There is much to be learned from their experiences – both the victories and the mistakes.

Read Romans 15:4. Why do you think the Bible records the stories of so many people’s lives? _____

Read James 5:17. How does the Bible refer to Elijah the prophet?

1. First you must carefully select a Bible Character to study. Be careful not to choose one that is too remote. If you do, information may be so scarce that you will not be able to complete your study. The person you select should be someone that you look up to, admire, and wish to learn from.

2. Now you must begin to do your research. Look the person up in a *Bible Concordance*, *Bible Dictionary* or *Encyclopedia*, or a *Topical Bible*. Many great Bible characters even have books written describing their life. On a piece of scratch paper, list and then perfect the best references to amplify your study.

3. After you have narrowed down the references that you will use, you should read each again carefully. From the scripture that you have selected, write a brief biography (1-3 paragraphs) of the person. This should include facts about the person’s life without a lot of interpretation. You should include things like:

- The meaning of their name
- When and where they lived
- Family background
- Occupation

- Details about how life was like when and where they lived
- Who was alive during that time
- Major events in the person's life
- Their growth and relationship with God (including their salvation experience if the information is available)
- What was their most significant contribution
- Who did they influence

4. From the list of verses that you have studied choose a key verse or small group of verses. They should summarize the person's life if possible. Write it out...maybe you will want to memorize it.

5. What is the *Leading Lesson* that you have learned from your study of this Bible Character? This should be the thing in their life that has most spoken to you about your own life.

6. Record any questions or problems you may encounter.

7. Last (but by no means least!) write out your application. This is what God has taught you through your study about your own life and what steps you will take to change it.

BIBLE CHARACTER STUDY

(taken from The Bible Studies Handbook page 102-103)

PERSON STUDIED: Nehemiah

SCRIPTURES USED:

Verse	Key Thought
Nehemiah 1:4	Intense feeling for the distress of his people
1:9	Claimed God's promise
2:5-9	Trusted God, yet planned in detail
2:20	Gave God credit for success
4:14	Taught fearful people to remember God and family
5:15	Set an unselfish example out of reverence for God
6:13	Enemies devised a plot to ruin him
8:10	Encouraged the people to rejoice in God
13:14	Expressed desire for God's recognition
13:25	Harsh in dealing with sin among the people

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Nehemiah, whose name means "comfort of God," lived during the reign of the Persian King Artaxerxes. The events recorded in the Book of Nehemiah occurred around 445 to 433 B.C. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to king Artaxerxes a job which required him to test the king's food for poisoning.

The city of Jerusalem had been destroyed to the point that the protective walls of the city needed reconstruction. Nehemiah was granted permission and all necessary provisions by Artaxerxes to rebuild the city. Under his direction, the wall was completed.

During the time that Nehemiah served as governor in Jerusalem, he also challenged the Jews on such issues as unjust business practices and marrying foreign wives.

KEY VERSE: Nehemiah 2:17

"Then I said to them, 'You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates are burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem that we may no longer be a reproach.'"

LEADING LESSON: (include the passage it is from)

James 2:17 – “Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”

Nehemiah is an example of a man who demonstrated his faith by his works. He believed God could overcome all obstacles in his way of rebuilding Jerusalem, and was willing to step out and act in light of that belief.

PROBLEMS:

Verse	Question
Nehemiah 4:5	Jesus taught us to pray for our enemies, not against them. Nehemiah prayed against his enemies. Was this right?
Nehemiah 13:25	How often is such harshness needed in dealing with sin?

APPLICATION:

Nehemiah was a man of action. He saw a need and even though it was costly and dangerous he took the opportunity to help meet the need.

I felt as I read the account of his life that willingness and availability make the difference. Though Nehemiah was a cup bearer and not a construction foreman, he was available to help build the wall at Jerusalem.

As an application, I am going to evaluate my attitude and schedule in light of being available to needs. I realize I am not responsive to needs if they appear too big or difficult. But to trust God is to rely on His sufficiency and ability to overcome obstacles.

I now have some opportunities to help others, yet I haven't been very available. This week I will prayerfully evaluate my schedule and make whatever changes are necessary to be free to help.

The opportunities I will consider helping with include:

1. Joining the evangelism program at church.
2. Spending more time with Harry and Jim.
3. More involvement with the people in my Sunday School class.
4. Becoming a student leader (I added that one!).

BIBLE CHARACTER STUDY

PERSON STUDIED: _____

SCRIPTURES USED:

Verse	Key Thought
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

KEY VERSE: _____

LEADING LESSON: (include the passage it is from)

PROBLEMS:

Verse

Question

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

APPLICATION:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this book we have examined many different methods of Bible Study. You have probably figured this out by now, but it is not the method that is important, it is simply that you are doing Bible Study!

What have been your favorite three methods (in order of preference)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I want you to spend some time this week and plan out your *Bible Study for a Lifetime*, what methods will you do when? How will you rotate them? How will you cover all the bases? _____

Now if you are up to it, I want you to tackle *The Big Daddy Bible Study*, I want you to pick any three methods and do each of them on the book of Colossians compiling a mini-commentary of your own (for example you might choose the *ABC*, *Search the Scriptures*, and *Topical* [on the key topic]). Use your own paper or journal and meet with your discipler in two weeks to show them the finished project! Have fun!

APENDIXES

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES Book Preview and Summary

If you decide to use the *Search the Scriptures* method to study an entire book of the Bible you should consider completing the *Book Preview* the first week or few days of study, and the *Book Summary* the last week or at the end of your study.

THE BOOK PREVIEW:

1. Read the entire book through slowly and carefully without stopping.
2. Study background information about the book using notes and maps in the back of your Study Bible or a Bible Handbook, Dictionary, or Commentary (you may also consider using the Internet).

Things like...

- *Who wrote the book? (What can you find out about the author?)*
 - *When was it written and where?*
 - *Who was it written to? (and where did they live)*
 - *Why do you think it was written? (purpose)*
 - *Is the story written anywhere else in the Bible as a cross reference?*
3. Read the book one more time and try and find the main theme or themes in it. Write those down.
 4. Write some applications that God reveals to you about your own life through reading (before you even begin your study).

NOW, PERFORM THE *SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES* METHOD ON EACH CHAPTER IN ORDER.

BOOK SUMMARY:

1. Read your Book Preview over carefully.
2. Read the entire book again at least one time. Try and read it quickly to gain an overview once again of the entire book.
3. Outline or Summarize the entire book (refer to your *Point of the Passage* notes from each chapter).
4. Read the book again and refer to your summary or outline as you do. Are you confident of its accuracy? Make the needed changes.

5. Come up with a Title for the book. It should identify the contents and theme of the book if possible.
6. Make a list of the main lessons and challenges you received while studying the book. Review each of them and pray about them. Ask God to continue this work in your life. Write out any further application that God brings to you.