

Inductive Bible Study

8) **Inductive* Bible Study.** From the very beginning to the very end students are not only encouraged but also required, not only challenged but also instructed so as to ensure that they will study the biblical text for themselves. For... students a concordance, preferably a concordance of the original language, takes precedence over a commentary.

In fact, the commentaries are the last books to be consulted as students are led through the study process. First comes the larger context, then the particular passage at hand (the structure, the phraseology, the etymologies, and the parallel passages), and, finally, the Bible commentaries and Bible handbooks.

9) **A Heuristic** Philosophy.** Closely allied to the inductive method of Bible study is the deep-seated conviction that what a student discovers for herself or himself is much better remembered and used than what a student accepts from another.

The words are a part of academic jargon but are used quite widely even in relation to Bible study so that it is important to distinguish between the two adjectives "heuristic" and "serendipitous." The latter refers more to chance discovery while the former has to do with demonstrating sound investigating methods. ...students are taught to investigate for themselves and come up with defensible answers. But having done that, they are also taught to consider the works of those that have gone before. After all, the Bible is to be understood in the context of the church...

* Inductive: Inductive reasoning is a bottom-up approach, while deductive reasoning is top-down. Inductive reasoning takes you from the specific to the general, while in deductive reasoning, you make inferences by going from the general premises to specific conclusions. (Dictionary.com)

** Heuristic: Enabling someone to discover or learn for themselves.
(Definitions from Oxford Languages)

(Scripture and Strategy: The Use of the Bible in Postmodern Church and Mission by David J. Hesselgrave, Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1994, 165, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)