

Helping a Disciple do a CHAPTER Study

A disciple becomes immersed in the riches of God's word, studying and applying it. You watch, delighted that they're learning to feed themselves. Bible chapter studies are like mining. We find gold if we keep digging. A DiscipleMaker should tutor a Disciple in the skill of Bible study if they're receptive.

Nuts and Bolts of a Chapter Study

Preliminary: like verse studies, most chapters in the Bible have a context (excluding Psalms and Proverbs). There's a train of thought before and after. For instance 1 Corinthians 13, the *Love chapter*, has a context. The church was full of immature, fractious Christians, with lots of heat and little love. They competed with each other for showy gifts. Chapter 13 was sandwiched between two chapters on spiritual gifts, because they needed love more than gifts. Whatever chapter is studied, the first task is to find the context, the flow of thought before and after.

Biblical materials: Suggest a chapter to the Disciple. Let's use Romans 8 to illustrate a chapter study. JI Packer says Romans is the most important book, chapter 8 the most important chapter. (can you guess what phrase in chapter 8 he says is most important?*)

Doing a chapter study: Here's a way to do a chapter study. It might take a month to do.

- **read:** read Romans 8 over and over, maybe five times (Packer suggests 10!) Slow down enough to soak, not skim. Ask, *what makes this chapter so important?*
- **research:** chapter 8 completes the first half of Romans. (Ch. 9-11 have a new theme). It concludes the process of salvation by listing benefits Christians have because they're in Christ. The immediate context is the struggle each Christian has, fighting the cancer of inner sin (7.14-25). Ask, *What resources do we have to have victory over sin, and become winners?*
- **write:** have the Disciple take notes as they research. Eg: *list the promises in ch. 8;*

what different themes are included? (growth, adoption, suffering, prayer, Spirit, love, trials, etc). What's the progression of ideas in the chapter? What don't I understand? What don't I practise?

- **journal:** write down personal insights; eg: *what is God saying to me? What verse(s) mean the most to me? (It's loaded with spiritual calories – you may have trouble picking 1 or 2 best verses)*
- **personalize:** list the implications: *what must change for me to become a Romans 8 Christian? Where should I start? What promises should I claim? Who can I share my learning with?*
- **pray:** *pray through it; take each idea and make it a prayer. Ask God to do this in your life.*

Optional: memorize the chapter. Remember, maybe no chapter is more important in the Bible. Write it down, carry it with you, print it out, have it in your iPhone – whatever works. Determine to own this chapter.

Assign another chapter – eg, 1 Cor. 13, 1 John 1. Perhaps a Psalm like 1 or 23. Or have the Disciple suggest a chapter to study. Have them use the same system, then tell you what they've learned. Encourage them to help someone else do a chapter study.

* the most important phrase acc to Packer is in 8.31, ...*God is for us/on our side*

Small things done in great love will change the world, one person at a time...