

DIGGING INTO GOD'S WORD

A Systematic Method of Bible Study

Lori Crawford

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Acknowledgements

This Bible study method is certainly not original with me. It is an amalgamation of many years of studying and teaching the Bible in Bible Study Fellowship as well as with a small group study in my home and in my church. I have found it to be a simple and effective way to study any passage of Scripture on your own or in a small group.

The format as it appears in this booklet has been used in a Bible study with a group of ladies I fondly call “Friends with Focus.” Together, we took the best of the Bible study methods we were familiar with, tried them out, revised and reworked them and settled on this format. I would like to dedicate this booklet to these women whom God brought into my life, and whom He has used in more ways that I could list to draw me closer to Him as we’ve studied His Word together. They are women after my own heart – women who love to dig into God’s Word and share the treasures they’ve found!

I would also like to thank God for my husband, Jim, without whose support and encouragement this booklet would not have come to be. He spent much time reviewing, editing, and suggesting changes to make it better. He is a sweet gift from God to me in so many ways, and I am grateful!

My goal in sharing this method is to present a plan of Bible study that forces us to dig into God’s Word for ourselves, perhaps in ways we’ve never done before. My prayer is that this method will be a helpful tool for opening God’s Word, understanding it better, seeing the Gospel throughout the Bible, and recognizing the impact it has on your life.

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Chapter 1

The D.I.G. Method

*Learning to dig into God's Word for Details,
Implications, and the Gospel*

The D.I.G. method is a Bible study method that you can do at any time, any place, and at any season of your life. The only tools you need are the Bible, paper, and a pencil. It is a method which is useful for personal study, but can also be used in a group setting after each member does their own personal study. And like anything worth doing, this Bible study method takes work (hence the name "DIG").

The purpose of this method is to teach you to feed yourself from God's Word. When you dig into God's Word this way, you will not only come to know God, His Word, and His plan, but you will discover how practical God's Word is for your life right now. So, don't be intimidated, but do be challenged to persevere in your digging. God wants you to know Him and experience Him, so He will meet you as you DIG!

Here's how to D.I.G. First, look at the Details (D) of the passage, looking for just the facts, asking what the passage is saying. Then, interpret those facts. Describe what you think the passage means.

Second, bring the passage home by discovering the Implications (I) contained in the passage. How does this passage impact your head, heart, hands, and prayers?

Finally, look for the Gospel (G) in this passage. Where do you see truths about God, man, Jesus, and how we respond?

While this method can be used with any passage of Scripture, it is helpful to divide the passage into bite-sized pieces for your study. Also, don't start each part of the study from scratch. The Interpretations will build on the Facts; the Implications build on the Interpretations, and so on. An example using this method is found in Chapter 2.

To disregard God's Word is to reject life itself. To DIG into God's Word and let it change how you think and what you love and how you live is the surest way to experience all that God has for you. As you taste and see how good the Word of God is and how good the God of the Word is you

will discover treasures beyond anything you can image—and you will be changed forever.

*Deuteronomy 32:47: This is no empty word for you,
but your very life, and by this word you shall live*

D—DETAILS

Facts: What does it say?

Observations

- Print a triple-spaced copy of passage you're focusing on with room to write in the margins.
- Context is king. Read the entire passage several times, not just the verses you're focusing on. See how the part you're studying fits into the whole. Read prayerfully—read reflectively—read inquisitively, looking for facts only.
- Think; engage your mind. Note specific words the author uses and think about why he used that word rather than a different one.
- Circle connecting words (therefore, but, because, for) and draw arrows to what they are referring to. Note repeated words or phrases and note key characters or events.
- Write your observations right on the page. Underline things you don't understand and write questions in the margins.
- Make note of what the passage says about who God is and how God works, what it says about Jesus, what it says about you, and where you see the gospel.

List of Facts

- Make a list of the facts of the passage—what is this passage saying? You're not interpreting the facts yet, just making a list of what is there.
- Facts can be listed verse-by-verse or you can lump several verses together, depending on how long the passage is that you are studying.
- Use abbreviations—the facts don't need to be written in complete sentences.
- Be sure to include the verse(s) which each fact comes from.

Summary

- Write a summary of the facts. This should be a brief synopsis with complete sentences.

Interpretations: What does it mean?

List of Interpretations

- God's Spirit interprets God's Word, so it's important to pray and ask Him to help you understand the meaning of the passage. Don't start from scratch, but build on what you saw from your observations of the passage.
- In a notebook write out what you think the passage means. You can do this verse-by-verse or you can put several verses together. You can be consistent with what you did in your Observations or interpret several observations together.
- Write out something that was new to you or something that especially speaks to you where you are in your life.
- It's important that you DIG for yourself. Resist the temptation to look at the study notes in your Bible or turn to commentaries to see what others think. God wants to speak to you personally—that's when you find treasure. The time to look at commentaries or study notes is after your personal study and group discussion.

Main Idea

- Write a brief statement describing what you have found to be the main idea of the passage. Think about why the passage is in the Bible. What are you supposed to learn from it? What are some timeless principles found in this passage?

I—IMPLICATIONS

Implications are conclusions drawn from the passage. This is where you bring the passage home. It doesn't matter how much Bible knowledge you have in your head or how savvy you are at understanding what it means. What matters is what impact God's Word is having on your life. As you DIG, God's Spirit renews your mind (head). Then He takes that knowledge and uses it to transform your heart in such a way that it changes what you do with your hands.

The Implications are built on what you learned from the passage in your Interpretations. An Implication may not necessarily be a new thought. It may be a reminder of something you've learned before but have forgotten.

HEAD

Christian transformation always begins with the renewing of the mind. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to change way we think and then everything changes. Ask yourself:

- What impact does this passage have on my head? How does it change the way I think about God and about Jesus and about myself? How does the passage change how I think about the gospel? How does it change how I think about how to get saved or how to live the Christian life?
- How does this passage change how I think about my marriage or my children? How does it change the way I think about financial problems or suffering in my life or in the world?
- How does this passage change the way I think about my role in the church or at my job?

Write down your thoughts. These can be verse-specific or they may be taken from the entire passage.

HEART

The Holy Spirit then moves what we learn in our heads 18 inches down to our hearts.

- How does this passage change how I feel? How does it change what I love or what I want? How does it change what's important to me?
- How does it change what I'm passionate about, what I value and treasure?

Write down your thoughts. These can be verse-specific or they may be taken from the entire passage.

HANDS

The truths which we learn in our heads and the changes of the desires in our hearts work themselves out to change what we do with our hands.

- How will this passage change what I say or what I do? How will it change how I talk and how I walk?
- How will it change how I spend my time? How will it change what I watch or what I read?
- How will it change where I go and who I go with?

Write down your thoughts. These can be verse-specific or they may be taken from the entire passage.

Important reminder: Our default mode when the Holy Spirit gives us insight into God's Word is to roll up our shirtsleeves and get to work. We try to change ourselves on the outside. We think "I can do this" or "I'll just try harder to be better" or "I'll just stop doing that." This is how the world works—behavior modification and self-help. But this is not how God works. God changes us from the inside out. So, avoid turning what you've learned into a to-do list by remembering how God works and trusting Him to not only change what you do, but to give you the desire to change and the ability to change through His Spirit working in you. That's where the final Implication comes in: Prayer.

PRAYERS

Prayer is the outcome of knowing something needs to change and knowing that you are powerless to change it. Prayer is admitting "I can't" and acknowledging that "God can." Prayer is coming to God with an open hand, admitting your neediness and acknowledging His all-sufficiency. Rather than being general prayers, these prayers should be specific to the passage studied. Again, ask yourself:

- How will this passage change how I pray? What will I ask God to do in my life through the enabling of His Spirit as a result of studying this passage? How will I pray differently for myself and for others as a result of what God has shown me in this passage?

When you DIG into God's Word this way, God changes how you pray and what you pray for. Our prayers move from simply "Fix it, God" to "Change me, God." Knowing how God works, you begin to pray for a renewed mind and a changed heart for yourself and for others.

When it comes to letting God's Word impact your prayers it is helpful to categorize prayers using the A-C-T-S format. This keeps your prayers from being all supplication. ACTS stands for:

ADORATION — praising God for who He is

List the attributes of God you see in the passage and praise Him for them. For example, "God, I praise You because You are:

- Sovereign
- Faithful
- Merciful
- Gracious
- Provider
- Protector."

CONFESSION — confessing your sin, not someone else's

List your sins that have been exposed in this passage and confess them to God. "Father, forgive me for:

- my self-righteousness
- my self-centeredness
- my lack of love and joy
- my pride."

THANKSGIVING — thanking God for what He's done

What are you thankful for as a result of studying this passage? "Thank you, God, for:

- Your provision
- Your protection
- Your Spirit working to transform me
- Your answers to prayer
- Revealing Yourself to me."

SUPPLICATION — making your requests known to God

What do you want God to do in your life or in the lives of others as a result of studying this passage? Think bigger than "fix it" prayers! God is waiting for you to come to Him and watch Him work.

G—GOSPEL

Gospel is a word which we use all the time, but I'm not sure we understand exactly what it is or that we could clearly explain it to others. The Gospel is easily remembered and discovered in God's Word when we break it down into Four Truths.

The Truth About God

God is the Holy Creator with sovereign authority over His creation.

Genesis 1:1: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

We were created by Him to worship Him and serve Him. We are to live for His glory, to live in dependence on Him, to point to Him in everything we do and say.

Isaiah 43:6b - 7: Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory

TRUTH: We were created by God and for God. We are absolutely dependent upon God who, as holy Creator, has absolute claim on us.

The Truth About Man

None of us do what God created us to do. We have all failed to worship and serve God. We all choose to go our own way rather than God's way. The Bible calls this sin.

Romans 3:23: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Sin is an offense against God that separates us from Him. There is nothing we can do on our own to bring us back into God's favor.

Romans 3:20: For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight

TRUTH: We are all sinners. Sin is who we are and sin is what we do. Our sin separates us from God and we need to be reconciled to Him.

The Truth About Jesus

His Incarnation

Jesus Christ is God in the flesh.

John 1:14: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth

His Perfect Life

Jesus was the only One Who kept all of God's law perfectly.

Hebrews 4:15: For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin

His Death

Jesus lived as a man in order to die for men.

Romans 5:8: God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us

His Resurrection

Jesus Christ conquered sin and death.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4: Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; He was buried; and He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

His Exaltation

Jesus ascended back to the right hand of God.

Hebrews 1:3b: After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

TRUTH: Through His perfect life and substitutionary death, Jesus Christ, the only God-Man, has provided the only way for sinful man to have our sins forgiven and to be reconciled to our Creator God.

The Truth About Our Response

Faith

Faith is resting in and relying on Who God is and what He's done for us through Jesus. It's believing in and trusting in Jesus alone to reconcile us to God.

Romans 10:9: If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved

Repentance

Repentance is not doing something about our sin, but admitting we can't do anything about our sin and turning from our sin and from ourselves to Jesus.

Acts 20:21 (NLT): I have one message—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

TRUTH: The only reasonable response to what God has done for us through Christ is faith and repentance - believing and receiving; resting in and relying on; turning to and trusting in Jesus.

That's the gospel. Ask yourself:

- Where do I see God in this passage? Think about the "Adoration" part of your Prayer Implication.
- Where do I see myself and my sin in this passage? Think about the "Confession" part of your Prayer Implication.
- Where do I see Jesus and His work in this passage?
- Where do I see my response to who God/Jesus is and what He's done in this passage?

You may not see all four truths clearly defined in every passage, but you will always see at least one. Or you may see the gospel in general ways in the passage. Write down your thoughts.

Here's a brief summary of the four truths, as well as the role the Holy Spirit plays in each truth:

God created us for relationship with Him, to love, worship, and obey Him. We said, "no." We chose to go our way rather than God's way. That's called sin. Our sin has separated us from relationship with God and subjected us to His anger. However, rather than punishing us for our sin, He sent His Son, Jesus, to live in perfect obedience and to take the punishment we deserve for our sins on Himself when He died on the cross. As a result, we are saved; we are forgiven and reconciled to God; we are given life rather than the death we deserve. Our response to what God has done through Jesus is not to try hard to be good and hope that God will accept us, but simply to rest in and rely on the work that Jesus did on our behalf.

The Holy Spirit is working in every one of the four truths. Without the work of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes we wouldn't see God. We wouldn't know that God created us for relationship with Him. And it's the Holy Spirit Who convicts us of sin. Without His work, we would be blind to our sin. The Holy Spirit also opens our eyes and quickens our hearts to see and believe in Jesus and the work He did on our behalf. He causes us to see Jesus as more valuable than all the sins we're holding on to. And the Holy Spirit creates faith in us to respond to the work Jesus did by turning from our own way and going God's way. The Holy Spirit continues His work throughout our lives to lift up Jesus, convict us of sin, and draw us back into the fellowship with God for which we were created. He fills us and produces fruit in us which changes our character on the inside and our conduct on the outside.

A common misunderstanding of the gospel is to think that it is how we get saved, but after that we're on our own to live the Christian life. But the gospel is so much more than that—it is for all of life. The gospel is how we do everything God calls us to do every day. We rehearse who God is and we remember that we are undeserving sinners unable to do anything apart from Him. We run to Jesus—the One who paid for all our sins past, present, and future—and we turn from depending on ourselves and receive the power and enablement of God's Spirit to live every day.

Primacy of the Gospel

It is imperative that we bring the gospel into everything we read in God's Word, everything we do, and everything we share with others. If we don't go to Jesus ourselves, and if we don't *take others* to Jesus and the gospel every time we share, counsel, teach, or preach the Bible, then we're

leaving it up to ourselves or each individual or group of individuals to answer the question, "That's good information, but what am I supposed to do with it?"

This will most likely result in one of the following responses:

- We will simply walk away and forget what we read or heard.
- We will store up knowledge in our head, but it won't have any lasting effect on how we think or what we love or what we do.
- We will create a to-do list. "I can do this. This is what I read/heard, so here's how I'm going to do it." This is our default mode. This approach leads to either becoming discouraged when we try and fail or becoming proud and self-righteous because we think we're doing a pretty good job.

The entire Bible is about Jesus and the gospel. We must be intentional in seeing Who Jesus is and what He's done for us in the gospel and intentionally take others to Him.

Chapter 2

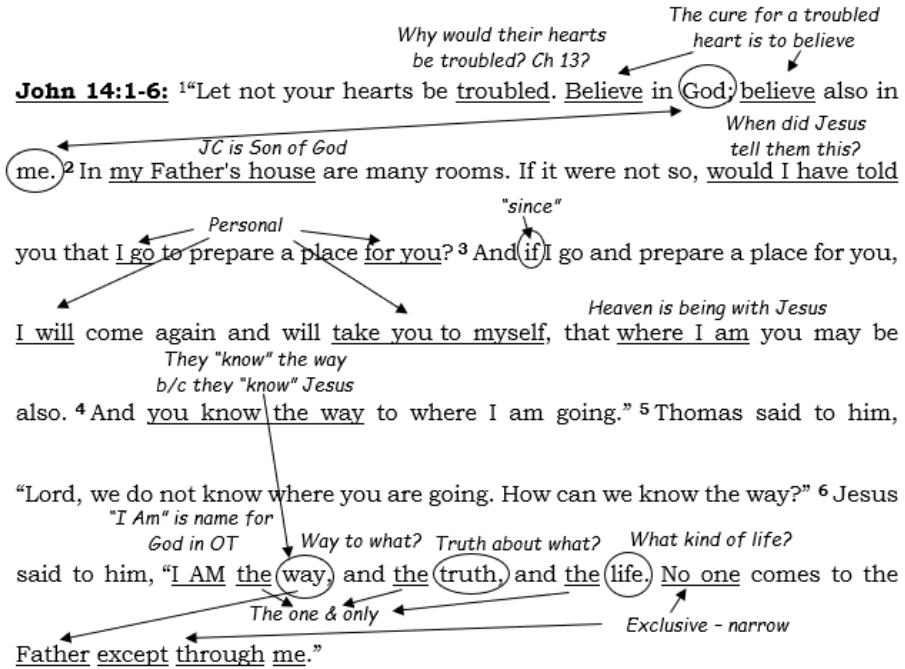
Example Using the Method

This chapter provides a detailed example of use of the D.I.G. method for the study of John 14:1-6.

D—DETAILS

Facts: What does it say?

Observations



List of Facts

1. Vs 1: Jesus tells disciples not to be troubled; believe in God & in Him
2. Vs 2: Many rooms in Father's house; He's going to prepare place for them
3. Vs 3: He will return to take them where He is
4. Vs 4: Jesus said they know the way to where He's going
5. Vs 5: Thomas said, "Don't know where You're going, so how know way?"
6. Vs 6: Jesus said He is way, truth, life; only way to Father is through Him

Summary

Jesus calms His disciples' troubled hearts by telling them to believe in God and believe in Him. He says He's leaving to prepare a place for them and He will return to get them. He says He is "The way, the truth, and the life;" the only way to the Father.

Interpretations: What does it mean?

List of Interpretations

1. Vs 1: The cure for a troubled heart is: Believing God; believing the Gospel (Jesus and the work He did); believing in forever (see vs 2 – believing this life is not all there is)
 - When my heart is troubled, I should ask, "What am I NOT believing about God – about Jesus & His work in the Gospel – about forever?"
2. Why were their hearts "troubled?" See 13:21-38: Last Supper = one of them would betray Jesus; "Now it's time for Me to be glorified"; "I'm with you only a little longer; you will look for Me; where I'm going you can't come now"; told Peter = "You will deny & disown Me 3 times tonight"
3. Jesus' solution for a troubled heart is to "believe" = "accept as true; feel sure of; have faith in; hold onto; feel sure someone is capable of a particular action"
 - Believe "in God" and "in Me" – not blind faith; God is the object of our belief; that's why we can trust & feel sure of & hold onto & know He is capable of what He says
 - That requires a high view of God; knowing God's attributes

4. Vs 2: "Would I have told you . . ." Where and when did Jesus tell them "I go to prepare a place for you"?
 - Ezekiel 34:22-31 = promise to bring His people back to the Land after exile; back into His presence (Eze. 34:29). This is a Messianic prophecy speaking about Jesus' future work.
5. God's plan is to have his people living in His place enjoying His presence (Storyline of the entire Bible from Eden to Revelation)
6. Where is God's place? In His presence (see vs 3)
7. Along with believing in God & in Jesus, fixing our eyes on eternity is the remedy for a troubled heart
 - Hebrews 12:2: "For the joy set before Him" Jesus endured the cross
 - Jesus didn't love suffering of the cross, rejection by His own disciples, unjust trials, mocking & scourging, nails in His hands, hanging naked before the world, rejection of His Father – but He loved His Father & He loved what the cross would accomplish for God & for us.
8. Vs 3: "And" = there's more; I want you in the place I've prepared
 - We are the "joy" for which Jesus endured the cross; we are His Bride; we are God's love gift to His Son.
 - God's mercy & grace = not only are my sins forgiven, but I'm welcomed into a place I have no right to be.
 - How do we not make vs 1-3 all about us? ("He didn't want heaven without me") By remembering who is doing the work = Jesus, not us.
 - Right now, Jesus is preparing us for the place He's preparing for us.
9. Vs 4-5: Jesus was going to His Father's house (vs 1-2)
 - Thomas focused on the "where"; Jesus focused on the "way."
 - "The way" to His Father's house was a Person = Jesus (vs 6); that's why Jesus said, "You know the way" because they knew Him.
10. Vs 6: Gospel in a nutshell
 - "I Am" = Yahweh/Jehovah; LORD = Psalm 23; Covenant Name; personal Name; faithful promise-keeper.
11. We can believe Jesus' promises because of He is = "I Am."

12. "The one and only way" to what? To God; Jesus is the mediator, reconciler. To truth; to eternal & abundant life; to heaven; to all God is.
13. "The truth" about what? About how to know God; how to have sins forgiven; how to be in relationship with God; how to live the Christian life; truth about everything
 - Truth that there's only one way to God & life eternal & abundant
 - Truth about Gospel = about who God is & who we are & what God has done about who we are & how we get what God has done
 - Jesus is Truth in a world of lies
 - Truth is not relative, subject to debate, whatever I think it is
14. "The life" = eternal & abundant; forever life as God intended it to be
 - Full life right now = joyful, enjoyable, purposeful, not dreary or boring or meaningless or futile
15. Jesus is "THE" one & only way to the Father & to truth & life; there are not many paths to God

Main Idea

Jesus is the only way to know and enjoy God now and forever. Believing in God, in Jesus (Gospel), and in forever is the cure for a troubled heart.

I—IMPLICATIONS

HEAD

- When I'm troubled, it's because there's something I'm not believing about God, about Jesus, about the work Jesus did, about eternity
- Unbelief in my head creates fear in my heart
- There is absolute truth; there is only one way to God & eternal life; only one road leads to heaven & that road goes through Jesus; 2 + 2 is always 4, it doesn't matter if you agree or accept it, it's always true

HEART

- I feel so loved to know that Jesus is preparing a special place just for me, & that He wants me to be with Him for all eternity - & that He is personally going to come & take me home to be with Him
- I want to know & believe in God & in Jesus & in the gospel & in eternity in a way that goes beyond knowledge in my head
- I want to experience the freedom that comes from knowing the truth

HANDS

- Spend more time in the throne room than in the strategy room, praying instead of fixing
- Let go of the “stuff” of this world that I hold on to so tightly because I know this life is not all there is, & I have a special place with Jesus forever
- Live like a pilgrim; don't settle down & get too comfortable in this world

PRAYERS

ADORATION (Praising God for who He is)

- God, I praise You because You are: Purposeful; Personal; Truth; Reconciler; Life; Sovereign; Love

CONFESSION (of sin)

- Lord, I confess my unbelief; I confess how easily I forget who You are & what You've done for me, & what You've promised me; I confess that live like this world is all there is, that I don't keep my mind & heart on eternity

THANKSGIVING (Thanking God for what He's done)

- Father, I thank You that this life is not all there is; I thank You for Jesus as the Way to bring me back to You & all that You are; I'm thankful for truth that sets me free from wrong thinking & wrong loving & wrong living

SUPPLICATION (Requests)

- Please God, help my unbelief; fix my eyes on Jesus & on eternity; release my grip on the things & people of this world that I'm putting my hope in; teach me what it means to live like a pilgrim; remind me of all that You are & all that You have done for me through Jesus – & all You've promised me

G—GOSPEL

Where do I see God in this passage? (coincides with Adoration)

- Purposeful; Personal; Truth; Reconciler; Life; Sovereign; Love

Where do I see myself in this passage? (coincides with Confession)

- I don't believe; I easily forget Who God is & what He's done & what He's promised to be & do; I live like this world is all there is; I don't keep my mind & heart on eternity

Where do I see Jesus and His work in this passage?

- Jesus died to get me to God; He removed the barrier of my sin that was separating me from God so that I could be reconciled to Him
- Jesus is the Truth that sets me free from the lies of the world; sets me free from works-based religion

Where do I see my response to who God is, & what He's done in this passage?

- My response to getting God & all that Jesus died to give me is to believe; receive; turn from my own trying harder & hold out my empty hand to receive everything He's waiting to give me

General Gospel Truths:

- The Gospel is God's plan to have His people living in His place enjoying His presence forever. He sent Jesus to make that happen.

Chapter 3

Suggestions for Discussion Leaders

This chapter provides helps for those who are going to be facilitating a small group study using this method. These are suggestions to ensure an effective and enriching time of discussion.

- Study the lesson on your own, just like the members are doing, without study notes or commentaries
- Always start and end on time. If you continually start late the members will start coming late. End on time to show that you value their time. Suggested time markers are included below to help keep you on time and on track.
- When facilitating the study in a small group it's best to go through the passage in the same way that the members studied. HOWEVER, in a small group setting it is difficult and time-consuming to go over all the Facts ("What does it say?"), so it's best to simply read the passage and then ask for volunteers to share their summary of the facts. It's also helpful to remind the members that even though you don't go over these facts during the discussion, it is important that they begin their study with them because everything else builds off of "What does it say?"
- Then move on to the Interpretations ("What does it mean?") followed by the Implications and the Gospel. You'll notice in the suggested timing plan that in a small group it's helpful to discuss the gospel question before ending with the Prayer part of the Implications. This provides a great way to end the group time with everyone praying about what they learned from the passage.

TIMING: Your goal is to finish the entire lesson in the time allotted. If you don't, the members will get frustrated; they will stop finishing their lessons since you never get to the end anyway; and they will miss opportunities to share some of their insights. Here are some helpful time markers which you can write into your study notes.

One and one-half hour study

- 6:30 – 6:40 Build in time for fellowship, if you desire
- 6:40 – 6:50 Pray. It's best if you personally pray to open the study. This way you can set the expectations of the meeting by praying about what you want God to do during your time together.
- Ask for a few volunteers to briefly review the previous week's lesson.
- Ask someone to read the new passage out loud.
- Ask for a few volunteers to share their Summary of the facts.
- 6:50 – 7:20 What does it Mean? (Interpretations) Depending on the length of the passage you can go verse by verse or you can group several verses together. Just be sure to make it clear what verses you're talking about ("*What do you think verses 3-5 mean?*").
- 7:20 – 7:35 Implications on Head – Heart – Hands (5 minutes each). Ask the members how this passage impacted the way they think, how they feel or what they love, and what will change with their hands.
- 7:35 – 7:45 Where do you see the gospel in this passage? You can divide the gospel out into the four truths:
- Where did you see God in this passage?
 - Where did you see sin?
 - Where did you see Jesus?
 - What is our response?
- And/or you can ask if they had any general gospel insights from the passage.
- 7:45 – 8:00 Implications on Prayers. How will what you've learned FROM THIS PASSAGE change how you pray, both for yourself and for others? Pray together following the A-C-T-S format. This is a great way for the members to learn how to pray according to God's Word; to learn to keep their prayers brief and focused; and to learn how to pray in their individual prayer time as well.

You start each part (Adoration-Confession-Thanksgiving-Supplication), then either go around in a circle or ask the members to “popcorn” a one-sentence prayer under that category which is specific to that passage. Be sure they know which category you’re praying about and persevere in teaching them the value of this type of prayer.

Two-hour study

- 9:30 – 9:45 Build in time for fellowship, if you desire
- 9:45 – 10:00 Pray. It’s best if you personally pray to open the study. This way you can set the expectations of the meeting by praying about what you want God to do during your time together.
- Ask for a few volunteers to briefly review the previous week’s lesson.
- Ask someone to read the new passage out loud.
- Ask for a few volunteers to share their Summary of facts.
- 10:00 – 10:40 What does it Mean? (Interpretations) Depending on the length of the passage you can go verse by verse or you can group several verses together. Just be sure to make it clear what verses you’re talking about (“*What do you think verses 3-5 mean?*”).
- 10:40 – 11:05 Implications on Head – Heart – Hands (about 8 minutes each)
- Ask the members how this passage impacted the way they think, how they feel or what they love, and what will change with their hands.
- 11:05 – 11:15 Where do you see the gospel in this passage? You can divide the gospel out into the four truths:
- Where did you see God in this passage?
 - Where did you see sin?
 - Where did you see Jesus?
 - What is our response?
- And/or you can ask if they had any general gospel insights from the passage.

11:15 – 11:30 Implications on Prayers. How will what you've learned FROM THIS PASSAGE change how you pray, for yourself or for others? Pray together following the A-C-T-S format. This is a great way for the members to learn how to pray according to God's Word, to learn to keep their prayers brief and focused, and to learn how to pray in their individual prayer time as well. You start each part (Adoration-Confession-Thanksgiving-Supplication), then either go around in a circle or ask the members to "popcorn" a one-sentence prayer under that category which is specific to that passage. Be sure they know which category you're praying about, and persevere in teaching them the value of this type of prayer.

Planning your timing and following it as closely as possible is your friend. It helps you in many ways, not only in finishing on time. But you also want to be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is doing in your group, so ask God to give you wisdom and discernment while you lead.

While timing is important, there is more to facilitating a lively discussion than simply staying on time. The members are expecting you to act like the leader and they will benefit when you do that. Here are a few insights into your role.

Facilitating

- Your role is to facilitate the discussion, not to teach the members. You may participate in the discussion, but you shouldn't dominate it.

Focusing

- Keep the members focused on the passage they studied. Don't let them go off on bunny trails and don't you go off on bunny trails. When the focus shifts from the passage studied to other things the discussion often results in pooling of ignorance rather than sharing from God's Word.
- This is where your timing provides a safe boundary for you to address someone starts to get off-topic. You can simply say, *"That's an interesting thought – I'd be happy to discuss that with you later, but we want to get through the entire lesson before it's time to leave, so let's keep moving."*

Balancing

- The goal of a vibrant discussion group is that every member participates. It's your job as the facilitator to help that happen. Don't be afraid to call on members who haven't shared yet. (*"Julie, what insight did you get from these verses?"*). Ask those who like to answer every question to hold back until others have had an opportunity to share and ask those who tend to be quiet to jump in. Ask the members to be brief in their sharing so as to allow for the maximum number of people to share. The reason we hesitate to do this is often that we are afraid we will offend someone. But, when we don't work to balance the conversation, we are offending the others in the group who have done their lesson, but never have a chance to share.
- A little silence in the middle of discussion is not bad, but prolonged silence can be deadly. Be prepared to draw out the members with questions – not to lead them to your conclusions or to teach them, but to stimulate discussion and get them thinking more deeply. (*"What do you think the writer meant by the phrase 'just happened' in Ruth 2? Why did Jesus call Himself the 'true' vine in John 15? Does that mean there's a 'false' vine?"*)

Responding

- The goal of group discussion is lively conversation, not simply recitation of questions and answers. As leader, you should not feel the need to respond after every answer and the members should not expect you to. If the conversation is going well you don't have to respond at all, except to move along to the next question when it's time. It is important that each member feels their input is valuable, so when you do respond, be encouraging. Sometimes a simple "thank you" is enough.
- What about when someone's answer is really "off the wall" in the sense that you really don't see how it applies to what you're talking about? Provided you have time, you could ask for clarification. Or you could simply say something like, *"It sounds like God has really brought this lesson home to your heart and mind, Tom, thank you so much for sharing with us. Does anyone else have a thought?"*

- Although your role is a facilitator and not a teacher you must be sure that doctrinal errors do not go unchecked. If you do, others in the group will take your silence as affirmation of the error. An example of a doctrinal error is someone stating that *"Jesus is not the only way to God"*. The best way to handle this is to always go back to God's Word, our source of truth. Ask the member where they find that in Scripture and share what you know from Scripture. It's not your job to convince them, that's the job of the Holy Spirit. But it is your job to point them to God's Word. Once you clarify what the Bible says it's probably best to move on in the discussion. But, be sure to follow up with them some time during the week.

It is a great privilege as well as a great responsibility to lead others in studying God's Word. As you depend on God in your leading, He will use you and give you everything you need for what He's called you to do.

Appendix

D.I.G Overview

D—DETAILS

FACTS—What Does It Say?

Observations

List of Facts

Summary

INTERPRETATIONS—What Does It Mean?

List of Interpretations

Main Idea

I—IMPLICATIONS

HEAD

HEART

HANDS

PRAYERS

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication

G—GOSPEL

TRUTHS ABOUT

God

Man

Jesus

Our Response

GENERAL GOSPEL TRUTHS

Biographical Note

I had the privilege of being raised in a Christian home. I accepted Christ when I was six years old and was very active in many church activities throughout my life. I married a Christian man and we raised three sons in the church. It was not until I was around 37 years old that I began to feel that something was missing, wondering, "Is this all there is to the Christian life?" That discontent led me to a Bible Study Fellowship class where I learned to study the Bible for myself. I soon realized how little about God and His Word I really knew, in spite of being in church all my life. I came to understand that the gospel is not just how you become a Christian, but it's how you live every day of your life as a Christian. Coming to know God and the gospel in this way created a hunger in me for teaching and training others to study God's Word for themselves. My prayer is that God will create that hunger in you as you DIG into His Word, and that you will be forever changed!