



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Swedish Bible Study Method

A Simple Way to Notice, Question, Understand, and Apply Scripture

The Short Answer

The Swedish Bible Study Method is a simple way to slow down and interact carefully with Scripture.

WRITE - Write out the passage, key verse, or important words.

READ - Read the passage slowly and carefully, preferably more than once.

QUESTION - Write down questions raised by the passage.

ANSWER - Look for answers first in the passage and its surrounding biblical context.

APPLY - Ask how the truth of the passage should shape belief, worship, character, or action.

The method does not require advanced Bible knowledge. It also does not replace prayer, dependence on the Holy Spirit, careful interpretation, the local church, or trustworthy study resources. Its purpose is to help readers pay attention to Scripture, become comfortable asking questions, and increasingly learn to search the Bible itself for answers.

Psalm 119:18 · Acts 17:11 · 2 Timothy 2:15 · 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Opening Memory Anchor

Write it. Read it. Question it. Search for the answer. Live the truth.



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PART ONE BEGINNER GUIDE

1. WHAT IS THE SWEDISH BIBLE STUDY METHOD?

The Swedish Bible Study Method encourages active engagement with Scripture. Rather than simply reading a passage and moving on, the reader: WRITE what Scripture says. READ it carefully. QUESTION what is difficult, surprising, or important. ANSWER those questions by examining Scripture. APPLY what has been understood.

Different versions use somewhat different symbols, questions, or steps. The exact format is less important than the habits it develops: PAY ATTENTION TO THE BIBLE. ASK GOOD QUESTIONS. SEARCH FOR BIBLICAL ANSWERS. RESPOND TO WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED. The method is a tool. Scripture remains the authority.

Memory Anchor

The method provides the questions. Scripture provides the truth.

2. WHERE DO PRAYER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT FIT?

Throughout the entire process. Before studying, pray for understanding. Psalm 119:18 provides a simple biblical prayer: "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law." Christians believe the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21) and helps believers understand and respond to God's truth (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

INSPIRATION is the Holy Spirit's work in giving Scripture through its human authors. ILLUMINATION is the Holy Spirit's work in helping believers understand, receive, and respond to the Scripture He inspired. Illumination does not mean receiving new Scripture, nor is every thought, feeling, or personal impression automatically from God. Interpretations and impressions should be tested by the biblical text.

Pray for understanding, humility, wisdom, attention, willingness to be corrected, and willingness to obey. Then work carefully with the words God has given.

Memory Anchor

Depend on the Spirit. Stay anchored to the Scripture He inspired.

3. WHY BEGIN BY WRITING?

Writing encourages careful attention. While writing, notice repeated words, commands, promises, questions, contrasts, connecting words, descriptions of God, human responses, and words that seem especially important.

Writing is not spiritually superior to reading. The purpose is attention, not handwriting. Typing the passage, speaking it aloud, or carefully marking a printed Bible can accomplish the same basic goal. Ask: WHAT DID THE TEXT ACTUALLY SAY?

4. HOW SHOULD THE PASSAGE BE READ?

Read slowly, and read more than once. FIRST READING: read for the overall idea. SECOND READING: notice details. THIRD READING: look for relationships between those details.

Whenever possible, read a complete paragraph or short section rather than an isolated verse. Ask who is speaking or writing, who is addressed, what is happening, what comes before and after, what kind of literature this is, and why these words mattered to the original audience. Context protects against giving a true sentence from Scripture a meaning the passage does not support.

Memory Anchor

Slow reading often reveals what hurried reading misses.

5. WHY SHOULD READERS ASK QUESTIONS?

Questions are not the enemy of faith. The Bereans in Acts 17:11 received Paul's teaching eagerly while examining the Scriptures to determine whether what they heard was true.

Ask: What does this word mean? Why did this person respond this way? Why is this idea repeated? What happened before this? Who received this promise? Is this a command, description, warning, promise, proverb, prophecy, or something else? How does this fit with another passage? What does this reveal about God? How does it connect to the larger biblical story? What is not yet understood?

A question that cannot be answered immediately is not a failed Bible study. Sometimes an important result is discovering what still needs to be studied.

6. WHERE SHOULD THE ANSWERS COME FROM?

Begin with the Bible. Then widen the view: PASSAGE → SURROUNDING SECTION → BIBLICAL BOOK → RELATED SCRIPTURES.

START WITH SIMPLE TOOLS: (1) The Bible - read the passage and context carefully. (2) Cross-references - look at related passages. (3) A trustworthy study Bible - use notes for historical setting, difficult wording, or background.

When more help is needed, consider comparing trustworthy translations, Bible maps, Bible dictionaries, reliable commentaries, original-language reference tools, or help from a pastor, teacher, or mature Christian. Tools should help readers understand Scripture rather than replace Scripture. If the answer remains uncertain, write: FURTHER STUDY NEEDED.

Memory Anchor

Search Scripture first. Use tools to help - not replace - the search.

7. WHAT DOES "APPLY" MEAN?

Application asks how the truth of a passage should affect life, but application comes after understanding. Begin with: "What is this passage communicating?" Then ask: "How should that truth shape life?"

Application may involve believing, trusting, repenting, obeying, changing, forgiving, encouraging, worshiping, remembering, or praying. Sometimes the most faithful application is simply understanding something about God more accurately. Not every passage needs to become a to-do list.

Application should never become a spiritual scorecard. Christians do not earn God's favor by completing enough Bible-study applications. Biblical obedience is a response to God's truth and grace - not an attempt to purchase them.

Memory Anchor

Application responds to grace. It does not earn grace.

8. WHAT DOES A SWEDISH METHOD STUDY LOOK LIKE?



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Read Mark 4:35-41. Jesus and His disciples cross the Sea of Galilee. A violent storm develops; the disciples awaken Jesus; He commands the wind and sea to become still and then addresses their fear and faith.

WRITE: Mark 4:39-41 or key phrases: "Peace, be still." "Why are you so fearful?" "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

READ: The disciples are inside the storm and believe they are in danger. Jesus is with them, yet they are afraid. He calms the storm and addresses their fear and faith.

QUESTION: Why was Jesus sleeping? Why were the disciples so frightened? Why does Jesus question their faith? Why are they even more afraid after the storm? Why do they ask, "Who can this be?" What does authority over wind and sea reveal about Jesus?

ANSWER: Jesus demonstrates authority that astonishes the disciples. Their final question directs attention beyond the miracle: WHO IS JESUS? In the Old Testament, God's authority over the sea demonstrates His sovereign power (Psalm 65:7; 89:9; 107:23-30). Mark confronts readers with Jesus' extraordinary authority and identity.

APPLY: A shallow application would be, "Jesus will calm every storm in life." The passage does not promise every difficult circumstance will immediately disappear. A stronger application is that Jesus is worthy of trust and His authority is greater than the circumstances that terrify His disciples.

Memory Anchor

Good application grows from what the passage actually reveals.

PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

INTERMEDIATE

9. DOES EVERY QUESTION HAVE A CLEAR ANSWER?

No. Some questions involve ancient customs, historical circumstances, difficult theology, Hebrew or Greek wording, prophecy, symbolism, textual questions, or connections between passages. Faithful Christians also disagree about some interpretations.

When Scripture explicitly answers a question, receive the answer. When an interpretation is a reasonable inference, identify it as an inference. When Christians hold several legitimate interpretations, acknowledge the disagreement. When the evidence does not provide certainty, allow the question to remain open. Humility recognizes the difference between what God has revealed and what a reader assumes.

10. HOW DOES GENRE CHANGE THE QUESTIONS?

NARRATIVE: What happened? Who is involved? What conflict develops? Is behavior described or commanded?

PSALM / POETRY: What images or metaphors appear? What emotions and parallel ideas are expressed? What does the poetry reveal about God?

PROVERB: What wisdom principle is taught? Is this a general principle or unconditional promise?

EPISTLE / LETTER: What argument is the writer making? What connects the paragraph to what precedes it? What commands and reasons appear?

PROPHECY: Who is the original audience? What historical situation is addressed? Judgment, restoration, or both? Does later Scripture identify further fulfillment?

APOCALYPTIC: What symbols appear? Does Scripture explain them? Are similar images used elsewhere? Avoid speculative meanings.

The method works across Scripture, but the questions should respect the kind of literature being read.

11. WHAT DOES THE METHOD LOOK LIKE IN A PSALM?

Consider Psalm 23:1-4. WRITE: "The LORD is my shepherd." READ the stanza and notice its poetic imagery. QUESTION why David calls the LORD a shepherd, what green pastures and still waters communicate, why the imagery moves to the valley of the shadow of death, and whether God's presence means David never experiences danger.

ANSWER: the shepherd provides, guides, restores, protects, and remains present. The dark valley shows that God's care does not mean His people never experience danger. APPLY: God's faithful presence can be trusted in peaceful and frightening circumstances. Do not turn every poetic image into a literal promise. Ask: WHAT DOES THE IMAGE COMMUNICATE?

12. WHAT DOES THE METHOD LOOK LIKE IN A LETTER?

Consider Philippians 2:3-5. WRITE the instruction to look not only to one's own interests but also to the interests of others. READ the surrounding paragraph.

QUESTION what attitude Paul describes, why humility is connected with considering others, and what it means to have the mind of Christ.

Reading Philippians 2:5-11 helps ANSWER the question: Paul points directly to Jesus' humility and self-giving. APPLY: the passage calls believers toward Christ-shaped humility, not merely "Be nicer to people." In an epistle, connecting words, arguments, commands, and reasons often help answer questions.

Memory Anchor

Different genres raise different questions, but Scripture still supplies the evidence.

13. WHAT ARE COMMON SWEDISH METHOD MISTAKES?

WRITING WITHOUT THINKING: copying mechanically defeats the purpose.

ASKING ONLY PERSONAL QUESTIONS: context, meaning, God, and the biblical storyline should come first.

SEARCHING TOO QUICKLY: looking for someone else's answer before examining the passage can weaken independent study.

ACCEPTING THE FIRST ANSWER FOUND: confidence does not guarantee correctness; compare claims with Scripture.

ASSUMING EVERY QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED: some require more study or remain uncertain.

JUMPING TO APPLICATION: application must grow from the passage.

TURNING APPLICATION INTO LEGALISM: Bible study is not a spiritual performance system; application responds to grace rather than earning love or spiritual worth.

Memory Anchor

Ask freely. Answer carefully. Apply faithfully.

14. WHERE DO JESUS AND THE GOSPEL FIT?

Jesus should not be artificially inserted into every verse, but every passage belongs to the larger biblical story that culminates in Him (Luke 24:27, 44-47). Legitimate connections may involve promise, covenant, sacrifice, priesthood, kingship, kingdom, temple, Exodus, wisdom, judgment, grace, redemption, resurrection, or new creation.

Ask where the passage fits within God's redemptive story; whether the New Testament explicitly connects it or its theme to Jesus; whether it establishes a pattern fulfilled in Christ; or whether it reveals a problem the Gospel ultimately addresses. Sometimes the connection is direct, sometimes part of the larger storyline, and sometimes no specific Christological connection should be claimed.

15. WHERE DO OTHER CHRISTIANS FIT?



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Bible study is personal, but it should not become isolated. God gives pastors and teachers to His Church (Ephesians 4:11-16), and believers teach and encourage one another with God's Word (Colossians 3:16). Questions can be discussed with mature Christians, pastors and teachers, Bible-study groups, the local church, and trustworthy biblical scholars.

No pastor, teacher, commentary, denomination, or Christian tradition carries the authority of Scripture itself. Yet other Christians can expose assumptions and identify interpretations with little biblical support. The goal is personal engagement with Scripture alongside humble learning within Christ's Church.

16. HOW IS THE SWEDISH METHOD DIFFERENT FROM SOAP, SPECK, AND COMA?

SWEDISH: WRITE → READ → QUESTION → ANSWER → APPLY - active reading, curiosity, and question-driven study.

SOAP: SCRIPTURE → OBSERVATION → APPLICATION → PRAYER - devotional reflection and prayerful response.

SPECK: SIN → PROMISE → EXAMPLE → COMMAND → KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD - categories for identifying truths and responses.

COMA: CONTEXT → OBSERVATION → MEANING → APPLICATION - greater emphasis on context and interpretation before application.

The methods can complement one another. The Swedish Method may reveal a question; COMA may investigate context and meaning; SPECK may identify a biblical truth; SOAP may turn that truth into prayer and response. THE METHOD SERVES SCRIPTURE. SCRIPTURE DOES NOT SERVE THE METHOD.

17. WHAT IF THE METHOD STARTS FEELING LIKE HOMEWORK?

Simplify it. WRITE one important verse or phrase. READ the paragraph twice. QUESTION one genuine issue. ANSWER by investigating that question. APPLY with one faithful response. That may take only a few minutes; another question may lead to an hour of study. Both can be worthwhile.

Spiritual maturity is not measured by how many journal pages are filled. The goal is knowing God through His Word and becoming increasingly confident reading Scripture faithfully.

Memory Anchor

The goal is not completing the method. The goal is engaging Scripture.



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18. A SIMPLE SWEDISH METHOD WORKSHEET

BEFORE BEGINNING: PASSAGE: _____ Pray for understanding. Read the entire passage once before writing anything.

WRITE

Write the passage, a key verse, or important phrases: _____

READ

What stands out? _____

What words or ideas repeat? _____

What comes immediately before and after? _____

What kind of biblical literature is this? _____

QUESTION

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What is difficult or unclear? _____

ANSWER

What answers are found directly in the passage? _____

What does the surrounding context clarify? _____

What related Scriptures help? _____

Further study needed? YES ____ NO ____ If yes: _____

APPLY

What truth does this passage teach? _____

What does it reveal about God? _____

How should this truth shape belief, worship, character, or action? _____

What is one faithful response? _____

NOTES / CROSS-REFERENCES

QUICK SWEDISH METHOD GUIDE

WRITE: Slow down and notice the words. READ: Read carefully and in context.

QUESTION: Ask what is important, difficult, surprising, or unclear. ANSWER: Search Scripture carefully before reaching conclusions.

APPLY: Respond to the truth the passage actually teaches.

FINAL MEMORY ANCHOR

WRITE slows the reader down.

READ reveals the text.

QUESTIONS expose what needs understanding.

ANSWERS require careful study.

APPLICATION responds to truth.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

The Swedish Bible Study Method is simple because Bible study does not need to begin with complicated tools. It can begin with an open Bible, prayer, attention, and curiosity. Write what Scripture says. Read it carefully. Ask genuine questions. Search Scripture for answers. Respond faithfully to what has been understood. Throughout the process, depend upon the Holy Spirit while remaining anchored to the Scripture He inspired.

Acts 17:11 commends the Bereans for receiving teaching eagerly while examining the Scriptures to determine whether it was true. Second Timothy 2:15 calls believers to handle the word of truth rightly. Second Timothy 3:16-17 reminds readers why Scripture deserves this attention: God's Word teaches, corrects, trains, and equips His people.

SLOW DOWN. PAY ATTENTION. ASK QUESTIONS. SEARCH SCRIPTURE. FOLLOW THE TRUTH.

And when an answer is not immediately clear: **PRAY. KEEP STUDYING.**

The goal is not becoming dependent upon a Bible-study method. The goal is becoming increasingly comfortable opening Scripture itself.

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