

Synthetic Bible Study – Part 3

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I. Introduction.

A. Constructing the superstructure.

B. Previous objectives:

1. Answering, why study the Bible?

2. Answering, what does it involve?

a. Observation.

b. Interpretation.

c. Application.

II. Further helps:

A. Robert Traina's *Methodical Bible Study*.

1. A technical book.

B. Olita Wald's *The Joy of Discovery*.

1. An adaptation of Traina for lay people.

C. Irving Jenson's *Independent Bible Study*.

1. More details in terms of inductive Bible Study.

III. Methods - more procedure than philosophy.

A. Seven basic approaches.

1. Synthetic Method.

a. An attempt to get a grasp of a book as a whole in its entirety.

b. The approach that will be employed for the rest of the messages.

2. Historical Method.

a. Reconstructs the backdrop of the book.

3. Analytical Method.

a. Takes apart the book - interested in detail.

b. No detail is trivial.

c. Complementary to the synthetic method.

4. Topical Method.

a. Taking any topic and chasing it through the Scriptures.

b. For example, what does the Bible teach on divorce?

5. Theological Method.

a. Grows out of the topical method.

b. Study of doctrine.

6. Biographical Method.

a. Also grows out of the topical method.

b. Chases characters through Scripture.

7. The Devotional Method.

a. The method that is least understood.

b. The Christian needs to stretch himself.

c. Gives you the reservoir for the basis of your message.

B. Recommends Merrill Tenney's *Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty*.

C. The process sometimes is more important than the product; we cannot just give students the end product.

IV. The Synthetic Method.

A. The most difficult, but most extensive.

1. Demands extensive experience.

B. Definition.

1. Approaches the book as a whole and attempts to address it as a series of parts.

2. The great danger is that you cannot be controlled by details.

3. This method is best understood in contrast to the analytical method.

- a. In the synthetic method you move from the parts to the whole.
- b. In the analytical method you move from the whole to the part.
- c. Good Bible study begins and ends with the synthetic approach, but it also demands the analytical approach.

4. Etymology: from words that mean “to put together.”

C. Values.

- 1. Synthesis is the basis and the goal of all analysis.
 - a. This is in accordance with the way the mind works.
 - b. The mind is always trying to go from whole to parts.
- 2. An indispensable aid to teaching and preaching.
 - a. The average teacher comes to class without a plan.
 - b. Before preaching or teaching you should consider these things:
 - 1) Create a chart for them.
 - 2) Encourage the audience to take notes.
 - 3) Give the audience a summary - repackage the information.
- 3. Synthesis is the best means of apprehending the overall meaning of the book.
 - a. The chapter verse divisions inappropriately make divisions that are not in the original text.
 - b. The beauty of an object is determined by its setting.

Application questions:

1. Summarize the importance of utilizing the synthetic method in your personal Bible study.

2. How do the other methods of Bible study relate to the synthetic method?

3. What is the most important feature of the synthetic method to you? What areas will you need to work on to better employ this method?
