

For the whole book:

Introduction:

1. Who wrote it?
2. When was it written?
3. To whom was it written?
4. In what style was it written?
5. Why was it written?
6. How does this book of the Bible fit into the Big Story of creation-fall-redemption-restoration in Scripture?

Dig Deeper:

7. Read through the entire book in as few sittings as possible.
8. Sketch a brief outline of the book.

For each narrative story:

1. Comprehension: What does it say?

- Praise God for giving us the revelation of his will and character in his Word. Admit your insecurities and weaknesses as you begin to study. Ask Him for ears to hear and eyes to see.

Read through the passage.

- Underline repeated words, phrases, or ideas in different colors.
- Underline key transition words: *if/then, therefore, likewise, but, because, in the same way*.
- Put question marks by words or concepts you don't understand.
- Write out your questions for ideas that are confusing or why something is significant.
(I wonder. . .)
- Look for a particular attribute of God that is illustrated or celebrated. Write it in the margin.

Questions to ask yourself/answer in your notebook:

- What has happened so far in the narrative? What have been some major events, characters or themes so far?
- What do you learn about the main characters in this section?
- What choices were made?
- What choices could have been made?
- What surprises are there?

Dig Deeper:

- Compare our translation (NIV) to other translations--ESV, NASB, NKJV, or RSV.
- Retell the story in your own words to a friend, child, or grandchild.

2. Interpretation: What does it mean?

- Choose one or two words you don't know, and look them up in an English dictionary. Write the meaning in the margin.
- Choose two or three questions you wrote out or ideas that were confusing in the passage.
- Go on biblegateway.com and look up related cross-references that might help you answer your questions.
- Look up the specific verses related to your questions in a study Bible or other trusted commentary. Jot down answers you find.

Questions to ask yourself/answer in your notebook:

- Does someone in the narrative learn something or grow in some way? How?
- How does the passage point forward to what God is going to do in the future? Does it prophesy or anticipate Jesus Christ in some way?
- Confess when you get frustrated. Ask for continued understanding. Thank God for what He reveals.

3. Application: What does it mean for me?

Questions to ask yourself/answer in your notebook:

- What is God doing for His people in the story?
- How does God do the same for us--only better--in Jesus?
- How does this passage challenge your understanding about who God is and what he is like? (Praise Him for that aspect of who He is.)
- How is this aspect of God revealed--most fully--in Jesus?
- How does this aspect of God's character change my view of self?
- What should I do in response? How does believing this good news change how I live, in my attitude or behavior? (Confess personal sin. Ask for help to apply what you've learned. Thank Him for the specific truth He's teaching you.)

- If there is a problem/tension left unsettled in this passage. . .How is the tension solved in Jesus?