

STUDYING NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

If you don't own a Bible dictionary, get one!

- Good Bible Dictionaries
 - [*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*](#) (\$2.99 Kindle)
 - [*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*](#) (\$18.99 Kindle)
 - [*Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*](#) (\$35.84 hardcover)

Steps to Studying a New Testament Letter (Epistle)

Getting the Historical Context (What's the situation being addressed?)

- 1.** Read the book all the way through in one sitting. Do this at least twice before moving on to the next step.
 - Read to get a “big picture” view and a “feel” for the whole argument.
- 2.** List everything that tells you something about the recipient(s) of the letter and problem/situation being addressed.
- 3.** Read the overview of the book in your Bible encyclopedia and jot down a few notes pertaining to anything important for understanding the letter you may have missed.
- 4.** (Optional) If helpful, make a list of key words or repeated phrases that highlight the author's main point.

Getting the Literary Context (What's the point of this book?)

- 5.** In a maximum of two sentences, state in a compact way the content of each paragraph. *What* does the writer say?
- 6.** In a maximum of one sentence, explain *why* you think the writer says this right at this point? How does this content contribute to the argument?
- 7.** In a brief summary, what timeless truth(s) or principles do you learn from studying the book?