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Acknowledgements

This Bible study guide has seen many lives and has taken a variety of forms. It has been developed particularly for those doing inductive Bible study for Bible courses at Tabor College. The most recent revisions have been made by Doug Miller and Del Gray, with previous revisions by Doug Miller, Lynn Jost, and Jerry Truex. It is believed that the basic outline and the acronym “FORRMAL” came from the Bible department at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California. The cover illustration and about half of those within the book are from the creative pen of Ken Otter, to whom we are grateful.

INTRODUCTION

The word “FORRMAL” is an acronym for one type of inductive Bible study method. This method provides a sequence of steps for analyzing a biblical passage. Each letter in the word “FORRMAL” refers to a step in the process. This Guide is organized according to these steps.

FORRMAL study of the Bible takes work. May it be exciting and rewarding for you!

What is FORRMAL Bible study all about?

FORRMAL Bible study is radical! It refuses to be satisfied with a quick reading of the Scripture, or with superficial explanations. It examines a text carefully, tries to understand it on its own terms, then challenges us to be followers of Jesus by applying the text to what is happening in our lives right now. In addition to personal study, this method enables a person to make a better contribution to Bible study with others, for example, in a study and prayer group or a Sunday school class.

Is it really possible to do a FORRMAL study?

There are many good ways to do Bible study, and each has its particular strengths. FORRMAL Bible study is a method which college students have learned and used with confidence. One advantage is that the Bible is the starting point and the primary source. The student learns to look for important clues himself or herself instead of depending on others at the start of the study. Only after doing this original work does the student consult commentaries and other scholarly tools.

What is the goal of FORRMAL Bible study?

The goal of learning the FORRMAL method is not to turn people into Bible scholars. Rather it is to help “ordinary readers” become “careful readers” who can read, understand, and embrace the Scripture in a way that is transforming for their own lives and for God’s purposes in the world.

What are two kinds of Bible readers?

Ordinary Readers
Careful Readers
The ordinary reader opens the Bible, starts reading, and makes sense of it for himself or herself. This applies to just about everybody who encounters the Bible. Ordinary readers typically are most concerned with “what the Bible means for me” and so they read the Bible looking for a quick payoff. Some ordinary readers may be suspicious of Bible scholars and resist the idea that trained specialists are important for studying Scripture. They often try to “reinvent the wheel,” not knowing there are resources to help them with questions people have been asking for hundreds of years.

Usually people are content to be an ordinary reader as long as things keep making sense and other Bible readers they know come up with pretty much the same conclusions as they do. But when something gets puzzling, or if another Bible reader challenges the way they interpret a text, the ordinary readers typically start looking for help. This help may come in the form of notes at the bottom of the page in a study Bible, a pastor or other trusted person who may know more about the Bible, a radio or television preacher, or some other form of expert, such as on the Web or in a reference book. When this process starts to happen, the ordinary reader may be ready to become a different kind of reader, a careful reader.

A careful reader is characterized by patience, discipline, teachableness, and courage. Careful Bible readers have learned how to ask questions that can lead them into the meaning of a text, how to use some reference tools to help answer their questions, how to take advantage of offerings of scholars while still evaluating and testing them, and how to incorporate their research with their own insights and the insights of their faith communities to live out the significance of the Bible’s message.

A FORRMAL study is a disciplined exploration of the Bible that has the potential to
• help ordinary readers of the Bible become careful readers
• as they explore and evaluate what scholars have to offer and
• actively participate in the study of Scripture within their faith communities.

How does a FORRMAL study start?
FORRMAL Bible study is like detective work. Good eyes look for clues a casual observer might miss. The observer carefully and systematically organizes all clues before forming conclusions and preparing to make applications.

Primary Bible Versions
For this class, you must use one of the following Bible versions as the basis for your study, and indicate which version you are using:

- New American Standard Bible (NASB),
- Today’s New International Version (TNIV),
- New International Version (NIV), or
- King James Version (KJV).

These versions are quite literal and so lend themselves well to inductive Bible study. They are available in the library (you may wish to photocopy your text) as well as online.
The Steps of FORRMAL Bible Study

STEP ONE: F Find What’s There, Find the Unit *Within the Text*
STEP TWO: O Outline the Unit *Within the Text*
STEP THREE: R Research Key Words and Phrases *Within/Behind the Text*
STEP FOUR: R Rediscover the Message *Within/Behind the Text*
STEP FIVE: M Mark the Literary Context *Within the Text*
STEP SIX: A Abbreviate the Unit *Within the Text*
STEP SEVEN: L Live the Vision *In Front of the Text*

Behind, Within, and In Front of the Text

Three dimensions of Bible study may be illustrated as follows:

*Behind the Text*: Investigating the history and culture in which the text is set and out of which the text arose. To do this usually requires reference tools like a commentary and a Bible dictionary.

*Within the Text*: The text itself, e.g., its structure, characters, and type of literature.

*In Front of the Text*: The reader whose situation and perspective shape how the text is understood.

The diagram compares Bible readers to those who look at a window, focusing on the window itself, but also looking through it at the historical/cultural dimension which lies behind.

**What Is Genre and Why Is It Important?**

The genre of a book is the type of literature or category to which it belongs. Each genre has its own set of common characteristics, and familiarity with the genre can help the reader understand how best to interpret the words of an author. In our culture today we implicitly understand that a personal letter is a different kind of writing than a newspaper article or a legal document. Each of these types of literature has its own vocabulary, tone, structure and appropriate content. The author and the reader are both working with a common understanding of how each genre should be written, and this helps us to share meaning back and forth. In the same way it is important to become familiar with literary types that were prominent in ancient cultures and that we find in the Bible. Here are some examples:
Narrative  A story with an intentional structure that describes and interprets a sequence of events.

Treaty/covenant  An agreement between two or more parties that defines the terms and conditions of their relationship.

Law code  General commandments and situational directives that describe how to live, with community-administered penalties for disobedience.

Prophetic oracle  A creative, contextualized written form of a message given by God to a prophet who proclaimed it to God’s people in an urgent setting.

Wisdom saying  Observations about how to live successfully amidst the challenges of everyday life.

Poetry  Stylized literature using figurative language intended to evoke an emotional response.

Gospel  A narrative that proclaims God’s purposes in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Parable  A brief story that works as an analogy to illustrate a truth.

Letter  Personal correspondence.

Apocalypse (Revelation)  Divine revelation about God’s ultimate triumph given through symbolic visions.

It is important to take the genre of a book into account when writing your FORRMAL. This will often include special sensitivity to the use of language, idioms, forms, and structures.

**HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR PAPER**  
**A Spirituality of Academic Bible Study**

**Fourteen Days to a FORRMAL**

It is best to begin your research *early*, at least a week ahead of time, even earlier if possible. FORRMAL Bible study requires time for thinking and reflecting, something which does not go so well if rushed just before the assignment is due. The following schedule suggests one way, over a period of 14 days, to do research so you can write a good FORRMAL paper. This is one suggestion; each student should find what works best. The time elements total about 14 hours of work. Some may take less time than this, others may need more. The sequence outlined below suggests that completing each step of the FORRMAL acronym before moving on to the next one is probably not the best way to research the paper. Yet there is a good rationale for the order of the seven steps.

For this assignment, your Bible text may be chosen for you, or you may have some options. If you have the opportunity to choose your text, you will want to start Day 1 by reading and reflecting upon the possible texts. You can then choose the one most interesting to you and begin the plan below. After the 14-day plan below, there are explanations for writing the rough draft of each step. When writing the second draft, consult the additional information in the “How Write Your Paper” section below.
Day 1: 4 minutes. Read the passage once, commit the Bible study process to God in prayer.
Day 2: 6 minutes. Read the passage twice, pray. Make it your focus to seek God’s truth more than a grade and more than just getting the assignment done.
Day 3: 10 minutes. Read the passage three times, consider memorizing one or more verses, pray.
Day 4: 45 minutes. Do observations and questions, note key words. Choose 3 words or phrases.
Day 5: 45 minutes. Write a rough draft of “Find the Unit.”
Day 6: 50 minutes. Write a rough draft of the “Outline.”
Day 7: 110 minutes. Use the concordance for your Bible version to find the names and numbers of three words or phrases. Then use the required word study tools for the word research. Do a rough draft of “Research Words and Phrases.”
Day 8: 110 minutes. Doing your own thinking, write a rough draft of “Rediscover the Message” and “Mark the Literary Context.” Reflect on the themes and issues raised by the text. Jot down some ideas for “Live the Vision.”
Day 9: 110 minutes. Consult the two required commentaries. Do a second draft of “Rediscover the Message.” Then do a second draft of “Find the Unit” and “Mark the Literary Context.”
Day 10: 120 minutes. Do a second draft of your “Outline,” and “Research Words/Phrases.” Do a rough draft of “Abbreviate the Unit.”
Day 11: 40 minutes. Do a rough draft of “Live the Vision.”
Day 12: 70 minutes. Do a second draft of “Abbreviate the Unit” and “Live the Vision.” Write your introductory paragraph. Consult the grading rubric for each section of the paper to be sure everything is done well. Print the paper and let one or two people read and comment on it, e.g., someone from the Writing Center.
Day 13: 90 minutes. Revise the paper according to comments from others.
Day 14: 30 minutes. Print and submit your paper.

Explanations of the Steps as You Research and Write the Rough Draft

**STEP 1** : FIND WHAT’S THERE, FIND THE UNIT

**What is the purpose of Step One?**
There are two related purposes in this initial step. The first is to look carefully and discover what is actually there in the text. The second purpose of this step is to “find” or “define” a text unit. This involves deciding where a biblical passage begins and where it ends. The text unit is a group of verses, all concerned with one subject or event. (A FORRMAL study may be done on a single unit, a smaller sub-unit, or several units depending on the assignment and interest of the student.)
How do I “Find what’s there”?  

One way is to make observations and ask questions. Divide a piece of notebook paper into two equal columns with a vertical line down the center. Use one column for Observations, and the other for Questions. Read through the unit several times in your primary Bible translation, noting carefully in the Observation column what you find there (Appendix I of this Guide suggests a variety of items to look for). To start your observations, look for RIP and the W’s:

R = Repeated words/phrases  
I = Important words/phrases  
P = Puzzling words/phrases  
W’s = Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How

You should also look for comparisons and contrasts, and consider how time might be important: past, present, and future.

When you find something that you don’t understand, or that you need to explore further, express it in the form of a question and write it in the Questions column. You can deal with it later.

Examples: In Mark 8:27, one might observe that the characters in the verse are Jesus and his disciples; in Mark 8:30, one might question why Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone about him. Read the unit a few more times. Below is one verse from a unit in Isaiah:

Isaiah 5:1-8

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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| v. 1  | Repeated Word: Vineyard (used 5 times throughout)  
Important word: Vineyard—main point of the passage  
Parable-like  
Poetic structure  
Aspect of song-like as well  
Who- First person narrator  
Where- vineyard on a fertile hillside | Who is speaking?  
Who is 'the one I love"?  
Does the vineyard stand for something, and if it does, then what?  
Does the word fertile thrown in there mean something |

Why should I be concerned about the unit?  

We need to hear the whole story. Like a joke, a biblical section is best understood if one hears both the beginning and the “punch line.” Defining the unit is being sure to include the whole thought.

How do I determine the boundaries of a unit?  

Three questions help determine a unit:

1. What distinguishes this unit from the preceding one?  
2. What distinguishes this unit from the following one?
3. What unifies this unit?
Look for these clues to decide where the unit begins and ends:
1. Change in subject, characters, setting geography, or action
2. Transitional terms like “therefore,” “after this,” “now”
3. Formal statements like “an oracle,” “the word of the LORD”
4. Self-defined groupings, like the Psalms

CAUTION: The printed headings and paragraph divisions in the Bible are not original and vary in different translations. Even the verse and chapter divisions are not original to the text and need to be examined carefully. All these may be helpful at times, but ultimately you must decide where the unit begins and ends. If your unit was assigned by the professor, you will still investigate to see if you agree with the beginning and ending point. (Regardless of what you decide about the boundaries, you will still do your paper over the specific verses assigned in class.)

STEP 2: OUTLINE THE UNIT

What is the purpose of Step Two?
The purpose of this step is to recognize the structure of the chosen unit, the way it is organized. You are able to do this because in step one you determined where the unit begins and ends.

Why is the outline important to a FORRMAL study?
The outline helps us to get an overall picture. It gives us a bird’s eye view of the passage and enables us to see the skeleton or framework of the unit. It helps us understand how the parts of the unit relate to each other.

How do I outline FORRMAL-ly?
1. Reread the passage several times in your chosen Bible translation. Reading out loud is best.
2. After you are familiar with the passage, label the phrases as they occur. Use FORRMAL terms as labels, e.g., terms for speech: statement, exhortation, setting, warning (see Appendix I). Note the italicized terms in the outline below. FORRMAL terms focus on how a phrase is used rather than on content alone. Make a rough list of the phrases as they occur consecutively in the unit.
3. Look for major divisions. Note such indicators as narrative and speech sections, words that emphasize time, and phrases that indicate turning points like “now,” “as,” “when,” “then.”
4. Notice how the phrases are related to each other. Note logical connectives. Determine if one phrase is subordinate to another or explains it. If it is subordinate, be sure to indent it to another level on the outline. Check your FORRMAL labels in Appendix I.
5. Arrange the phrases in outline form. On each line of the outline, place
   (a) the FORRMAL term (in italics below),
   (b) a summary of the verse (or part verse), and
(c) the verse number.

OUTLINE EXAMPLE #1: Psalm 1 — Wisdom Psalm

I. *Positive Example* (1-3): Blessed is the one
   A. *Description* (neg.) (1):
      1. who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
      2. or stand in the way of sinners
      3. or sit in the seat of mockers
   B. *Description* (pos.) (2):
      1. But their delight is in the law of the LORD
      2. and on his law they meditate day and night
   C. *Positive Simile* (3):
      1. *Imagery*: That one is like a tree
         a. planted by streams of water
         b. which yields its fruit in season
         c. and whose leaf does not wither
      2. *Interpretation*: and whatever that one does prospers

II. *Negative Example* (4-5): Not so the wicked
   A. *Negative Simile*: They are like chaff that the wind blows away (4)
   B. *Consequence* (5):
      1. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment
      2. nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous

III. *Conclusion* (6)
   A. *Statement* (pos.): For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous
   B. *Statement* (neg.): but the way of the wicked will perish.

OUTLINE EXAMPLE #2: Mark 8:27–9:1 — Dialogue and Teaching

I. Jesus *questions* concerning his identity (8:27-30)
   A. *Setting*: the villages of Caesarea Philippi (27a)
   B. *Dialogue*: Jesus and disciples (27b-30)
      1. First *exchange* regarding others’ perceptions (27b-28)
         a. Jesus’ *question*: “Who do people say I am?” (27b)
         b. Disciples’ *reply*: “John the Baptist, Elijah, prophet” (28)
      2. Second *exchange* regarding disciples’ perceptions (29)
         a. Jesus’ *question*: “Who do you say I am?” (29a)
         b. Peter’s *reply*: “You are the Christ” (29b)
      3. Jesus’ *warning* regarding secrecy (30)

II. Jesus’ *teaching* regarding his death (8:31-33)
   A. The *teaching*: killed and rise again (31-32a)
   B. Peter’s *response*: rebuke Jesus (32b)
C. Jesus’ reply: “Get behind me, Satan!” (33)

III. Jesus’ challenge regarding following him (8:34--9:1)
   A. Setting: Jesus summons the crowd and the disciples (34a)
   B. Jesus’ wisdom saying (34b-38)
      1. statement of condition: take the cross (34b)
      2. statement: losing and saving one’s life (35)
      3. rhetorical question: what does it profit? (36)
      4. rhetorical question: what will one give? (37)
      5. statement: ashamed of the Son of Man (38)
   C. Jesus’ prophetic statement: not seeing death (9:1)

STEP 3: RESEARCH KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

What is the purpose of Step Three?
The purpose of this step is to study several of the words and phrases which you discovered to be important or puzzling in step one. Studying key words, terms, and phrases accomplishes a deeper understanding of the unit.

Why is word research important to a FORRMAL study?
Word research moves the observer in for a microscopic view of key pieces of evidence needed for formulating a complete understanding of the unit. Often key terms central to the text provide the necessary detail for a fuller understanding.

Keep in mind that the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew (a few parts in Aramaic) and the New Testament in Greek. Our English Bibles are translations—someone or a group has examined the Hebrew or Greek text, and made decisions about how that might best be rendered in English. The goal of word research is to get behind the English translation to the original languages. Word research can help you learn the possible meanings of a word
   (a) generally in the Bible,
   (b) specifically in the book where your text is found, and
   (c) especially in your unit.

How do I research words?
1. Choose important words, phrases, or concepts for study. At least three words or phrases should be chosen, and your professor may require more. Good candidates for your study are words that
   (a) appear frequently in the unit (Repeated)
   (b) are theologically significant or provide background information, e.g., geographical, cultural, or agricultural terms (Important), and/or
   (c) are unclear to you (Puzzling).
2. Look up the word in a concordance. The concordance will help you
   (a) locate the occurrences in the unit, the book of the Bible, and any group of Bible books;
   (b) identify the Hebrew or Greek term behind the English translation;
(c) discover whether the word is translated with more than one English word; and
(d) get an overview of the different ways the word is used (if any).

3. It is extremely important to identify the Hebrew or Greek word which lies behind the English text. You are doing word research on the original Hebrew or Greek terms, not the English translations. Use the exhaustive concordance developed for your Bible version, NASB, NIV, or KJV. These have a number system which identifies the Hebrew or Greek terms underlying the English translation. If you are using the TNIV Bible version, the NIV concordance will be adequate most of the time.

4. Note that a given Hebrew/Greek word may be translated differently in different parts of the Old/New Testament. Also, a given English word may be used to translate different Hebrew/Greek words. Finally, some words are written the same but have different meanings, just as in English band may refer to a musical group or to something that wraps around a finger. Sometimes Hebrew or Greek words that are written the same are distinguished with superscript numbers, e.g., gur¹ and gur².

5. The Dictionary of Biblical Languages. After identifying your Hebrew or Greek words, go next to the appropriate volume of the DBL: there are Old Testament volumes for Hebrew and Aramaic, and a New Testament volume for Greek. Each possible meaning for your words will be listed in DBL. It may be helpful to distinguish two basic types of words:

   (a) those that have a single meaning, such as the English word flour (this type of word is rare)
   (b) those that have several meanings, such as the English word heart: a physical organ, the source of a person’s emotion and will, courage, a person’s entire personality, a suit in cards, a particular shape, etc. (this type of word is very common)

You will list all the possible meanings of each word in your paper. (Do not list the meanings for the word in names or in phrases, unless you are doing research on the phrase.) Then you will decide which meaning fits in your unit and explain why you think so. Note: The meaning of a word is determined largely by its context and the way the author is using it. Don’t be surprised if you find some words to be a bit “slippery”—hard to pin down their precise meaning.

6. Theological Dictionaries. After using a concordance to identify your words and phrases, continue your research by using a theological dictionary.

   For the Old Testament, use one or both of the following:
   (a) Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)
   (b) The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE)
For the New Testament, use one or both of the following:  
(a) *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (*NIDNTT*), abridged or multivolume editions  
(b) *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (*TDNT*), one-volume or ten-volume editions

When using theological dictionaries, try to find the information which is most important for your passage. Note: A given article in these dictionaries may not comment on all passages in the Old or New Testament which have the word you are studying.

**STEP 4: REDISCOVER THE MESSAGE**

**What is the purpose of Step Four?**
The purpose of this step is to understand and clearly present the essential message of the text as it was given to its original audience many centuries ago.

**Why is rediscovering the message important to a FORMMAL study?**
Rediscovering the message is often the most significant step in a FORMMAL study. It is here that one can move past prior understandings about the text, avoid making false assumptions about the passage, and rediscover the true intent of the unit. The attempt is to allow the Bible to speak for itself, to say what it says, and not what you or anyone else want it to say.

Step four moves the student beyond simply paraphrasing (restating the text in your own words), to analyzing and explaining the unit. Especially be alert to uncertain or controversial issues.

**How do I Rediscover the Message?**
This step builds on the three previous ones. Look for patterns and repetition of words, phrases, and thoughts within the unit. Let your outline guide you. A big mistake students often make is to do an outline and then leave it behind, disconnected from the rest of the paper. Rather, use your outline to help you see patterns that might otherwise be missed.

For example, the outline offered for Mark 8:27–9:1 is divided into three major sections. You might contrast these three by asking about how both the speakers and the audience change and how this is significant. Within the first section, what pattern can you detect? Can you assume that Jesus is moving to his more important question? How do the second and third sections develop Jesus’ and the disciples’ understanding of who the Messiah is? Since Jesus is the focus of attention in the first two sections, why is the change in focus in the third section significant? How does this change complete the thought (become the “punch line”)?
Behind the Text: Historical and Cultural Issues
As you do Step Four, it is important to keep in mind the historical context in which the text was written. You will want to consider what issues the text was designed to address, and not simply assume that they are the same as those of the present time. As you do this, it is also important to discern how this passage communicates to its audience. Does it persuade, challenge, encourage, teach? Or praise, lament, give thanks?

Important information may be available which can give insight into the historical, cultural, and religious issues that are assumed or addressed by the text. Take special note of information that is not included in the biblical text itself, information that the original audience would have likely known. For example, John 1 verses 21 and 29 mention “the prophet” as one possible identity of John the Baptist. To understand this reference, it would be helpful to know what Jewish teachers in first-century Palestine had to say about this “prophet” figure. Consulting commentaries is often the quickest way to gather this kind of information.

Using Commentaries
It is best to consult commentaries after you have done your own study and investigation of your unit. You will understand the commentary much better when you are familiar with the text it is discussing. A good commentary can help you in several ways:

(a) it can provide important information on ancient customs, beliefs, history, and languages;
(b) it can address controversial issues related to interpreting the text; and
(c) it can make suggestions concerning the relevancy and application of the text.

The professor will likely require or recommend certain commentaries. You may also choose others, but all electronic or internet sources must be approved by the professor. Be sure to engage the person who wrote the commentary. Do you agree or disagree with what is said? Certainly you do not have the training to challenge everything that a commentator might say, but point out when something doesn’t seem right. It would be good to compare several commentaries to see if they disagree with one another on a given point. Then attempt to discern which you agree with, and state why you do or do not agree. Several commentary series are listed in Appendix II. Note: Of those you select, only one may be older than 1980.

STEP 5: MARK THE LITERARY CONTEXT

What is the purpose of Step Five?
The purpose of this step is to understand how your unit fits within its section of the book and the book as a whole. This is also the place where you will compare subjects addressed by your text with other places in the Bible that also discuss them.

**Why is marking the literary context important to a FORRMAL study?**

It is important to mark the literary context in order to understand key episodes in a story or the significance of portions of a writer’s argument.

**What type of literature is my text and why is it important to know about it?**

In order to understand the relationship between your unit and the rest of the book, it is important to identify first what literary genre the book belongs to. Different types of literature use different literary conventions or “rules” that provide an overall framework for how to understand its content. This applies to a wide variety of characteristics like an author’s use of vocabulary, tone, and types of speech, but in this step we will pay special attention to the form and structure of the book.

An author arranges the parts of a book and relates them to each other differently in various genres. In a collection of wisdom sayings, like the book of Proverbs, the literary relationship between one proverb and the others around it might be very loose, or even non-existent. This is not because the author is unable to write longer complex thoughts, but because it is a common form in the genre itself, and his original readers would have understood and even expected this. Likewise Paul’s readers would have understood that the letters he wrote them contain a very tight logical structure where one passage is intimately connected to the one before it and after it, and must be understood according to the larger literary context.

Some genres regularly fall into a fairly standard literary structure (like many types of poems where the meter and rhyme are consistent), but others allow for a great deal of flexibility (like narratives). In any type of literature, however, an author might decide to break with conventions and creatively organize the writing in a new way. Determining how your unit relates to the rest of the book, then, is not a mechanical process but always requires some literary sensitivity to the way the author has composed this specific writing.

**How do I mark the literary context?**

First you will examine the Bible book of which your unit is a part, e.g., the Gospel of Mark. Compare the unit under study with adjacent units. For example, how does the healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-25 (the preceding unit) prepare us for a question about how people “see” Jesus? How does the following story about the transfiguration of Jesus reveal God’s assessment of Jesus?

At this level, also look beyond the immediate context and explain how this passage relates to the rest of the Gospel of Mark. For example, this unit, nestled in the center of the Gospel, serves as a pivot. The first half of Mark, which precedes this unit, leads to Peter’s conclusion that Jesus
is a powerful person, the Christ. The second half of Mark, which follows this unit, reveals that this Christ is one who suffers and dies.

Step five is also where you will explore two or three themes that are found in your unit. In the case of Mark 8:26–9:1, you could examine other places in the Bible in which important questions are asked, e.g., God to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:9, 11, 13), God to Cain (Gen 4:6, 7, 9, 10). You could also investigate the meaning of the term “cross” and other places people are challenged to take up their cross.

STEP 6: ABBREVIATE THE UNIT

What is the purpose of Step Six?
This step ties the thoughts of the unit together and summarizes them concisely. The abbreviated statement uses the finding of your prior work, especially the Outline, Research Words, and Rediscover the Message to describe the central message of your unit.

Why is the abbreviated statement important to a FORRMAL study?
Until you can distill your findings into a single sentence or two, you have not really grasped the meaning of the Bible passage. A summary can be especially useful for sharing the results of your FORRMAL work with others. The abbreviated statement describes the text. It is usually written in past tense. It can be the basis for constructing a statement of contemporary relevance in Step Seven.

How do I abbreviate a unit?
Ask, What is the message of the unit? Present this in a carefully distilled and concise sentence or two, at least 30 words but no more than 40 words in total length. Include as much detail as possible; use all 40 words if you can. Be sure that you cover all the main sections of your unit. A good way to do this is to compile a statement based upon the two to four major sections of your outline.

Remember that this is not an application; that is, it does not make a comment regarding the text’s present or personal relevance. It is not what you think about the text. Retell the text as it is presented. Briefly stated, what is the text attempting to communicate to its audience?

A summary of Psalm 1 could read as follows (40 words):

The one is blessed who avoids the wicked and meditates on God’s law. As that person flourishes like a tree and bears fruit, God watches over them. In contrast, the wicked, like chaff, will not survive judgment but will perish.

A summary statement of Mark 8:27–9:1 (39 words):
Jesus questions his disciples regarding his identity, teaches them that he must die and rise again, rebukes Peter who rejects the possibility of Jesus’ death, and challenges them to be his followers by losing their lives to save them.

**STEP 7 : LIVE THE VISION**

**What is the purpose of Step Seven?**
This step is where you consider how the result of the study of the passage in the previous six steps intersects with your life in today’s world. We recognize that there is a dynamic relationship between who I am as a reader in the 21st century and the biblical text written thousands of years ago on a different continent. This relationship works in both directions—interpretations of any text are affected by the nature of the reader, and the text in turn should also have a profound effect on the reader’s life. In step seven we will examine both of these relationships.

**Why is it important to Live the Vision?**
In the previous steps of this FORRMAL we have worked hard to try to Rediscover the Message of the passage through a meticulous investigation of the language of the text as well as its historical and social background. In the Introduction to this Guide we briefly explained the use of the phrase “behind the text” to describe elements that are important to determining meaning but lie in the background world of the original author and readers, and “within the text” to describe elements that clarify the way the author used language to convey his meaning. In this step we take a look “in front of the text” to examine how our understanding is shaped by the person who is doing the reading.

No matter how hard we try to be neutral, nobody is without presuppositions. This is especially true when we read the Bible. When we recognize our presuppositions it allows us to examine them in a constructive way, determining if they have helped us or excessively limited the way we understand a passage. Imagining how other people with different lives might see this same text can be an eye opening experience that greatly enriches our appreciation of it.

It is also the assumption of the instructors of this course that the Bible still speaks to its readers today. After having done a rigorous academic exercise like the one outlined in this Guide, you may be tempted to overlook how God wants to address you personally or your faith community. We believe God wants our total love and devotion, involving our mind, attitudes, and actions.

Hopefully, application ideas have suggested themselves to you as you worked on various parts of this assignment. Perhaps an idea you had at the beginning still seems like a good one now. However, it is significant that the application step is listed at the end of the FORRMAL process.
This is to ensure that the contemporary meaning of the text arises out of careful study, and is not simply what you had assumed when approaching the text in the first place. Be careful! Some students casually comment that this step is the easiest part of the FORRMAL method. Actually, it should be the most challenging, and should be the most carefully thought through.

**How do I Live the Vision?**

There are two sub-sections in the seventh step.

(1) **Reflect on how the results of the first six steps have been shaped by your identity as a reader.**

Recognize the influences and presuppositions you hold that have contributed to how you interpreted the passage. Sometimes we are conscious of these influences, but other times they operate in us even when we aren’t aware of them. In order to begin the process of reflection, these types of questions might be helpful:

a. How have my previous understandings of the Bible played a role in my interpretation of this passage? Is it possible that my religious background, or lack of religious background, has exerted a strong influence on my conclusions? Where was this influence positive? Where was it negative?

b. Does my gender influence the way I read this text?

c. Is my study affected by my social-economic background? Would I come to different conclusions if I was significantly richer or poorer?

d. How does my racial or ethnic identity affect my awareness of issues in the text?

It is often helpful to ask yourself how you would read the passage differently if you had a different religious/gender/economic/racial background. More and more sources are becoming available today where you can actually read the results of others who consciously and intentionally bring insights from their diverse backgrounds into the way they interpret the text. Commentaries written in previous generations can also offer these kinds of insights. If this sounds interesting you might search for some of these.

(2) **Apply the passage to your life.**

The second part of Live the Vision asks, *So what?* What is the practical pay-off? What are the implications of the passage for me and for other people today? What in this text should be given thought, prayer, meditation, and testing within the Christian community of which I am a part? How might this passage inform, correct, or empower people? How should I or my community or my culture change because of this text?
Using the specific information discovered in the study (especially the Rediscover the Message and the Abbreviated Statement), show how the unit is either relevant or irrelevant for today. You may choose to note particular applications to your personal life, the church, or the world. You may wish to suggest that the passage has little or no relevance for today. In either case, support your conclusions.

The following questions may help you consider the text’s relevance:

a. What in the passage is often overlooked, ignored or taken for granted today?
b. What do I learn about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, discipleship, the church and its mission, about our future hope as Christians?
c. What am I going to do differently as a result of what I have learned? Is there something to stop doing? Something I wish to commit to doing regularly? A habit I need to establish or break? Something I wish to speak to someone else about? What goals will I set for myself?
d. Is there something I should become? Perhaps there is something God wishes to transform into my life.
e. What difference does it make or not make that this text was written to an audience in a different part of the world some 2000 to 3000 years ago?
f. Why is this passage part of God’s Word? Why was it valuable to whomever treasured it and passed it along? Why does it remain valuable as God’s Word for God’s people of all times and places?

**HOW TO WRITE YOUR PAPER**

**Suggestions and Grading Rubric**

**Help for Writing the Second (and Following) Drafts of Each Section**

The preceding section had lots of helpful information on writing each step of the paper. You may wish to review it as you do your second and subsequent drafts. The section below gives you additional help, including a grade rubric.

*Organize* the paper as follows:

I. Title Page  
II. Table of Contents  
III. Introductory Paragraph  
IV. Find the Unit  
V. Outline  
VI. Research Words/Phrases  
VII. Rediscover the Message
VIII. Mark the Literary Context
IX. Abbreviate the Unit
X. Live the Vision
XI. Works Cited
XII. Observations and Questions (may be handwritten if legible)

Based on 100 total points, the following is a rubric for a typical FORRMAL paper. It aligns with the evaluation sheet at the end of this booklet. Your professor may modify it or supply a different one for your specific assignment. Use this as a kind of checklist to make sure you have covered everything important for each step of the paper.

HELP WITH STYLE
For style requirements, consult this Guide, including the sample papers, and the current edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. For help with citations, see the information at the end of this section of the booklet. Some style basics: The paper should be

- double spaced using a 12-point font
- use italics for emphasis; do not use underline anywhere in the paper
- margins should be 1” all around
- avoid unusual bold, large script, or other striking fonts
- be sure to include: Title Page, Table of Contents, and Works Cited pages
- staple your paper; do not use paper clips, folders, or covers.

Note some commonly misspelled and confused words:

- Israel (not “Isreal”)
- too meaning “also” or indicating degree (should not be spelled to or two)
- altar (not “alter”) for what sacrifices are made upon
- judgment is the American spelling, judgement is British
- there and their and they’re
- definitely (not defiantly)
- deity (not “diety”) for God or a god

Style (10 pts)
10 Clean, stapled (no paper clips or folders), almost no grammar/spelling errors, correct MLA style (including Works Cited)
9 Clean, occasional grammatical, spelling or style errors
8 Smudges, bent pages, or printing on reverse, occasional grammatical, spelling, and style errors
7 Clean, repeated grammatical, spelling, and style errors
6 Smudges or bent pages, major grammatical, spelling, and/or style errors

Cohesion & Clarity (10 pts)
10 Clear, precise, well-reasoned; clear analysis and formulation of information
9  Clear, precise, well-reasoned with occasional lapses
8  Uses some terms correctly but makes some mistakes
7  Frequent mistakes in terminology and lapses in reasoning
6  Little evidence of reasoning

General Competence (10 pts)
10 Evidence of thorough reading of the text and good use of research tools; recognizes key issues, assumptions, questions consistently; frequently identifies points of view
9  Evidence of careful reading of the text but less than thorough research; usually demonstrates clear analysis and formulation of information; recognizes most key issues, assumptions, questions; frequently identifies points of view
8 Occasional lapses in both reading the text and research; lapses in reasoning at times; needs to develop clarity and precision and use of key concepts; evidence indicates inadequate reading of the material
7  Frequent lapses in reading the text and research; poor use of key concepts; only slight evidence of reading the material
6  Inadequate reading of the text and research; lack of effort to pull together ideas, concepts, information; lacks evidence of reading material

Page length suggestions in {curly brackets} below are for 200-level courses; suggestions in [square brackets] are for 300-level courses.

HELP WITH STEP ONE A: FIND WHAT’S THERE (7 pts)

Observations and Questions (may be handwritten if legible)
Note: Although this is the first step in the research of the paper, it is located last in the final version of the paper, after the Works Cited page.

7  Consistently looks for and identifies substantive issues: RIP, W’s, contrasts, types of speech, imagery, emotions, grammar elements; average of 5 observations for each verse; one or two thoughtful questions for each verse
6  Frequently looks for and identifies substantive issues; average of 4 observations for each verse; one or two thoughtful questions for each verse
5 Occasional lapses with substantive issues; occasional summarizing; average of 3 observations for each verse; few questions or quality questions
4 Tends to summarize rather than look for substantive issues; average of 2 observations for each verse; occasional questions
3  Summarizes or fails to include observations; questions are few or missing
2-0 Misunderstood or omitted this task

HELP WITH STEP ONE B: INTRO AND FIND THE UNIT (8 pts) {½-¾ page} [½-¾ page]

Introductory Paragraph: State which unit you studied, why you chose that one for study, and what you will be doing in your paper. Also state which Bible translation you used (NIV, NASB,
etc.). Hook the reader. Convince the professor that your paper could be interesting. You may wish to include a question or issue which caused you to be interested in the text. If you do this, be sure to check whether you have actually answered these questions by the time you have completed the paper.

Find the Unit: A paragraph of several sentences should explain why you began with the verse you did, why you ended the unit where you did, and what unifies it. Compare/contrast what comes before and after your passage in terms of subject matter and/or literary type.

| 8 | Good introduction with Bible version stated; clear and accurate comparison with the units which come before and after, statement of what unifies the unit; awareness of other issues. |
| 7 | Slight problem with the introduction and/or comparison with other text units |
| 6 | Comparison with one unit done well |
| 5 | Issues understood, but neither comparison done well |
| 4-0 | Misunderstood or omitted this task |

HELP WITH STEP TWO: OUTLINE (10 pts) {½–¾ page sg. sp.} [1 page sg. sp.]

There is no one right way to do an outline. However, information at the same outline level should be of similar importance. For example, I.A. and I.B. should concern the same type of information, such as I.A. God speaks, I.B. God acts. Also, if there is a 1, there should be a 2; if there is an A, there should be a B. Your outline must be single spaced.

| 10 | Outline is thorough and well done, verses indicated, appropriate labels used |
| 9 | Outline is thorough and well done, occasional lapses in verses and/or labels |
| 8 | Outline partly well done, verses or labels omitted |
| 7 | Major sections of outline done well, some detail |
| 6 | Outline inadequately done |
| 5-0 | Misunderstood or omitted this task |

HELP WITH STEP THREE: WORD RESEARCH (10 pts) {1½-2 pages} [2 pages]

For each word or phrase you research (one paragraph each), you should:

(a) give the Hebrew or Greek word in transliteration and italics, e.g., bar'';
(b) briefly list the several different meanings your word may have (most will have several possible meanings), and
(c) state what you think the word or phrase means in your specific unit. Also state how does this research helps you understand your passage better (or not, if it doesn’t help).

If you wish to comment regarding how many times a Greek or Hebrew word occurs,

(a) be sure that your counts are based on Hebrew or Greek words in the original text (beware of including word counts based on English translations); and
(b) explain why you are including this information. It may be interesting, e.g., if most of the occurrences are found in the passage or book you are studying, if it is only found in the Gospels, if it is an extremely common word, etc.

Be sure to use an exhaustive concordance. Bible margin notes may provide some cross reference help but are ultimately inadequate for your word research. The brief Hebrew and
Greek glossaries found in the back of the exhaustive concordances should be used only to identify the words you are researching. Do not use these glossaries, or cite them, for the meanings of the words themselves. Bible dictionaries and commentaries sometimes include information on Hebrew and Greek words. However, for this assignment, you must use the theological word dictionaries recommended in the descriptions above (TWOT, TDNT, etc.).

10 Three words researched well using proper tools; states where verse(s) are found; range of meaning given for each; clear explanation for which meaning is appropriate to this text; at least one reference to where this word is used elsewhere in the Bible; how this research helps interpret the text; sources cited correctly
9 All words researched, occasional lapses in range of meaning or explanations for appropriate meaning, or other of the above matters
8 All words researched, frequent lapses in range of meaning or explanations for appropriate meaning, etc.
7 Not all words researched, or major lapses in range of meaning or explanations
6 Research inadequately done
5-0 Misunderstood or omitted this task

HELP WITH STEP FOUR: REDISCOVER ORIGINAL MEANING (12 pts){2-3 pp}[4-6 pp] Steps three and four, Research Key Words/Phrases and Rediscover the Message, constitute the heart of your study. You are reporting the fresh discoveries you have made through your own effort. For step four, you must carefully, verse by verse, explain what you understand to be the message of the text to its original audience many centuries ago. If your text is a song celebrating God’s victory over Pharaoh during the exodus from Egypt, explain the message that those people would have understood. If it is Paul’s letter to Philemon in the New Testament, explain the issues Paul raised in that first-century context. Later, in the Live the Vision step, you will explain how this ancient writing might still have a message for us today. But that is not what you do in Step Four.

Be sure you interpret each verse in your unit. Explain what the verse means, and acknowledge any puzzles, uncertainty, or differences among commentators. You will consult commentaries recommended by your professor, and perhaps also a Bible dictionary or other reference works. Be alert to copyright date in the tools you choose: only one may be older than 1980. All electronic or internet sources must be approved by the professor.

12 Explains the structure of the unit; carefully interprets each verse of the unit; good use of two required commentaries; compares commentaries with each other; checks own opinions with reference tools; awareness of difficult issues.
11 Careful interpretation but fails to explain the structure of the unit and/or omits some interpretation, good use of required commentaries or other reference tools.
10 Occasional lapses in interpretation, e.g., summarizing, and incomplete use of commentaries and reference tools.
9  Frequent lapses in interpretation, e.g., summarizing, only occasional use of commentaries or other tools.
8  Mostly summarizing
7-0  Misunderstood or omitted this task

HELP WITH STEP FIVE: MARK THE LITERARY CONTEXT (8 pts) {1 page} [1-2 pages]
This step requires putting your text into the larger picture of an entire book. It also requires comparing two themes found in your text with other places in the Bible where they are found.

8  Explains well two themes found in this unit and where they are found elsewhere in the Bible; cites the locations clearly by book, chapter, and verse(s), and describes the comparison briefly; explains the role of the unit within a larger group of units and within the Bible book overall.
7  Explains one theme found elsewhere, good explanation of unit’s role in the book
6  Poor explanation of themes and/or explanation of unit’s role in the book
5-0  Misunderstood or omitted this task

HELP WITH STEP SIX: ABBREVIATE THE UNIT (5 pts) {¼ page} [¼ page]
Consult your outline, and be sure that each major section of the outline is represented in your summary. Also be careful that your statement is descriptive; that is, you should say exactly what the text says but do it in summary form. Avoid comments about the relevance or application of the text at this point. Length should be 25-40 words.

5  Wording stays within limits for length (30-40 words) and covers all major subdivisions of the outline
4.5  Wording stays within guidelines for length with some lapse of thoroughness
4  Wording misses the guidelines for length or has major lapse of thoroughness
3.5  Wording misses guidelines for length and has major lapse of thoroughness
3-0  Misunderstood or omitted this task

HELP WITH STEP SEVEN: LIVE THE VISION (10 pts) {1½ pages} [1-2 pages]
**Reflection.** Write a careful paragraph (about half a page) that addresses the issues and questions raised for this section.

4  Thoughtful self-reflection based on three important issues
3  Thoughtful self-reflection based on two important issues
2  Thoughtful self-reflection based on one important issue
1-0  Misunderstood or omitted this task

**Application.** Be focused. Think of three things that are especially important: one for you personally, one for a group of which you are part, and one for your nation or society. Devote a carefully written paragraph to each. Make them practical, precise, and planned:
Practical: State something you can really do. If the text points to a need for patience, courage, or some other virtue, think of ways to keep that issue alive and active for you.

Precise: Be very specific. Exactly what will you do? At the end of the week, you should be able to decide whether or not you have done it.

Planned: When will you do it? How often?

6 Three appropriate application themes based on the text developed into a solid paragraph each: practical, precise, planned

5 Two appropriate themes are developed well but the other is lacking in practicality, precision, or planning, or is not based on the text

4 One appropriate theme is developed well

3 Two themes are provided but not related well to the passage and/or developed well

2-0 Misunderstood or omitted this task

HELP WITH CITATIONS AND THE WORKS CITED PAGE

In your citations, always include the page numbers or numbers where the information can be found in the scholarly source you are citing. See the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Source</th>
<th>Cite in body of paper?</th>
<th>List in Works Cited?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibles</td>
<td>Yes (Gen 12:1; Matt 5:8)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentaries</td>
<td>Yes (Hanson 142)</td>
<td>Yes; once for each commentary, do not list page numbers used in your paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Brueggemann, Genesis 218)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concordances</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes; only once, no page numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary of Biblical Languages</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes; only once, no page numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Word Dictionaries</td>
<td>Yes, by author if “signed,” by editor if “unsigned” (Ray 213) (Verbrugge 432)</td>
<td>Yes; each article has an entry: “signed” articles are listed by author and title, “unsigned” by editor and title; list beginning and ending page numbers of each article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Dictionaries</td>
<td>Yes (same as theological word dictionaries)</td>
<td>Yes (same as theological word dictionaries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Bible Notes</td>
<td>Yes (Youngblood 23)</td>
<td>Yes (state the author of the notes, the Study Bible, beginning and ending page numbers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English dictionaries, thesauruses</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If one of your sources cites another source, e.g., J. J. M. Roberts in his commentary quotes Mother Teresa. (a) If you can find the original source in which M. Teresa speaks, find it and cite...
it. (b) If you cannot find the original source, state in the body of your paper that M. Teresa said it, then give the in-text citation like this: (cited by Roberts, 213); in your Works Cited, list the book by Roberts as you normally would.

HOW PAGE LENGTH AND NUMBER OF SOURCES AFFECT YOUR GRADE

Minimum lengths and numbers of scholarly sources provide the “ceiling” for your grade. In the 200-level Bible courses, the following are rough guidelines:

“C” grade: papers must be at least 7 pages long and use 6 scholarly sources.
“B” grade: papers must be at least 8 pages long and use 7 scholarly sources.
“A” grade: papers must be at least 9 pages long and use 8 scholarly sources.

Two points each will be deducted if you neglect to include a Title Page, Table of Contents, or Works Cited. Your professor may also establish a maximum length of the paper.

Page count is measured from the introductory paragraph through the Live the Vision section. Title Page, Table of Contents, Works Cited, and Observations and Questions pages do not figure in the page count. Pages must be full, not partial, to count. Double space throughout except: single space the outline (you may double space between major sections). NOTE: Your professor is usually sharp enough to recognize when “double space” printing has been stretched, or when top, bottom, and side margins are larger than the 1” called for in the MLA guidelines, and will reduce your page count accordingly (double-spacing provides for approximately 25 lines per page). Such maneuvering will only cost you style points.

“Scholarly sources” are reference tools—such as theological dictionary articles, commentaries, and Bible dictionaries—that you list in your Works Cited page (see chart above).
Appendix I: A Sample of FORRMAL Terms
What to Observe and Ask Questions About
Labels for Your Outline and for Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations &amp; Questions</th>
<th>• repetitions • important • puzzling • who? • what? • when? • where? • why? • how? • past-present-future, • contrasts • illustrations • types of speech • logical connectives • emotions • grammar • genre • atmosphere • tone • symbols • images • paradox •</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labels for Speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusation</td>
<td>• allegation • charge • complaint •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assurance</td>
<td>• comfort • consolation • encouragement • promise •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>command</td>
<td>• admonition • advice • ban • charge • condition • decree • direction • emphatic statements • exhortation • injunction • instruction • interdiction • mandate • order • prohibition • summons • warning •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialogue</td>
<td>• argument • declaration • direct address • exchange • question • quotation • reply • response • rhetorical question • speech •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluation</td>
<td>• analysis • appraisal • assessment • judgment • opinion •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose</td>
<td>• goal • intention • payoff • plan • promise • reason • result • reward •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question</td>
<td>• interrogation • query •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>request</td>
<td>• appeal • desire • entreaty • petition • prayer •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statement</td>
<td>• allegation • comment • declaration • fact • inference • testimony •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels for Logical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectives</td>
<td>• also • as • just as...so also • likewise •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condition</td>
<td>• if • suppose •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reason</td>
<td>• because • for • since •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>result</td>
<td>• then • thus • therefore •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose</td>
<td>• so that • in order that •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrast</td>
<td>• although • but • much more • nevertheless • yet • otherwise •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporal</td>
<td>• after • as • before • now • then • until • when • while •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argument</strong></td>
<td>• lesser-to-greater • greater-to-lesser •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels for Grammatical Construction</td>
<td>• adjectives • adverbs • connectives • interjections • nouns • pronouns • verbs and their tense •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels for Structure</td>
<td>• chiasm • inclusio • parallelism •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels for Genre (type of literature)</td>
<td>• announcement • apocalyptic • didactic (teaching) • entreaty • epistle (letter) • exhortation • fable • folktale • gospel • history • illustration • law • narrative • parable • poetry • praise • prayer • prophecy • proverb • psalm • riddle • saying • symbolic action • teaching • wisdom saying •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistles</strong></td>
<td>• appeal • body • challenge • command • conclusion • greeting • health wish • recipient • request • salutation • sender • thanksgiving • travel plans •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Law</strong></td>
<td>• apodictic • casuistic •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative</strong></td>
<td>• act/action • appeal • argumentation • characterization • conclusion • description • dialogue • elaboration • introduction • mood • narrative report • narrator • person • plot • point of view • problem • resolution • scene • series • setting • voice •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poetry/Imagery</strong></td>
<td>• acrostic • antithetical • chiasm • ellipsis • emblematic • imagery • inclusio • metaphor • meter • parallelism • personification • pivot • refrain • repetitive • simile • stanza • synonymous •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prophecy</strong></td>
<td>• enactment prophecy • judgment speech • lawsuit • messenger speech • promise • salvation oracle • woe oracle •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psalm Types</strong></td>
<td>• creation • deliverance • enthronement • entrance liturgy • hymn • imprecatory • lament • narrative • praise • royal • thanksgiving • Torah • trust • wisdom • Zion •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wisdom</strong></td>
<td>• a fortiori saying • abomination saying • allegory • better saying • blessed • saying • dialogue • existential • experiential saying • fable • good saying • instruction • instrumental virtue • moral virtue • numerical saying • onomasticon • personification • proverb • recipe • riddle •</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II: A Bibliography of Reference Tools

100: Suitable for all skill levels  200: Intermediate and above  300: Advanced

Bible Translations acceptable for FORRMAL studies
100 KJV  King James/Authorized Version
100 NASB  New American Standard Bible
100 NIV  New International Version
100 TNIV  Today’s New International Version

Concordances: English Translations
100 KJV  Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance to the Bible, James Strong
100 NASB  New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance, Robert L. Thomas
100 NIV  NIV Exhaustive Concordance, Goodrick and Kohlenberger

Concordances: Greek & Hebrew
200 The Englishman’s Greek Concordance of the New Testament, George V. Wigram
200 The Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the OT, George V. Wigram
200 Greek-English Concordance of the New Testament, Goodrick and Kohlenberger
200 Hebrew-English Concordance of the Old Testament, Goodrick and Kohlenberger
300 The Exhaustive Concordance to the Greek New Testament, Kohlenberger and Goodrick
300 A New Concordance of the Old Testament, Abraham Even-Shoshan

Theological Dictionaries and Lexicons
100 The Dictionary of Biblical Languages, Hebrew, Swanson
100 The Dictionary of Biblical Languages, Aramaic, Swanson
100 The Dictionary of Biblical Languages, Greek, Swanson
100 Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Harris, Archer, Waltke
100 Theological Lexicon of the New Testament, Ceslas Spicq (3 vols)
100 New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Verbrugge (abridged)
200 New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, VanGemerden (6 vols)
200 Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Bromiley (1 vol)
300 Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Kittel, Friedrich (10 vols)
300 Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Botterweck, Ringggren (15 vols)

Bible Encyclopedias
100 Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia (5 vols), Tenney
200 Encyclopaedia Judaica (16 vols)
200 The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (4 vols), Bromiley
Bible Dictionaries
100  *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, Myers
100  *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, Achtemeier
100  *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (3 vols), Douglas, et al.
100  *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, Harrison
200  *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vols), Buttrick
200  *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols), Freedman
200  *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vols.), Sakenfeld

Commentary Series
100  Believers Church Bible Commentary
100  Daily Study Bible
100  Interpretation
100  New Century Bible
100  Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
100  Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
200  NIV Application Commentary
200  New International Commentary on the New Testament
200  New International Commentary on the Old Testament
200  Old Testament Library
200  New Testament Library
200  Word Biblical Commentary
300  Anchor Bible
300  Hermeneia
300  International Critical Commentary

Atlases and Geographies
100  Rainey and Notley. *Carta’s New Century Handbook and Atlas of the Bible*
100  Rasumussen, Carl. *Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible*
100  Aharoni, Yohanan, and Michael Avi-Yonah. *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*
100  Baly, Denis. *The Geography of the Bible*
100  May, Herbert G. *Oxford Bible Atlas*
100  Pritchard, James B., ed. *The Harper Atlas of the Bible*
200  Rainey and Notley. *The Sacred Bridge: Carta’s Atlas of the Biblical World*
200  Aharoni, Yohanan. *The Land of the Bible*

Introductions
100  White, J. Benton. *From Adam to Armageddon*
100  Beasley, et al. *An Introduction to the Bible*
200  Anderson, Bernhard W. *Understanding the Old Testament*
200  Childs, Brevard S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*
200  Childs, Brevard S. *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*
300  Gottwald, Norman K. *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction*
Histories
100 Bright, John. *A History of Israel*
100 van der Woude, A. S. *The World of the Bible*
200 Miller and Hayes. *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*
200 Provan, Long, Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*
300 Ahlström, G. *The History of Ancient Palestine*

Bible Study Methods
100 Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: Handbook for Students & Pastors*
100 Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*
100 Hayes and Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook*

Archaeology
200 Aharoni, Yohanan. *The Archaeology of the Land of Israel*
200 Rousseau and Arav. *Jesus and His World: Archaeological & Cultural Dictionary*
200 Israel Exploration Society, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*

Related Texts
100 Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*
100 Foster, Benjamin R. *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*
100 Martinez, F. G. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*
100 Pritchard, J. B., ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*

Other
100 Newsom and Ringe, eds., *The Women’s Bible Commentary*
100 Kroeger and Evans, eds., *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*
100 Fortress Guides to Biblical Scholarship (mult. vols)

Biblical Theologies
100 Martens, Elmer. *God’s Design*
200 Childs, Brevard. *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*
200 Eichrodt, Walther. *Old Testament Theology*
200 Goldingay, John. *Old Testament Theology*
200 Goppelt, Leonhard. *Theology of the New Testament*
200 Kaiser, Walter C. *The Promise-Plan of God*
200 Ladd, George E. *A Theology of the New Testament*
200 Rad, Gerhard von. *Old Testament Theology*
200 Vos, Gerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*
200 Waltke, Bruce, and Charles Yu. *An Old Testament Theology*
Appendix III: Sample Works Cited Pages

Works Cited


----. In Man We Trust. Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1972.


Works Cited


Articles on the Web and Other Electronic Articles


Evaluation of FORRMAL Paper (sample)

I. Quantitative Criteria: Determines the maximum score possible.

A. Grade Factor # pages: 9-A, 8-B, 7-C
B. Grade Factor # sources: 8-A, 7-B, 6-C

Grade Factors: A = 100, B = 89, C = 79

Quantitative Score (lower of IA or IB) 

II. Qualitative Criteria: Measures how well the assignment was done.

A. Style (10 pts)
   1. Appearance
   2. Grammar and spelling
   3. Use of MLA style 

B. Cohesion & Clarity (10 pts)
   1. Flow and organization
   2. Integration of subject matter
   3. Intelligibility
   4. Definition of issues
   5. Style of argument

C. General Competence (10 pts)
   1. Knowledge of text
   2. Use of scholarly materials

D. Content (70 pts)
   1B. Find the Unit (8)
   2. Outline (10)
   3. Research Words (10)
   4. Rediscover the Message (12)
   5. Mark Literary Context (8)
   6. Abbreviate the Unit (5)
   7A. Vision: Reflection (4)
   7B. Vision: Application (6)
   1A. Find What’s There (7)

Content Total 

Qualitative Score (total section II) 

III. Grade:
   A. Quantitative score (section I) 
   B. Qualitative score (section II) 
   C. Net score (lower of IIIA or IIIB) 
   D. Deduction for lateness or missing items (2 pts each)

E. Final score