How to approach studying the Bible

1. *Read the book: Establish author, audience and context (completed)*
2. Read the chapter: Identify the message being communicated
3. Identify questions that you want to have answered: Use resources to find answers.
4. Read the chapter: Identify the message being communicated
5. Map the audience & message: Apply the message to your life
6. Compare your conclusions with others: Trace back any differences to the text

Session 4: Understanding Chapter 3

Objective: Identify the message of Chapter 3 and apply it as God's word spoken into our lives.

Step Two: Read the chapter and identify the message Paul is communicating to Timothy

Having addressed conduct of the church-goers in chapter 2, Paul moves on to the different leaders and outlines the standards they must meet.

To lead in a church is a noble task. Therefore, the potential overseer must:

1. Manage his household well, especially his children. The home is the training-ground for the church.
2. Be mature in his faith, not a recent convert. Too fast a rise in status gives access to Satan to prick his pride (that it's about what he already has).
3. Be well respected in the community outside of the church. Do not give society any reason to mock or make light of the church because of who leads it.

Likewise, those who serve as deacons must meet criteria as well.

1. Household: One spouse, managed household, well managed children
2. Mature: Hold the mystery with a clear conscience
3. Respected Not greedy, drunk, or slick talkers

For serving well in the church grants a deacon good standing.

Step Three: Identify and write down any questions that arise out of the chapter. - Use resources to research and answer the questions you've written down.

What are the origins of the "trustworthy statement"?

- I could not find any references. Perhaps Paul is simply making a point. "You can count on this."
- However in the light of the honor and nobility of leadership, there would be a draw for those who wanted the status but were not properly qualified to lead in the "household of God" (would God's household be as well behaved as their house?)

What is the meaning of the word "overseer"?

- [Strong's Definition] episkopos – from which we get our word Episcopal – or bishop. Although this is not an endorsement of a modern denomination, Paul describes it as an office of the church. As such it is a required function which is necessary for the proper function of the household of God. The overseer was responsible for oversight into the health and orthodoxy of the church.

What is the great mystery of godliness?

- [Halley's Bible Handbook] references this as potentially a fragment from a hymn of Paul and Timothy's time.
- The word mystery [gr. mysterion] refers to knowledge which cannot be externally discovered, but must be revealed by someone who knows it. The snippet expresses what Jesus revealed – what could not be known apart from Him.
    - He became incarnate, and suffered death, even death on the cross.
    - His real work was spiritual, not earthly, as the Jews had hoped.
    - What He did was in the full view of heaven and the heavenly host
    - His name was proclaimed widely – through Pentecost and the missionary work of many believers
    - Taken up in glory – as reported in Acts.

Step Four: Read the chapter and refine the message Paul is communicating to Timothy (now that your questions are answered)

Paul's Objective: Teach Timothy how people ought to behave in Gods household (the church).

Overseers must be qualified lest the honor of the position draw those who are not appropriate to oversee God's household (the church).

- Above reproach (lest he become the object of attention and detract from the purpose of the church)
- Manage his household well (if the household is out of order, the church will be out of order)
- Mature in his faith (maturity comes with time, immaturity opens him to attack from Satan)
- Well regarded by outsiders (lest he personally bring the church under external criticism).

In the same manner (likewise), those who serve as deacons must meet similar qualifications, because they too gain a good standing.

- Dignified (not subject to ungodly vices)
- Proven (have a track record of service before receiving the honor of the office)
- Well managed households (the home is the trial ground for service in the church)

The gospel is a great mystery, revealed by Jesus, and it has been entrusted to the church, therefore the church must be equipped for the responsibility of managing God's household.

1 Timothy - A Bible Study

Step Five part 1: Map the Audience (how much and in what ways is Timothy like us today?)
Review and confirm the previous mapping.

In this chapter, the mapping that seems most relevant is:

Timothy is UNLIKE me in that he is the leader of a church in Ephesus – I am an attendee of a church in America, but do not have the same leadership responsibility.

What Paul is saying to Timothy does not translate directly to me as it does to Timothy (although as a Deacon in my church, I find the deacon qualifications directly relevant). I need to understand Paul's message from a different perspective of how I would relate to a deacon or an overseer.

Step Five part 2: Map the message to apply to me today

- What commands must I obey?
    - There are no direct commands to me as a part of my local church. However, I think this establishes the respect due to church leaders as well as the implication that I ought to pray for them and support them in their roles.
- What truth must I hold dear?
    - Great is the mystery of godliness. The elevation of Jesus .
- What error must I flee?
    - Being a church leader is just another job and it demands no further respect than any other job.
- How is God revealed?
    - In this passage we see the church revealed as the household of the Living God. God is revealed as the head of the house, from whom all authority and responsibility flows.
- How is the gospel made clear?
    - Jesus is the center of the gospel:

      He who was revealed in the flesh,
      Was vindicated in the Spirit,
      Seen by angels,
      Proclaimed among the nations,
      Believed on in the world,
      Taken up in glory.

- What actions can I take in the next 7 days that will demonstrate what I said above is real?