

EMBRACE THE ENIGMA

BIBLE STUDY METHOD

The 4C Model

Discover *HOW-TO* Videos:

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What It Is

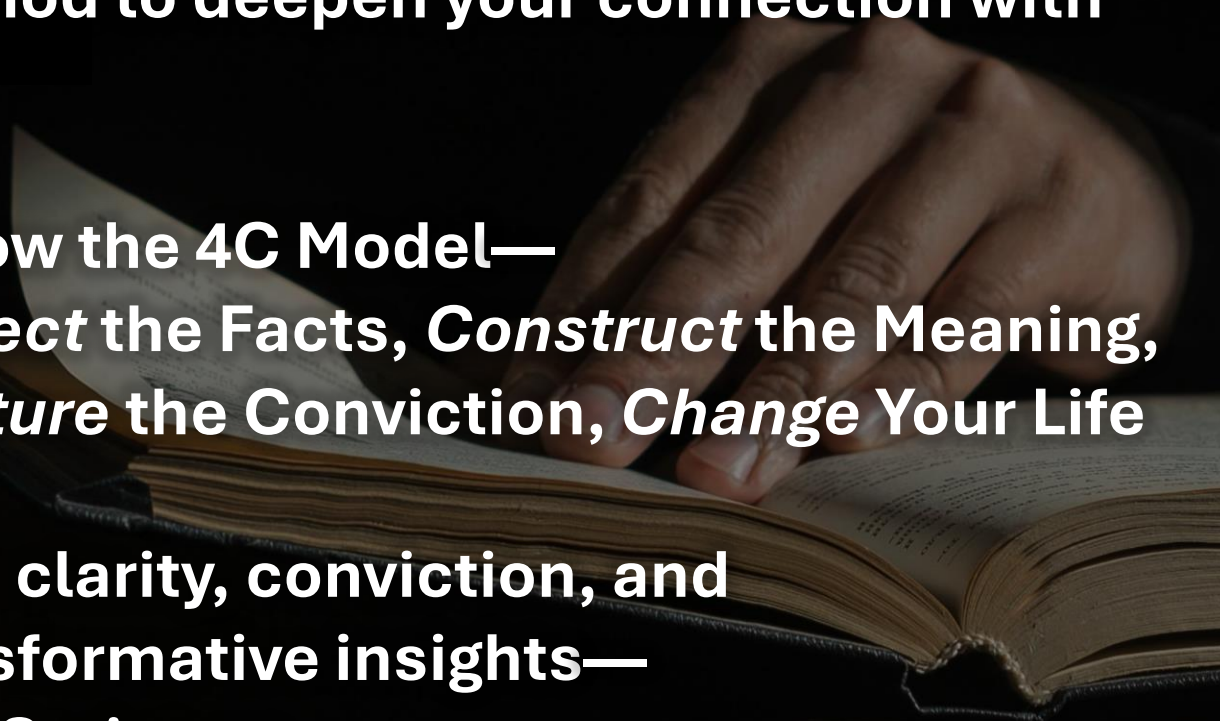
A simple and practical Bible study method to deepen your connection with God

How It Works

Follow the 4C Model—
Collect the Facts, *Construct* the Meaning,
Capture the Conviction, *Change* Your Life

Why It Matters

Gain clarity, conviction, and transformative insights—
thru Scripture



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Getting Started:

Tools & Tips for Your Journey

TOOLS

During the **COLLECT the Facts** step, focus on your observations—they are central to understanding Scripture. Tools like the examples listed below can help, but they are not required. The Bible is your ultimate guide.

BIBLES - Study from a Literal Version:

- **LITERAL** – *New American Standard Bible*
- **LITERAL** – *English Standard Version*
- **DYNAMIC** – *New International Version*
- **PARAPHRASE** – *Message Bible, New Living Translation*

WORD STUDIES:

- **EASY** – *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
- **ADV.** – *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*
- **ADV.** – *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*

CONCORDANCE - Cross Ref/Themes:

- **EASY** – *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*

COMMENTARIES - Entire Bible/Testaments:

- **EASY** – *New International Bible Commentary (Bruce)*
- **EASY** – *Tony Evans Bible Commentary (Evans)*
- **EASY** – *The Bible Knowledge Commentary (Walvoord/Zuck)*
- **ADV.** – *Commentary on the NT Use of the OT (Beale/Carson)*
- **ADV.** – *Mercer Commentary on the OT (Mills/Wilson)*
- **ADV.** – *The People's NT Commentary (Boring/Craddock)*

BIBLE DICTIONARIES & CULTURAL STUDIES:

- **EASY** – *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Douglas, etc)*
- **EASY** – *New Manners & Customs of the Bible (Freeman)*
- **ADV.** – *The New Dict. of Biblical Theology (Alexander, etc)*
- **ADV.** – *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery (Ryken, etc)*

CHARTS & MAPS:

- **EASY** – *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*
- **EASY** – *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*

TIPS

In the next two pages, you'll find a **step-by-step guide** to the *Embrace the Enigma* process. The final page is a **printable worksheet** for you to work through the process on your own.

You don't have to complete every step in a single sitting; feel free to work through the process gradually at your own pace.

If you're new to systematic Bible study, don't worry if it feels overwhelming—it's completely normal to need some time and practice to become proficient.

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1 COLLECT the Facts

To start, select a passage of Scripture. Look for a story or a unit of thought: an entire chapter is often too large and a single verse, too small. Read it several times before you start **COLLECTING the Facts**.

PREUNDERSTANDING (Initial Biases):

- Write a simple interpretation of the passage using what you currently know, before you **COLLECT the Facts**.

BEGINNER: Worm's Eye View

SCRIPTURE OVERVIEW:

- Which **Testament**? What Bible **Book**? What is the **Genre**?

CULTURAL CONTEXT:

Literary Setting

- **Who's** involved? **What's** taking place? **When** is this occurring?
Where is it happening? **Why** is this context important?

Language Use

- Compare your passage in other **Bible Translations**

LITERARY INSIGHTS:

- **Key Terms** – Repeated or emphasized words (seek definitions)
- Classify the language as **Descriptive**, **Prescriptive**, or **Both**
- **Emotional Tone** of the passage
- Is there a **Command**, a **Principle**, or a **Promise**?
- **Main Idea** – Summarize the core message after analyzing
- **Theme** – State the underlying principle beyond the passage

BEGINNER – Bird's Eye View

- What ideas, phrases, or parallels from prior passages of the Bible are present in the passage you are studying?
- How could these help you to understand your current passage?
» *If difficult, revisit this later as your understanding develops*

ADVANCED: Worm's Eye View (Add to Beginner Steps)

SCRIPTURE OVERVIEW:

- What is the **Subgenre**?

CULTURAL CONTEXT:

Historical Setting

- **Time Period** – date, era
- **Major Events** – calamities, cultural/religious shifts
- **Politics** – state leaders, alliances, laws
- **Economics** – socioeconomic conditions

Societal Norms

- **Social Customs** – behaviors, etiquette, taboos
- **Class Structures** – Pharisees, Zealots, Herodians, etc.
- **Family/Gender Roles** – men, women, children

Language Use

- **Original Language** – Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
- **Literary Styles** – intertextuality, rhetorical devices
- **Variants** – textual criticism, manuscript comparison

ADVANCED – Bird's Eye View

- Explore intertextual links and examine how the broader Biblical narrative informs your current passage
- Where does your passage sit in God's redemptive plan?

2 CONSTRUCT the Meaning

Having gone through the **COLLECT the Facts** step, now focus on writing a statement of interpretation:

- **Evaluate your preunderstanding**, testing it against the evidence to discern whether it needs adjustment
- **Identify the central message** of the passage, considering the context, themes, and author's intent
- **Narrative passages** can offer multiple layers of interpretation, yet still contain an overarching meaning
- **Non-narrative passages** generally aim for a singular, overarching meaning
- **Consult commentaries** to confirm/refine your interpretation, recognizing the wisdom of other Christians

3 CAPTURE the Conviction

After the **CONSTRUCT the Meaning** step, reflect deeply on the meaning and how it shapes your view of God:

- **Allow these insights** to form a lens through which you see God's reality
- This moment is one of **deep intimacy with God** where you simply ponder Him through the meaning of the passage you have discovered

4 CHANGE Your Life

While there is primarily one interpretation of a passage, there can be multiple applications:

- Allow the **CAPTURE the Conviction** step to intensify your motivation to live out these principles
- **Identify specific ways** in which God may be calling you to change your outside influences, internal perceptions, thinking patterns, ways of communicating, and everyday actions
- **Avoid overcommitment:** applying one with all your heart is better than applying many, half-heartedly

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SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: _____

DATE: _____

1 COLLECT the Facts

Worm’s Eye View:

Bird’s Eye View:

2 CONSTRUCT the Meaning

3 CAPTURE the Conviction

4 CHANGE Your Life