



A disciple becomes immersed in the riches of God's word, studying and apply it. They are learning to feed themselves. Chapter studies are like mining – you'll find gold if you work at it. A DiscipleMaker can tutor a Disciple in this skill if they're receptive.

Nuts and Bolts of a Chapter Study

Preliminary: like a verse study, each chapter has a context. It's part of a train of thought before and after (this doesn't apply to Psalms or Proverbs). For instance, 1 Cor. 13, the *Love chapter*, has a context. The church is full of proud, immature Christians. They're fractious, with lots of heat and little love. The Christians compete with each other for showy gifts. That's why ch 13 is sandwiched between two chapters on spiritual gifts. Most of all, they need to love. Whatever chapter is studied, the first task is to find the flow of thought surrounding it.

Biblical materials: Suggest a chapter to the Disciple. JI Packer says Romans is the most important book, chapter 8 the most important chapter. (can you guess what phrase in the chapter is most important?...) Let's use Romans 8 to illustrate a chapter study.

Doing a chapter study: Here's one way to do a chapter study. It might take a month to do.

- **read:** read Romans 8 over and over, maybe five times (Packer says 10x!) Slow down enough to soak, not just skim. Ask, *what makes this chapter so important? Any other questions?*
- **research:** chapter 8 completes the first half of Romans. (Chapter 9-11 has a new theme). It concludes the process of salvation by listing benefits Christians have, being in Christ. The immediate context is the agonizing struggle of each Christian, fighting the cancer of inner sin (7.14-25). Ask, *What resources do we have to have victory over sin, and become winners?*
- **write:** have the Disciple take notes as they research. Eg: *list the promises; what different themes are included? (growth, adoption, suffering, prayer, Spirit, love, trials, etc). What's the progression of the chapter? What don't I understand? What don't I practise?*
- **journal:** write down personal thoughts; eg: *what is God saying to me? What verse(s) mean the most to me? It's loaded with spiritual calories – you may have trouble picking 1 or 2 best verses*
- **personalize:** list the implications: *what must change in my life, to be a Romans 8 Christian? Where should I start? What promise(s) should I claim? Who can I share my learning with?*
- **pray:** *pray through it; take each idea and make it a prayer. Ask God to do this in your life.*

Bonus: memorize the chapter. Remember, there may be no chapter more important in the Bible. Write it down, carry it with you, print it out, have it in your iPhone – whatever works. Determine to make this chapter yours.

Observations: Chapter studies are diamonds. They'll enrich you spiritually if you do the hard work mining them. Consider doing it with another person or a small group, then share insights.

Assign another chapter – eg, 1 Cor. 13, 1 John 1. Perhaps a Psalm like 23. Or have the Disciple pick a chapter they'd like to study. Have them use the same system, then reflect with you what they've learned. Encourage them to help someone else do a chapter study.

Small things done in great love will change the world, one person at a time...