

# Epistles Paragraph Study Worksheet

Name:

Instructor:

Paragraph:

2. a. Unfamiliar, historically significant, key words; use of OT

2. b. Theological meaning of main & supporting points

3. a. Application - What did it mean to them?

3. b. Application - What does it mean to us?

1. a. Main Point

1. b. Supporting points (WHY?, HOW?)

1. c. Literary/ theological context

Main point of paragraph before:

Main point of paragraph after:

2. c. Parallel passages

How does this paragraph fit into the argument of this section?

Structure

Theology

Application

## INDUCTIVE STUDY: EPISTLES

### Inductive Overview

**1. Paragraph titles:** Read the book all the way through, writing down titles for each paragraph. This reveals the general thought development of the book.

Titles should meet the following requirements:

- The **titles should be short**. No sentences are allowed. A phrase of a few words is the maximum length. This will force us to get the main idea clearly fixed in our minds.

- The **titles should cover all of the significant content in the paragraph**. If there is subject matter that is not covered in your title, you need revision.

- **Decide in advance how you will determine where the paragraph divisions belong**. If studying with a study group, it is probably best to stay with the existing paragraphs. However, if convenient, it is often correct to divide the paragraphs in a different location than those used in any particular version. Feel free to discuss where the divisions should be, and why.

(Remember that they are not inspired, and are different from one version to another).

### 2. Identity and situation of the author, audience, and third parties:

Compile all the references to the author, audience and key third parties. This is usually done by drawing three or more columns on a sheet of paper - one for the author, one for the audience, and one or more for key third parties that the author mentions. The *audience* is the individual or group of people that the letter is written to. Key *third parties* are *people* (not God, angels, Satan, etc.) that the author mentions more than once in his letter. Examples of key *third parties* include false teachers and individuals that are singled out for discussion (e.g. Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4; Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Timothy 1). Observations should be referenced with the chapter and verse, and marked with an asterisk if the insight is implied rather than directly stated. The implied data are less conclusive in reconstructing the historical situation. Once all the data is gathered, write a one paragraph summary of the historical situation of the author, audience and any third parties.

**3. Major themes:** Review your paragraph titles and note repeated ideas, words, and themes. What are the major issues/themes that the author is addressing?

**4. Why was the letter written?** Record your conclusions about the author's reason(s) for writing the book.

### Paragraph Study

**1. Structure:** Clarify the author's thought development.

**a. Identify the main point** of the paragraph.

Hints:

- Imperatives
- Connective words such as: thus, so, therefore, then...
- Overarching, controlling idea
- Independent clause expressing a complete thought

**b. Identify the supporting points** – Supporting points are the bases for the main claim and explain how and why the main point is true or should be acted upon. List supporting points as individual summary phrases. Note the verse number where each supporting point is located.

Hints:

- Indicative statements
- Connective words: since, because, if, for...
- Dependent clauses
- Illustrations, examples, Old Testament quotes

**c. Literary/theological context** – Identify the main point of the paragraph before and after. How does your paragraph fit into the argument of this section of the book?

**2. Theology:** Understand the content & meaning of the paragraph.

**a. Identify and define unfamiliar, historically significant, and key words; note use of Old Testament passages.**

**b. State the theological meaning of the main and supporting points.** What do they teach about God, man, sin, salvation, the church, ministry, etc? How does the theology of the supporting points relate to the main point?

**c. What parallel passages** might bear on your interpretation?

**3. Application:** Understand what to do based on the meaning of the paragraph.

**a. How is the argument of the paragraph intended to affect the original audience** in terms of actions, attitudes, convictions? Application should center on the main point, not on supporting points.

**b. How is the argument of this passage relevant to me/my group/our culture?**