

ABIDE 101 • LESSON 4

Thinking Like Sherlock Holmes

Meditate and Obey. Study and Apply. Hear and Do.



SECTION 1 · PROVERBS 18:13–17

The Bad Detective and Sherlock Holmes

*“He who answers a matter before he hears it—
this is folly and disgrace to him.”*

Proverbs 18:13 · BSB

PROVERBS 18:13–17 1 / 2

¹³He who answers a matter before he hears it—this is folly and disgrace to him. ¹⁴The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but who can survive a broken spirit? ¹⁵The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks it out. ¹⁶A man's gift opens doors for him, and brings him before great men.

PROVERBS 18:13–17 2 / 2

¹⁷The first to state his case seems right until another comes and cross-examines him.

Deduction and induction

Deduction	Induction
Assumption based	Evidence based
Moves from universals to particulars	Moves from particulars to universals
Begins with absolute premises and derives certain conclusions	Pieces the data together to derive meaning (probable conclusions)

“It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data.” (Sherlock Holmes, “A Scandal in Bohemia”)

So What?

The bad detective decides first and looks for clues later. Holmes gathers the clues and lets them lead. Read the Bible like Holmes: observe before you conclude, and be willing for the evidence to change your mind.



SECTION 2 · PROVERBS 2:1–5

Why the Inductive Mindset Matters

“if you seek it like silver and search it out like hidden treasure, then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God.”

Proverbs 2:4–5 · BSB

PROVERBS 2:1–5 1 / 2

¹My son, if you accept my words and hide my commandments within you, ²if you incline your ear to wisdom and direct your heart to understanding, ³if you truly call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding, ⁴if you seek it like silver and search it out like hidden treasure,

PROVERBS 2:1–5 2 / 2

⁵then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God.

Why it matters

It honors what the Bible is

An ancient book from God deserves to be heard on its own terms, not ours.

It keeps us from bending it

Doctrine comes last, built up from the texts, not first, deciding what they may say.

It grows discernment

Like the Bereans, we weigh every voice against Scripture (Acts 17:11), including this one.

You can start now

It fits anyone, at the breakfast table or the study desk. You need curiosity.

So What?

The inductive mindset isn't a technique for experts. It's a posture of respect toward God's Word: let it speak, let it shape you, and keep searching like someone who knows the treasure is real.



SECTION 3 · THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

Three Stretches of Road

What does it say?

What did it mean?

How do we live it?

The road from the page to your life

Observation

What does it say? Read slowly; notice who speaks, what repeats, what connects. Good observation makes sure “all the pieces are available.”

Interpretation

What did it mean? What the text “was intended to convey by its original author to his original audience.”

Application

How do we live it? First for God’s people today, then for me, as the Holy Spirit presses the Word into one heart.

The bridge: the **abiding principle**, the timeless truth in a passage that holds for God’s people in every age.

So What?

Observation asks what it says. Interpretation asks what it meant. Application asks how to live it. Take them in that order, and you won't start building a life on a verse you haven't yet understood.



SECTION 4 · THE TEN READING QUESTIONS

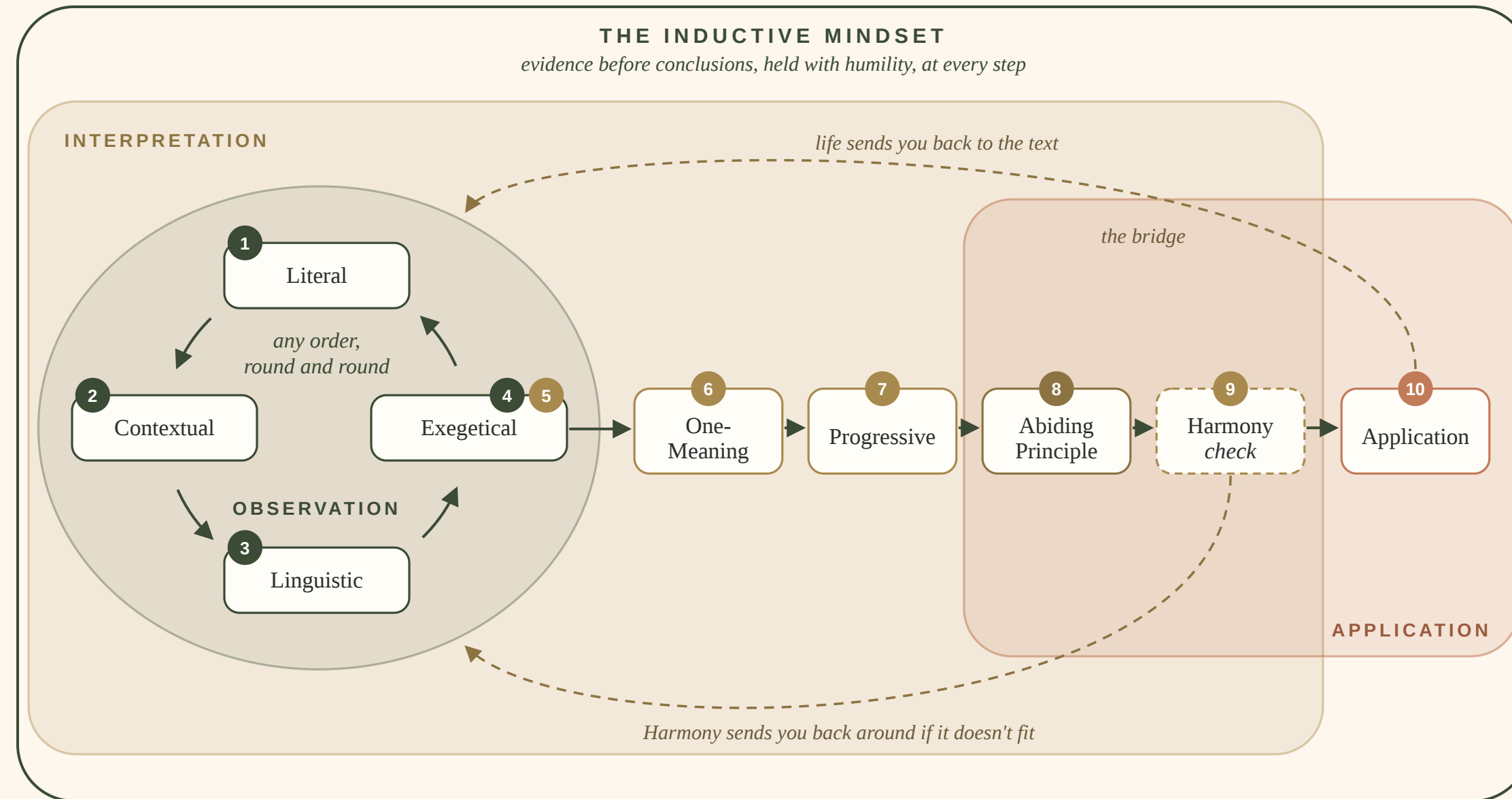
Ten Questions for the Road

Ten questions carry you from the page to your life: four to observe, three to interpret, one to build the bridge, one to check it, and one to walk across it.

SECTION 4 · HOW THE TEN QUESTIONS FIT TOGETHER

Inductive Bible Study

A time-tested method for handling “the word of truth” accurately (2 Timothy 2:15 · BSB)



The ten diagnostic questions, mapped to the stages of biblical interpretation

The ten questions are on the next slide.

SECTION 4 · READ THEM DOWN THE TABLE

The ten questions

#	The question to ask	Stage	Guardrail
1	What genre is this, and what does it actually say in that genre?	Observe	Literal
2	What surrounds it, what did the first readers know, and where does it sit in the whole story?	Observe	Contextual
3	Is there a word where the Hebrew or Greek adds nuance?	Observe	Linguistic
4	What is the Author saying in this passage to the original audience?	Observe → Interpret	Exegetical: out
5	What am I bringing to this text that I need to let go of?	Interpret (posture)	Exegetical: not in
6	What is the one thing this meant when it was first given, before later revelation illuminated it further?	Interpret	One-Meaning
7	Where does this sit in the unfolding story? What had God revealed by then, and what did He reveal later?	Interpret	Progressive
8	What is the timeless, abiding principle that applies to us today?	Bridge	Abiding principle
9	Do clear passages elsewhere agree with my reading?	Check	Harmony
10	How might we apply this abiding principle to our lives today? How is God inviting you to live out this abiding principle this week?	Apply	Application

So What?

Ten questions carry you from the page to your life: four to observe, three to interpret, one to build the bridge, one to check it, and one to walk across it.



SECTION 5 · THE PROCESS SPIRAL

The Road Circles Back

“There will inevitably be movement back and forth between these steps, but the general flow will be linear.”

Fuhr and Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study*

Where the road circles back

A word → the context

Question 3 finds a word with a range of meanings, so you go back to question 2: what surrounds it? (The good eye of Matthew 6:22, lesson 3.)

Harmony → the start

If your reading clashes with clear passages elsewhere (question 9), don't force it. Go back around: genre, context, words.

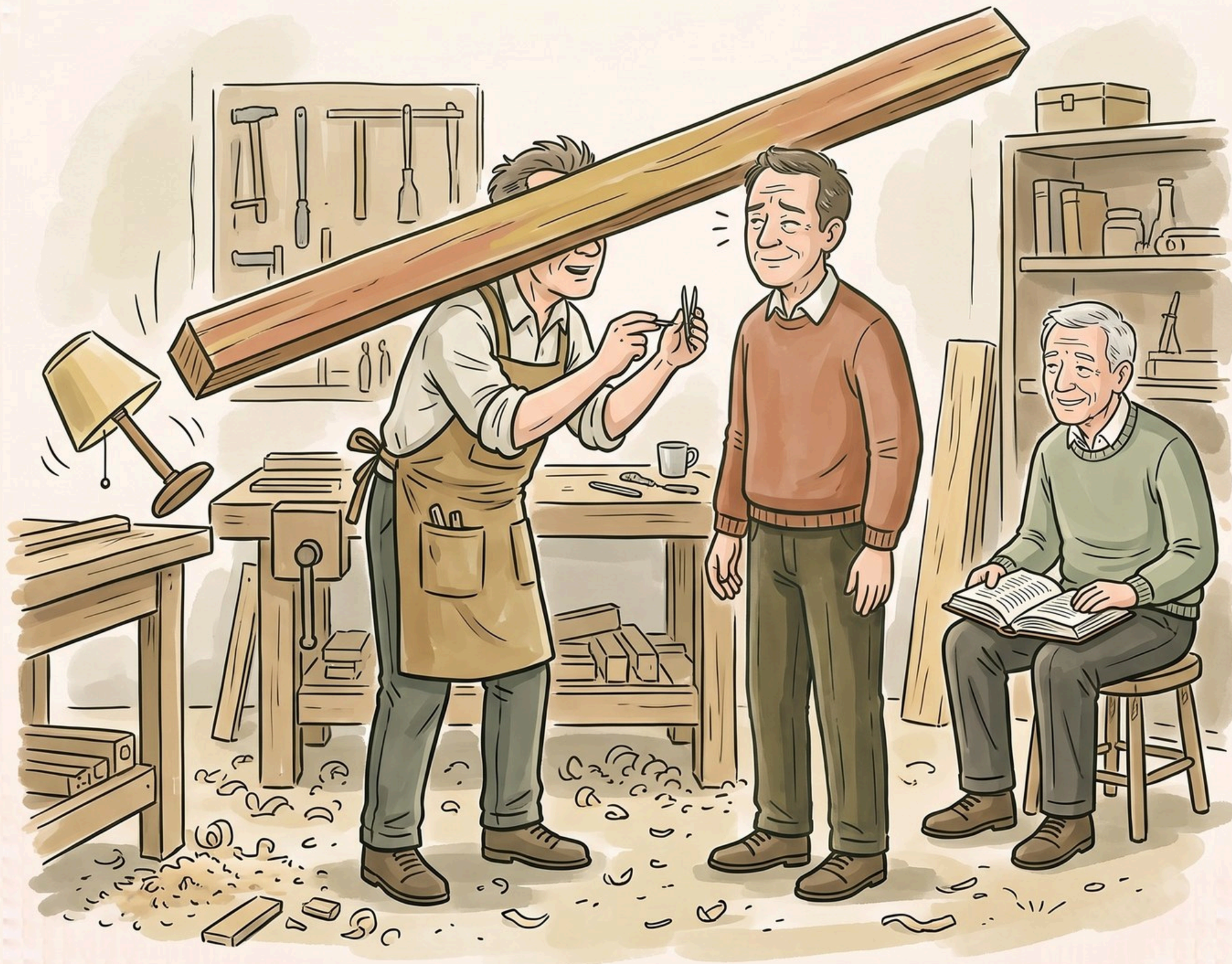
Life → the text

You try to apply a passage (question 10), and a real situation raises a new question. Back to interpretation, often back to observation.

Going back isn't failure. It's how the road climbs.

So What?

Going back isn't failure. It's how the road climbs. Follow the questions in order, expect to circle back, and each time around you'll see more of the view.



SECTION 6 · MATTHEW 7:1–6
QUESTIONS 1–4

The Drive, Part 1: Observing

“Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye but fail to notice the beam in your own eye?”

Matthew 7:3 · BSB

MATTHEW 7:1–6 1 / 3

¹“Do not judge, or you will be judged. ²For with the same judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye but fail to notice the beam in your own eye?

MATTHEW 7:1–6 2 / 3

⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while there is still a beam in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

MATTHEW 7:1–6 3 / 3

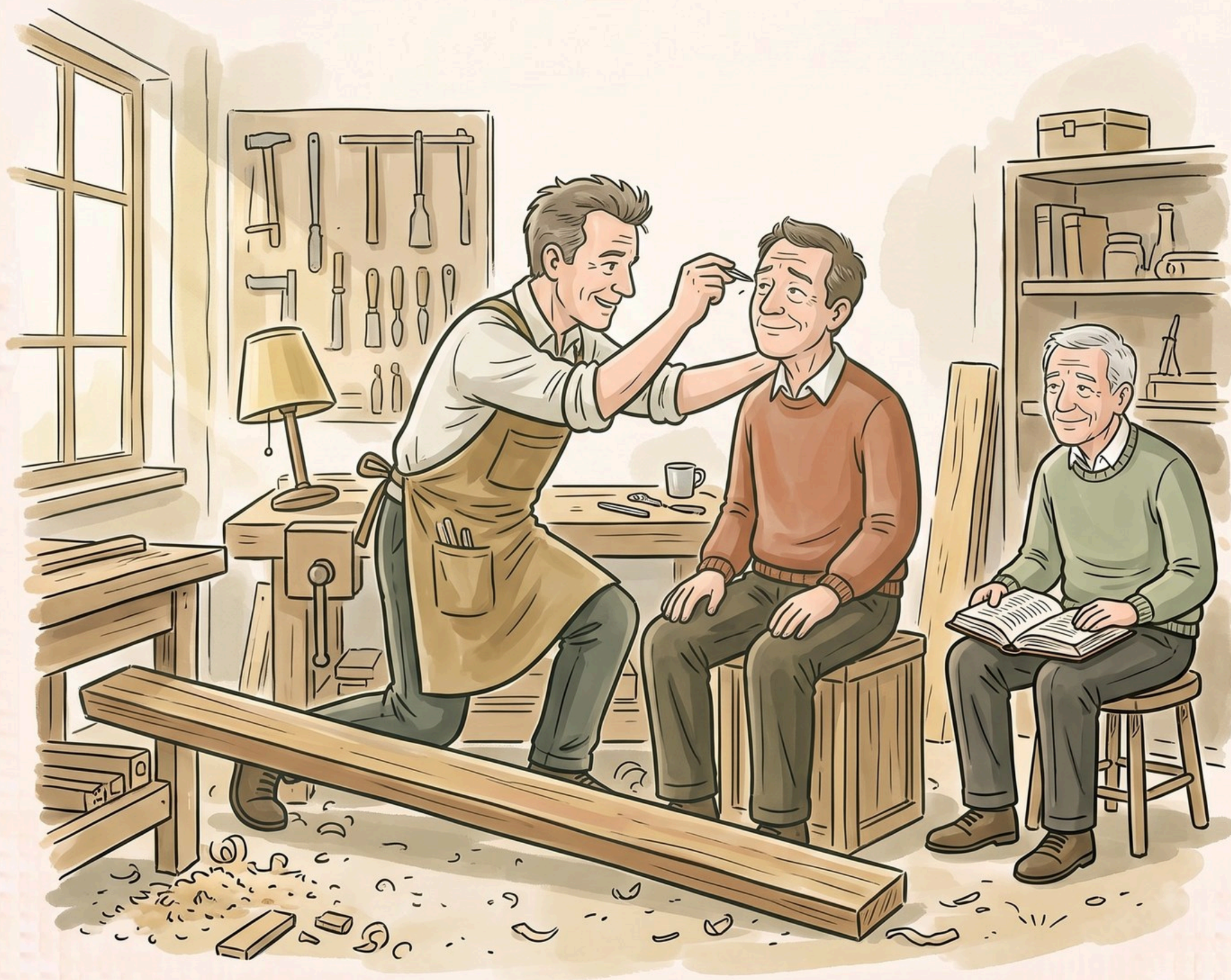
⁶Do not give dogs what is holy; do not throw your pearls before swine. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

Gathering the clues

Question	What we find
1 · Literal	Sermon teaching with humor and hyperbole: a roof beam in an eye. Nobody is meant to go looking for lumber.
2 · Contextual	Jesus teaches His disciples, with crowds listening (Matthew 5:1; 7:28). Verse 16: recognize false prophets by their fruit. The dogs are wild scavengers; the pigs, unclean animals (Blomberg).
3 · Linguistic	<i>Krinō</i> , “judge,” ranges from “separate, put asunder, distinguish” to “pass sentence upon, condemn” (Liddell and Scott). <i>Ophthalmos</i> , “eye,” six times in verses 3–5.
4 · Exegetical	Don’t set yourself up as the judge who condemns your brother while ignoring your own bigger sin. Deal with your own sin first; then, seeing clearly, help.

So What?

Observation slows us down long enough to see what's really there: humor, a repeated word, and a sermon full of both mercy and discernment. Before we decide what *Do not judge* means, we've already noticed that Jesus wants His disciples to see clearly.



SECTION 7 · MATTHEW 7:1–6
LUKE 6:36–37 · QUESTIONS 5–10

The Drive, Part 2: Interpreting and Applying

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged.”

Luke 6:36–37 · BSB

MSB: “Therefore be merciful...”

LUKE 6:36–37

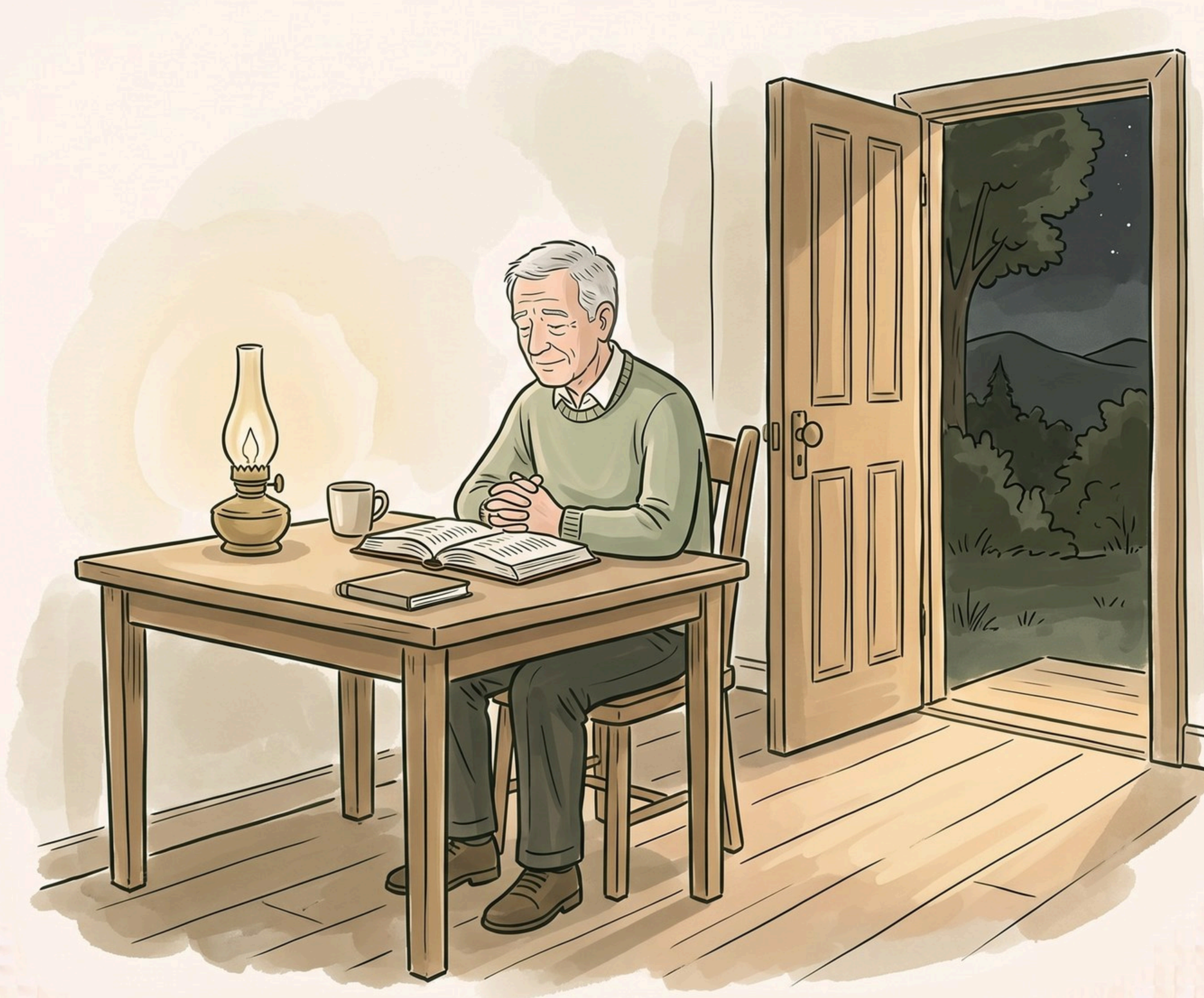
³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

From meaning to this week

Question	What we find
5 · Exegetical	What am I bringing: <i>don't judge me</i> , or a love of spotting faults?
6 · One-Meaning	Jesus forbids condemning, fault-finding judgment while blind to our own sin. He does not forbid discernment or loving correction.
7 · Progressive	Moses: judgment belongs to God (Deuteronomy 1:17). Later the apostles lived it out in the churches (Romans 14:10; Galatians 6:1).
8 · Abiding principle	God alone is the Judge. Those who have received His mercy examine themselves first, then help others humbly and gently, and use discernment without condemning.
9 · Harmony	Luke sets “Do not judge” beside mercy and “Do not condemn” (Luke 6:36–37, BSB); John 7:24 commands judging justly.
10 · Application	A parent, a coworker, a post online, a friend who mocks: one meaning, many applications.

So What?

Do not judge doesn't mean *never notice anything*. It means stop playing God. Take the beam out of your own eye, then help your brother with a clear eye and a gentle hand. And notice what just happened: ten questions, in order, circling back three times, carried you from a misquoted verse to what Jesus actually said.



SECTION 8 · LUKE 24:44–45

Humble Confidence

“Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

Luke 24:45 · BSB

LUKE 24:44–45

⁴⁴ Jesus said to them, “These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

Confidence and humility

Confidence

“You’ll be able to reach most interpretive conclusions with a high degree of certainty.” The Bible was given to be understood.

Humility

We remain “open to wherever the evidence may lead.” Confident about Matthew 7:1–5; a lighter grip on verse 6.

“We’re not just developing a method; we’re developing a person.” (Fuhr and Köstenberger)

So What?

Read like Holmes: observe before you conclude. Walk the ten questions in order, and expect the road to circle back. Hold your conclusions with confidence where the evidence is clear and with humility where it isn't. And never study alone: ask the Author to open your mind.

THE AUTHOR WANTS TO BE FOUND

“Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.”

John 14:21 · BSB

How is God inviting you to live out this abiding principle this week?

Meditate and Obey. Study and Apply. Hear and Do.