

Getting The Most Out Of Your Bible Reading

LIFEGROUP

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
WHAT TO EXPECT	
LESSON 1: SETTING THE STAGE	4
LESSON 2: POSTURING THE HEART	10
LESSON 3: UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT	14
LESSON 4: OBSERVATIONS	22
LESSON 5: INTERPRETATING	27
LESSON 6: APPLICATION	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY & RESOURCES	36

FOREWORD

As a church, we embarked on a learning journey to study the Word of God for ourselves. This curriculum aims to achieve that through a simple systematic way of approaching God's Word, called the Inductive Bible Study.

Knowing God's Word does not necessarily require a lot of intelligence but it does require a lot of diligence. If you follow this approach, you will find that even with 15 minutes each day, you will receive much new insights.

We hope you will enjoy this learning process and find the Word of God "living and active" according to Hebrews 4:12. Our prayer is that you will grow to delight in the Word and it will come alive in your life.

Blessings,



Rhordan Wickramasinghe

Senior Pastor

Full Gospel Assembly Singapore

WHAT TO EXPECT

This study has been designed to help you get started to go deeper into the Word of God by learning how to observe, interpret and apply scripture. This method of learning scripture is called *Inductive Bible Study*. It is one of the methods of studying God's Word.

This curriculum is best used in a small group. Going through this with a group, you are able to draw from one another's learning and hold one another accountable to personal applications from scripture.

Each lesson contains video clips and exercises that you will work on as a group. Take down notes from the video clips as Pastor Rhordan explains the Observation, Interpretation and Application process. The exercises will help you to process learning and personalise application. Take time to discuss your responses from these exercises during your small group.

At the end of each lesson, there is a short assignment for you to do on your own before the next lesson. Share what you have learned from the assignment at the beginning of the next meeting.

**PART
1**

SETTING THE STAGE

PART 1

SETTING THE STAGE

The great tragedy for Christians in the developed countries today is that many own multiple copies of the Bible but few spend time to study it.

What about you? Do you regularly read and study the Bible on your own? Or do you rarely open the Bible to read if for yourself? Before we dive into the lesson, here is a simple exercise to find out about your Bible reading habits.

How often do you read the Bible?

☐ Never ☐ Once a month ☐ Once a week ☐ 2 or 3 times a week ☐ Daily

When you read the Bible, how much time do you spend reading?

☐ 5 min or less ☐ 15 min ☐ 30 min ☐ 45 min ☐ 1 h or more

What is your Bible reading habit like? What do you do?

What are some reasons why you don't read the Bible more than you would like to?

Watch



Choosing a Bible Translation

There are many excellent Bibles around. To get into studying God's Word for yourself, you will need a good study Bible. Study Bibles typically include a concordance at the back, maps and cross-references which is useful for comparing scripture with scripture. It is best that it does not include any notes or commentary. Ideally, you only want the biblical text.

There are various English Bible translations. The New King James (NKJV), New International Version (NIV) and the English Standard Version (ESV) are some of the common Bibles used. These Bibles are actual translations from the original languages as opposed to paraphrases such as The Message or the Good News Bible.

**The best Bible is
the one that you
will read.**

- Lanny Hubbard

Watch



Discuss

1. What are some things you discovered about translations?
2. Which translation do you use?
3. Which translation do you find easier or more challenging to use?
4. Would you be willing to commit to one translation but also willing to read through other translations?

What should I read?

The Bible is not only one book. It is a collection of sixty-six documents in one volume and with different genres. These sixty-six documents conspire to form a unified whole. They were written over a period of more than sixteen hundred years by more than forty human authors who came from different backgrounds.

Yet the Bible is a single unit, inspired by the Holy Spirit to reveal God and His relationship with His creation—mankind. Each book, section, paragraph and verse works together with others to reveal God’s truth. That is why scripture is best understood by relating its individual parts to the integrated whole.

Watch



The Classification of the Bible



(Source: Hendricks, Howard G. and William D. Hendricks. *Living By The Book*. Moody Publishers, 2007.)

Discuss

1. What do you normally do when you study the Bible devotionally? E.g. Do you follow a Bible reading plan or you read a book at a time? Do you keep a journal?
2. Do you feel your way of studying the Word is effective or ineffective? Why do you feel that way?

Review

- ◇ The Bible is important for God to reveal His purpose and plan for us and help us deal with the life issues we face.
- ◇ There are many authors but one divine writer - the Holy Spirit.
- ◇ Pick a version either Word for Word or Thought for Thought as your primary version, and be open to read through a variety of translations for the richness and originality of text to flow through, especially when studying a passage.
- ◇ The Bible is a collection of different books with different genres. Hence, the way you study each book differs.
- ◇ Pick one book of the Bible and read through the entire book so that you will have a better understanding of it.

Assignment

A good gospel book to start with is the Book of Mark as it is a short and easy book to read. Decide on a time and a place daily to have some quiet time reading this book. Just read one section or pericope* a day. Keep a journal to write down your reflections. Keep a journal to write down your reflections.

You can do this together as a group. Post your thoughts and reflections in your group chat (if you have one) daily.

*Pericope is a set of verses that forms one coherent unit or thought. When reading a section of scripture, it is crucial to know where the section begins and ends and it is the pericope that provides the framework. There are many clues as to defining the shape of a pericope which might include transitional words, plot or scene changes, syntactical markers, etc. It might also be argued that the pericope gives a textual limit to the one meaning of a given text which is of first importance in understanding the original meaning of a biblical author.

**PART
2**



**POSTURING THE
HEART**

PART 2

POSTURING THE HEART

Prayer is an important key to effective Bible study.

Learn to posture your heart before the studying the scripture.

When you come to a place in your study where you are stuck and confused, you should pause and pray, “Holy Spirit, I don’t understand this passage. Give me insight and reveal to me your truth.”

**Open my eyes,
that I may behold
wondrous things
out of your law.
- Psalms 119:118**

Watch



Discuss

Howard Grant in his book, “The Trauma of Transparency” shared great insight about the importance of listening to God. The following text is extracted from the article “Preparing to Hear God’s Word”.

1 Timothy 4:15 says, *“Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all.”* Here Paul told Timothy to “take pains” and “be absorbed” in these things, a reference to the previous commands regarding his ministry in teaching, being an example of Christlike character, and using his gift (1 Timothy 4:11-14).

One simply cannot “take pains” and “be absorbed” and remain a passive listener. “Take pains” is the Greek word *melataw* which means “cultivate, think meditate, attend to carefully.” “Be absorbed” is literally, “in these be,” and connotes the idea of “being totally enveloped, absorbed, give yourself totally to them.”

But note the next verse in 1 Timothy 4:16: “Pay close attention to yourself...” Bible study or

hearing the Word is aimed at personal application for changed living from the inside out.

Passive, uninvolved listening to God is inadequate and judged by God as futile religiosity. Believers are always to be on the alert—probing for meaning and application, for lethargic, half-hearted listening just doesn't cut it with God nor can it result in spiritual deliverance. In practical terms what does this entail?

What does this mean in terms of my *listening to God*? When I read and study the Word, I must put everything else aside and concentrate on what He is saying to me. I must give Him my undivided attention.

I should do this on a regular basis, for that is the only way I can develop my listening skills. I should do this in a place where I have minimal distractions. I should read and meditate out loud and take notes and ask questions, for these are the kinds of things that make me an active participant.

I should *observe carefully* to whom God is speaking, what He is saying and why He says it. I should *interpret accurately* what God means. I should apply these truths personally and practically in my own life.

1. Why is it important to posture our hearts in prayer as we study God's Word?

2. What can you do to prepare your heart so that you are in a position where you can hear God when studying His Word i.e. understand His Word and respond with faith and obedience?

(<https://bible.org/article/preparing-hear-god's-word>)

Review

◇ After picking a translation and selecting a book in the Bible to study, it is important that we posture our heart to study it.

◇ We posture our hearts for Bible study by praying.

◇ We need to go to the Word of God with humility and dependency on the Holy Spirit and respond with faith and obedience.

Assignment

What do the following verses say about posturing our hearts in preparation for God's Word? Summarise each verse in your own words. Share your summary with the group at the next meeting.

Proverbs 22:17-19

Isaiah 66:2

Mark 4:18-19

Luke 8:18

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

James 1:22-27

PART 3



UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

PART 3

UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

Context is the key principle in understanding scripture. When we have the right context, then we are able to understand and interpret the passage correctly.

What do we mean by context? Context refers to that which goes before and that which follows after. So whenever you study a verse, a paragraph, a section, even an entire book, always consult the neighbours of that verse, that paragraph, that section, that book.

(Hendricks, Howard G. and William D. Hendricks. Living By The Book, page 233. Moody Publishers, 2007.)

Watch

Before you watch the following video, get ready some coloured pens or pencils.



Draw the picture based on what you have heard Pastor Rhordan describe in the space below.

Then describe this picture to the group with as much as details as possible.
For example, what did the house look like? What did the path look like?
What did Jenny look like? Do you know what a jujube is?

Watch



Discuss

1. How important is and what is the value of context?
2. How much do we think about the context before diving into the Word?

What type of literature is this?

Before you interpret scripture, the first thing you need to know is what that book's author meant it to be. What literary form did he employ? Literary genre is crucial to interpretation. Unless you know what types of literature the scripture is taken from, you are in no position to interpret its meaning.

There are 5 major literary genres that God used to communicate His Word. See additional notes at the back of this lesson on each of the genre.

1. Historical Narrative (stories)
2. Parable (a brief tale that illustrates a moral principle)
3. Poetry
4. Prophetic and Apocalyptic
5. Letters/Epistles

We recommend these resources below as additional resources that may help you to understand the books and genre. They also provide background to the book you are studying which can provide insight to why the book is written and the circumstances surrounding the book.

- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth. 4th Edition, Zondervan, 2014.
- Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. How to Read the Bible Book by Book. Zondervan, 2002.

Watch



Discuss

How well do you understand the different genres of the Bible? Which genre are you most familiar with? Refer to “The Classification of the Bible” at page 8 of this curriculum.

Review

◇ Context is key principle in understanding scripture. When we have the right context, we are able to interpret the passage correctly.

◇ Four questions to ask to figure out the context:

- Author: Who is it written by?
- Audience: To whom is it written?
- Purpose: Why was it written?
- Genre/Form: In what form was it written?

◇ Literary genre is crucial to interpretation and influences our understanding of the text.

Assignment

Look up the following scriptures. Ask the four questions to figure out the context. It will be useful to use a study Bible for this assignment. Write your notes in the space below and discuss with your group at the next meeting.

Psalm 1

Jeremiah 1

Mark 4:1-20

Acts 1

Additional Notes

1. Historical Narrative

The narrative books are the most popular as they are composed of stories. A large part of the Bible is narrative and it is the best place to start if you are new to reading the Bible. What are we to make of the stories in the Bible? How do we determine their meaning and significance? Let us suggest three things to pay attention to:

- What is the plot? What development is there in the story? What is different at the end of the book, and why?
- Who are the characters? How are they presented? What roles do they play? What decisions do they make? How do they relate to each other, and to God? Why are they in the story? What do we like or dislike about them? What would we do in their place?

- In what ways is this story true to life? The stories of scripture show us life as God wants us to see it. So we can ask: What questions does this story raise? What problems do the characters have to deal with? What lessons do they learn or not learn? What do they discover about God?

2. Parable

A parable is a brief tale that illustrates a moral principle. Most of the parables in the Bible come from the teaching of Jesus. And it is also Jesus' common method of communication as parables are simple, memorable and easy to understand. They deal with everyday matters such as farming, fishing, travel, money and human relationships. Parables are usually intended to have a powerful impact. They jolt the listener into awareness by using basic ethical principles such as right and wrong (parable of the wicked servant), love and compassion (the good Samaritan), justice and mercy (the Pharisee and the tax collector).

Parables are a form of fiction. But they communicate truth that cannot be communicated in any other way. It compels listeners to see some aspect of life in a completely new way.

3. Poetry

The distinctive feature of poetry is its appeal to the emotions, as well as the imagination. That's why the psalms are so well loved. They express some of the deepest feelings, longings, rapture and pain of the human heart.

One of the main features of Hebrew poetry is its extensive use of "parallelism". If you look through the psalms, for instance, you will notice that the majority of the verses have two lines. The two lines work off of each other to communicate meaning. Sometimes, the second line will reinforce what the first line says by repeating its thought.

For instance, Psalm 103:15 says,

*"As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes."*

Sometimes it will extend the thought by adding new information, as in Psalm 32:2:

*"How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit."*

And sometimes the second line will oppose the first with an alternative thought:

*"How blessed is the man who has made the Lord his trust,
And has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood." (Psalm 40:4)*

Another key to approaching Hebrew poetry is to recognize hyperbole, extreme exaggeration used to make a point. The following is an example of a hyperbole.

*"O that Thou wouldst slay the wicked, O God;
Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed."*

*For they speak against Thee wickedly,
And Thine enemies take Thy name in vain.
Do I not hate those who hate Thee, O Lord?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against Thee?
I hate them with the utmost hatred;
They have become my enemies.” (Psalm 139:19-22)*

The key to understanding the above passage is to notice who David is talking about—“the wicked”. People who shed blood, spoken against God, taken His name in vain (all violations of the ten commandments and demonstrated that they hate the Lord. In becoming God’s enemies, they have become David’s enemies. In a formal, ritualized way, he denounces them with the strongest language he can find.

Here are some interpretive questions to consider as you approach the poetry of the Bible:

- Who composed this material?
- Can you determine why?
- What is the central theme of the poem?
- What emotions does the verse convey?
- What response does it produce?
- What questions does it ask?
- What does the poem say about God? About people?
- Are there references to people, places or events that you are unfamiliar with? If so, what can you find out about them elsewhere in scripture or through secondary sources?

Prophetic and Apocalyptic

The prophetic and apocalyptic is probably the most challenging type of literature in the Bible. The role of the prophet in scripture was not so much to tell the future, but to proclaim the words of the Lord; not to foretell, but to “forth-tell”. God raised up prophets in Israel when it became clear that the people were determined to resist Him. The prophets’ thankless task was to warn the nation of the dire consequences of continued disobedience, in hopes of true repentance and a return to the Lord.

In reading the prophets, it is critical that you ask the six questions—who, what, where, when, why and wherefore (for what reason or as a result of which). Answering them will give you an invaluable database for considering these additional issues: what is the main problem that the prophet is addressing? What images does he use to describe it? What is the response of the people? What does this prophet’s message tell you about God? What happens after this prophet delivers his message? Why do you think God included this book in His Word?

A special category of prophetic literature is apocalyptic. The book of Revelation is a good example. Apocalyptic literature details the authors’ visions of the end times as revealed by God. The language of the apocalyptic is highly symbolic.

In the Old Testament, books such as Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah contain elements of apocalyptic literature. The same is true of certain in the New Testament, such as 2 Thessalonians

2, Mark 13 and Matthew 24. And, of course, the entire book of Revelation is apocalyptic; in fact, the Greek word apocalypse means “revelation”.

When you study these books, pay close attention to the structure of the book. What movement is there from the opening to the close?

What changes come about? Also, who is the material written to?

What was the historical and cultural context in which the writer was working? How might that have influenced his method of communication? Rather than worry about a time line for future events, ask what implications this book would have had for Christians in the early church.

(Source: Hendricks, Howard G. and William D. Hendricks. *Living By The Book*, page 233. Moody Publishers, 2007.)

Letters/Epistles

The word epistle comes from the Greek word epistole that means “letter” or “message.” Epistles also generally followed a familiar format. Most of Paul’s letters begin with an introduction that identifies his name and those of any associates, mentions his audience, and gives a greeting. The introduction is followed by the main body of the letter, and the epistles often conclude with a general blessing and personal notes to individuals within the recipient church.

They express and explain doctrine. It is the epistles where we get the most of our theology. An epistle is a literary work designed to be public. It is meant to be circulated among large groups of people. The books help to define how God’s people are to live in the present age.

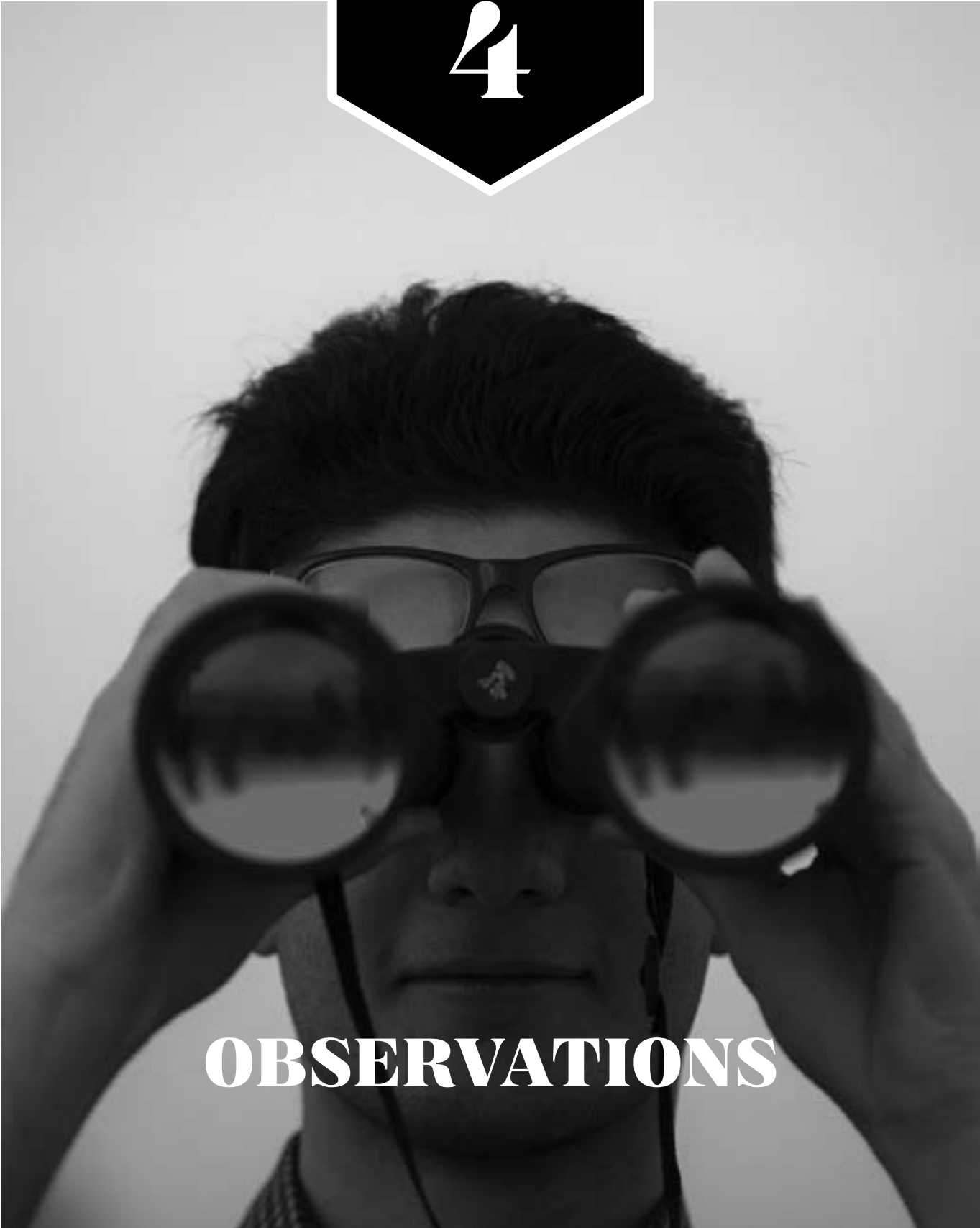
All epistles are written to first generation converts and do not set out to give a full summary of Christian doctrine or ethics. They are all ad hoc, written to specific situations in the lives of believers. A wide range of circumstances prompted the writing of the epistles. Disorder in a church, the threat of false teaching, trepidation about the end of the world, confusion about death, controversy over religious practices, ambiguity about ethics, weakness in leadership. Some epistles were meant as a word of encouragement or just a way of reconnecting. The books of Hebrews and Romans offer an expansive theological perspective. Some letters focus on a particular theological point: grace in the case of Galatians, Christ in the case of Colossians, the church in the case of Ephesians.

When you study the epistles, you have to look at its context. Ask the four basic questions:

1. Who wrote it?
2. Who was it written to?
3. What prompted it to be written or why was it written? (a good study Bible will provide some background information or you can refer to the additional resources recommended on page 22)
4. What is its message?

(Source: Fee, Gordon D. and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. 4th Edition, Zondervan, 2014.)

PART 4



OBSERVATIONS

PART 4

OBSERVATIONS

Through observation we learn to get beyond the obvious. We begin to see the importance of little words and phrases that are easily missed at first glance. We pay attention to things that might be repeated or emphasized. We put ourselves in the place of the person being described so that we can better understand what he or she might be experiencing. And as we continue to observe, we begin to see much more clearly what God is saying to us.

**- “Living By The Book”
by Howard G. Hendricks & William D. Hendricks**

The Inductive Bible Study method consists of these 3 steps; Observation, Interpretation and Application. Let us look at Observation this lesson.

Observation is a very important skill in studying God’s Word. Because if we cannot see what is in the text, we will not be able to accurately interpret its meaning. The same truth is available to all of us but what makes a better Bible student is that he can see more in the text. In Observation, your main concern is, what do I see?

Activity: How many triangles do you see?

Here is an exercise you can try with your group. It will develop your powers of observation and teach you about the observational process.



Ask the group, how many triangles can they see? Give the group about 30 seconds to respond. If you have more time, would you be able to see more triangles? (The answer is at the back of this lesson)

Watch



Discuss

The ability to observe is a developed process. How can you develop your observation skill so that you can see more in the text?

Use the following list of questions to help guide you in your study of scripture. You probably do not need to use every question for each passage you study but these questions provide a good starting point.

- Who is the author of the passage?
- Whom is the author addressing? (God's people? A specific people group? Unbelievers?)
- What is the most important term and/or concept of the passage?
- What are the main verbs? What are the tenses of those verbs?
- Repetitions: Any there any words/ideas that repeat themselves?
- Connecting words: Consider the 'small words'/connectors that connect thoughts and ideas
- Are there terms you need to define so you can better understand the passage?
- Are there people or places you need to identify?
- What do you already know about the people and places mentioned?
- Can you identify any cause-effect relationships in the author's writing?
- In what ways does the passage apply to your own personal life?

In the next video, Pastor Rhordan is going to demonstrate the observational process so that you can see it in action.

Watch



Activity

Now that you have seen Pastor Rhordan observe John 3:16. Try the process yourself.

Observe the following passage, Joshua 1:8 (ESV).

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth,
but you shall meditate on it day and night,
so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it;
for then you will make your way prosperous,
and then you will have good success.”

Remember, in observation, your main concern is, *what do I see?*

Pay special attention to terms and grammatical structure. Also look at the context. Use a pen or pencil to record your observations in and around the text. See what you can find in this passage. Share your observations with one another.

Review

- ◊ Observation is a very important skill in studying the Bible.
- ◊ We need to slow down in our reading of scripture and observe the text.
- ◊ There is a vast difference between merely seeing and carefully observing.
- ◊ As we learn to make observations, we need to ask questions of the text.
- ◊ Asking questions (who, what, when, where, why and how) of the text will open up the scripture for us.

Assignment

Let's try observing Acts 1:8 (ESV).

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

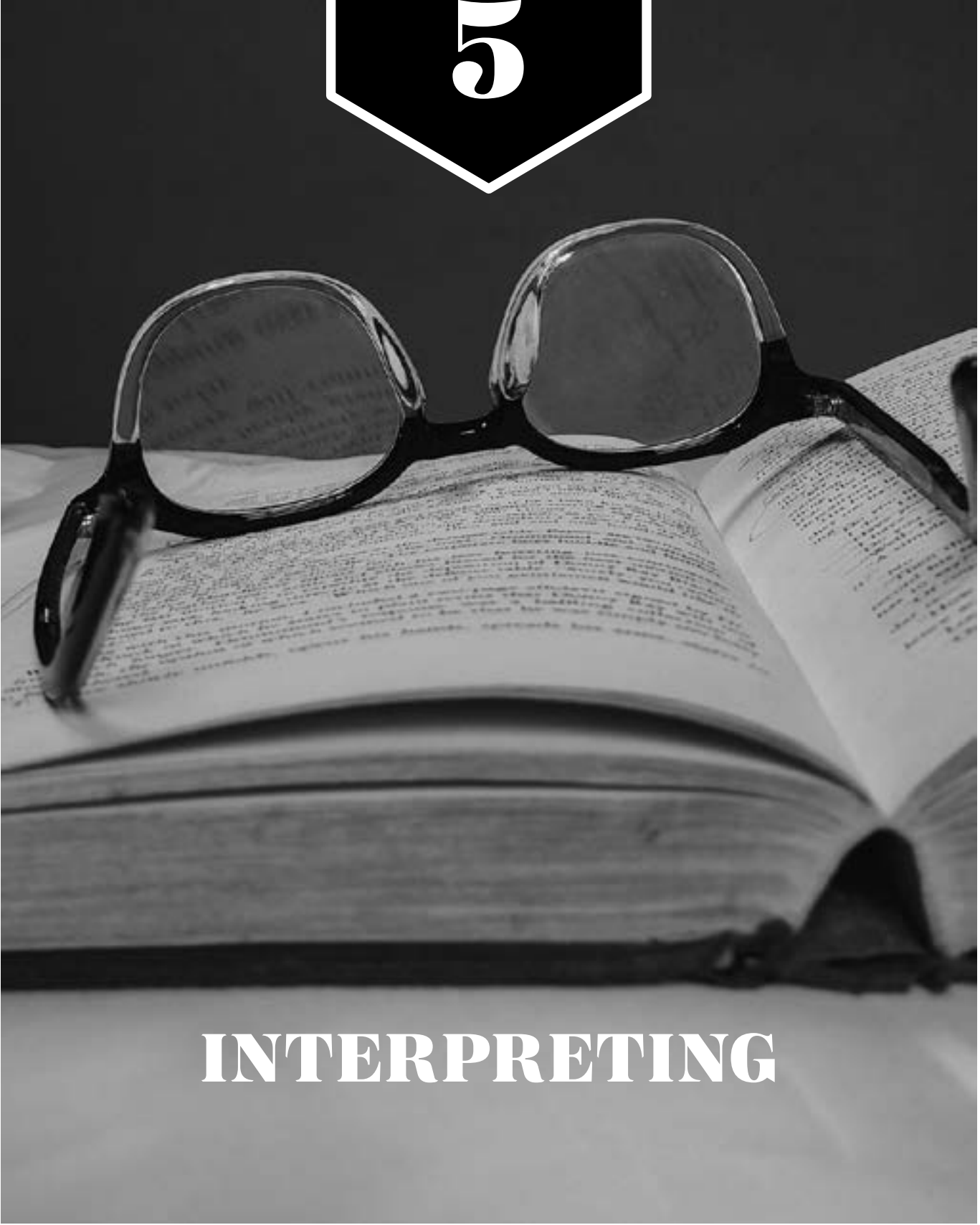
Begin by going through the questions on page 31 of this lesson. Not all of them will apply but this is a good place to start. I have listed some questions below to help you get going.

- What is the most important term in this verse?
- Who is the author?
- Who is the person that the author was addressing to?
- Who are these people the author was referring to?
- What is the main verb in this verse? And what tense is it?
- What are they going to receive?
- Is there a cause-effect relationship?
- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- Define the terms in this verse e.g. power, witness
- What is significant about the places mentioned?

List down all the observations you have made in your journal.

Share with your group the next time you meet.

PART 5

A black and white photograph of a pair of glasses resting on an open book. The glasses are positioned in the upper half of the frame, with their lenses reflecting light. The book is open, showing two pages of text. The background is dark and out of focus.

INTERPRETING

PART 5

INTERPRETING

The second major step to the Inductive Bible Study method is the step of Interpretation. Here you ask and answer the question, what does it mean?

What do we mean by interpretation? Timothy 3:16 says, “All scripture is profitable”. That is, every scripture has a meaning. The problem with people reading the Bible today is that they have interpreted scripture based on their own response to the text. And everyone is free to have his own response. Meaning becomes purely subjective.

If we are to interpret God’s Word accurately, we have to start with these fundamental premises: *what is the context of the passage and what was the author’s intent when he was writing the text?*

The scripture should be interpreted in the light of its context. We have to stand in the author’s shoes and ask, “*what did this mean to him?*”, before we ever ask, “*what does it mean to us?*”.

**Give me
understanding,
and I will keep your
law and obey it with
all my heart.**

- Psalm 119:34 (NIV)

Watch



Activity: What does it mean?

What do you think the following statement means? Write down your response below.

“It was a ball.”

Watch



Aids to interpretation

We have provided some helpful aids in the table below. These are secondary sources that can help you interpret the Bible.

We suggest you start with a good study Bible and a companion concordance (www.blueletterbible.org is an online Bible study resource that provides some basic tools, including a concordance.)

Then, if you can, get a good Bible dictionary, a Bible handbook, an atlas and a simple one-volume commentary. You will have a basic library to work with. You can add to it as time goes by.

As you build up these tools, beware of over-relying on secondhand information. The use of these secondary resources should never be a substitute for personal Bible study, but rather complementing it. The order is always the same; first the Word of God, then secondary resources.

Type of resources	Description	Use it to overcome...
Atlases e.g.: Holman Bible Atlas	Collections of maps showing places mentioned in the text, and perhaps some description of their history and significance	Geographic barriers
Bible dictionaries e.g.: Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary	Explain the origin, meaning and use of key words and terms in the text	Language barriers
Bible handbooks e.g.: Zondervan Handbook to the Bible	Present helpful information on subjects in the text	Cultural barriers
Commentaries	Present a biblical scholar's study of the text	Language, cultural and literary barriers
Interlinear texts e.g.: The Zondervan Greek and English Interlinear New Testament	Translations with the Greek or Hebrew text positioned in between the lines for comparison	Language barriers

(Source: Hendricks, Howard G. and William D. Hendricks. *Living By The Book*. Moody Publishers, 2007.)

Discuss

Since you have made observations of Acts 1:8 in the previous lesson, your observations will form the database from which you will construct the meaning of the text. Understand its context and the author's intent when you are interpreting the text. It will be helpful to use a study Bible and Bible aids like Bible dictionaries, atlases to give you further insight to the text. Write down your interpretation in the space below.

Review

- ◇ The scripture should be interpreted in the light of its context.
- ◇ There are Bible aids and resources to help you to interpret the text and overcome the barriers between us and the biblical writers.
- ◇ Understanding the author's intent is key in interpreting scripture.

Assignment

Read Mark 6:7-13 slowly. Apply what you have learned so far and interpret the text.

Step 1: Posture your heart

Pray and ask the Lord to quiet your heart and make you receptive to the truth that you will hear

Step 2: Understand the context

What is the background of the passage/book? Who is the author of the book? What are the circumstances surrounding the book?

Step 3: Make observations – Ask six investigative questions

1. Who are the main characters? What is said about the person/people? What does the person say?
2. What is happening in the text? What are the events? In what order? What happens to the characters? If it's a passage that argues a point: what is the point? What is the author trying to communicate? Another 'what' question is, what is wrong with the picture?
3. Where did the event take place? Where are the people in the story? Are you studying a journey, how many miles from one place to another? Is this place significant for other events?
4. When did the events take place? When was the writer writing?
5. Why do the events occur? Why is it placed here? Why does this person say that? 'Why' is a question that digs for meaning.
6. How do the events happen?

Also, pay attention to key words, connecting words, repetitions and contrasting ideas when making observations.

Assignment

Step 4: Determine the interpretation

- What does the text mean?
- What was the author's intent when he wrote the text?
- Apply the context principle when you are interpreting scriptures so that you will not take the verse out of context

Note: The application to this passage will be covered in the next lesson. Do not share your application for this assignment till the next lesson.

PART 6

APPLICATION

PART 6

APPLICATION

Many people focus on Interpretation to the point of missing the benefits of Observation and Application. But the better you get at Observation, the less Interpretation you need. And until you find the proper Application for your life, your interpretation is of little practical use.

**- “Living By The Book”
by Howard G. Hendricks & William D. Hendricks**

You have learned everything up to this point and done all the exercises. But unless you start to apply what you have learned, your Bible study is just an intellectual exercise. This is an important part of the inductive Bible study process. Ask yourself, “What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this text?” And, “What do I need to do as a result of hearing God through this text?”

The following 9 questions can help you glean relevant applications for the portion of the Bible you are studying.

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to claim?
4. Is there a prayer to repeat?
5. Is there a command to obey?
6. Is there a condition to meet?
7. Is there a verse to memorize?
8. Is there an error to mark?
9. Is there a challenge to face?

Watch





Discuss

You have done the observation and interpretation for Mark 6:7-13 in the previous lesson. Use the nine questions, what personal application have you drawn from this passage.

Putting it Together

Step 1: Posture your heart

Pray and ask the Lord to quiet your heart and make you receptive to the truth that you will hear.

Step 2: Understand the context

What is the background of the passage/book? Who is the author of the book? What are the circumstances surrounding the book?

Step 3: Make observations – Ask six investigative questions

1. Who are the main characters? What is said about the person/people? What does the person say?
2. What is happening in the text? What are the events? In what order? What happens to the characters? If it's a passage that argues a point: what is the point? What is the author trying to communicate? Another 'what' question is, what is wrong with the picture?
3. Where did the event take place? Where are the people in the story? Are you studying a journey, how many miles from one place to another? Is this place significant for other events?
4. When did the events take place? When was the writer writing?
5. Why do the events occur? Why is it placed here? Why does this person say that? 'Why' is a question that digs for meaning.
6. How do the events happen?

Also, pay attention to key words, connecting words, repetitions and contrasting ideas when making observations.

Step 4: Determine the interpretation

- What does the text mean?
- What was the author's intent when he wrote the text?
- Apply the context principle when you are interpreting scriptures so that you will not take the verse out of context

Step 5: Make application

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to me from this text?
- Make it personal
- Think through various contexts (home, work, family, friends, ministry)
- Make it specific
- Make it actionable

BIBLIOGRAPHY & RESOURCES

We would like to credit the following authors for their work in helping us study the Word of God. Much of the research that has gone into the writing of this curriculum was from these resources.

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