

OBSERVATION:**WHAT DO I SEE?**

Not all the questions will be relevant to every passage you study

Observation begins with reading the text carefully. Learn to read:

- Repeatedly - Many times over, perhaps in different translations
- Patiently - Take your time, do not go too fast or skim over details
- Prayerfully - Before, during and after
- Meditatively - Thinking about it quietly, its implications and treasures
- Purposefully - Look for structure and relationships between words
- Telescopically - Viewing the *parts* in light of the *whole*

Who is the author of the book?

- To whom is the book written?
- Who are the characters in the book?
- Who is speaking?
- To whom is he speaking?

What?

- What kind of literature is this? History? Poetry? Letter? Prophecy?
- What is the atmosphere of the book or passage? Friendly? Chastening? Loving?
- What is the author's general topic? What is he saying about his topic?
- What is the context (the circumstances that form the setting for the events seen in the text)?

- What are the key words? What do they mean?

When?

- When was the book written?
- When did this event happen in relation to other events?
- When was this prophecy fulfilled or has it been?
- “When” questions are important to ask especially in narrative literature such as the Gospels. This will help give you the “time” perspective.

Where?

- Where was the book written?
- Where were the recipients of the book living?
- Can you locate the places mentioned on a map?
- Where else does this topic appear in Scripture?

Why?

- Why was the book written?
- Why does he include this material and not other things?
- Why does the author give so much space to that topic and so little to another?

How?

- How many? How many times does the author use the same word in this book, chapter, passage, verse?
- How long?

- How much.?
- How does this relate to the preceding statement? To the succeeding statement?

Things to Look For

- Pay attention to the verbs (action words!)
- Relationships between words, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs
- Things that are emphasized
- Things that are repeated
- Things that are related and how
- Things that are alike (uses words like “as” or “like”)
- Things that are unlike/unusual (contrasting words such as “but”)
- Things that are true to life

INTERPRETATION:**WHAT IS THE AUTHOR SAYING TO THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE?**

What is fundamentally, eternally important in this passage?

Step 1- What is happening?

Read over your notes and think about what you have seen and observed in the text.

- A. What kind of literature is this (genre)?
- B. List main ideas, key words, themes you see.
- C. In a few sentences, sum up in your own words *what is happening* in the text.

Step 2- Why is this passage important?

- A. List attributes, characteristics of God you see in the text.
- B. Consider what God would want the original audience to know.
- C. Consider *why* God would want them to know this.

Step 3- Putting it all together!

- A. Using your thoughts from Steps 1 and 2, in a few sentences, state ***what*** you have observed and ***why*** God would want the original audience to know this.

HOW DO I APPLY THIS TO MY LIFE?

The Bible is not understood until it is obeyed.

Four Steps in Application

- **Know** Know the text and know yourself.
- **Relate** God's Word speaks into every area of our lives.
- **Meditate** Do not empty your mind, but fill it with God's Word.
- **Practice** Make a plan to change based on the grace and mercy found in Christ.

Questions to Ask

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid/confess?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a verse to memorize?

- Is there an error to avoid?
- Is there a challenge to face?
- Is there a principle to apply?
- Is there a habit to change - i.e. start or stop?
- Is there an attitude to correct?
- Is there a truth to believe?

Remember: Attempting to apply biblical truth outside of the grace of God found in Christ is moralism, and it is deadly. All change comes through faith in Christ.

