

FIRST STEP OBSERVATION

OBSERVING A PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE

“What makes one person a better Bible student than another? He can see more, that’s all. The same truth is available to both of them in the text”.

If you want to get more out of Bible study, it helps to know what you’re looking for. Use the following list of questions to help guide you in your search of Scripture. You probably won’t use every question for each passage you study, but at least they provide a good starting point. The more completely you can answer these questions, the better you will observe God’s truth, which then provides a strong foundation for interpretation and application.

- Who is the author of the passage?
- Whom is the author addressing? (God’s people? A specific church? 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?
- 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 relationship in the author’s writing?
- In what ways does the passage apply to your own personal life? (If there isn’t an obvious application, is there a more subtle one?)
- What things from this passage might you want to study later in further detail?

OBSERVATION

Ten Strategies to First-Rate Reading

- Read Thoughtfully
- Read Repeatedly
- Read Patiently
- Read Selectively
- Read Prayerfully
- Read Imaginatively
- Read Meditatively
- Read Purposefully
- Read Acquisitively
- Read Telescopically

Six Things to Look For

- Things That are Emphasized
 - Things That are Repeated
 - Things that are Related
 - Things that are Alike, & Unlike
 - Things That Are True to True Life
 - Getting the Big Picture
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- Summarize Your Observations

STEP 2

INTERPRETATION

STEP 2: INTERPRETATION

- The Value of Interpretation
- Handle with Care
- What Type of Literature Is This?

FIVE KEYS TO INTERPRETATION

- Content
- Context
- Comparison
- Culture
- Consultation

NINE QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- 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 mark?
- Is there a challenge to face?

STEP 3

APPLICATION

- The Critical Step of Application
- Truth That Transforms
- A Transformed People
- Four Steps of Application
- Customized Christianity
- Nine Questions to Ask
- Now and Then
- The Principle of the Thing
- A Process of Life-Change

TRUTH THAT TRANSFORMS

APPLICATION

- **COMING**
Using what you've learned in the previous sections about Observation and Interpretation, what do you find significant as you come to this passage?
- **CONVICTION**
During this second step, we search for any potential sins in order to deal with them. Though we may feel a sense of reproof and correction from portions of Scripture, the desired response is repentance in order to change and move forward. Does any portion of this passage promote a sense of conviction within you?
- **CONVINCING**
What positive motivations do you find in the Scriptures passage that convince you to lead a righteous life?
- **CONVERSION**
Conversion is not a one-time event, but a transformation that results in living differently as a result of exposure to God's truth. Does any portion of the passage cause you to want to begin to live differently?

FINAL STEPS TO APPLICATION

These are Four Steps to follow in learning to apply Scripture appropriately to your life.

Step 1. **KNOW**- We need to know the Scripture text and know ourselves

Step 2. **RELATE**- We must relate the Word of God to our own experience

Step 3. **MEDITATE**- We need to pay close attention to the Scriptures, even memorizing them so they will continue to work in our hearts and minds.

Step 4. **PRACTICE**- The practice of truth should be our primary goal of Bible Study

OBSERVATION A VERSE

James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ⁹ Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. ¹¹ For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. ¹² Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

**OBSERVATION:
WHAT DO YOU SEE?**

**INTERPRETATION:
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

**APPLICATION:
HOW DOES IT WORK?**
