

OBSERVATION

Dr. Greg Bourgond – Adapted from Multiple Sources

What does the Bible say?

In this first step of Bible study you are a detective. You are simply making an unemotional observation. Resist the temptation to 'jump' to application.

The basic idea of observation is awareness – it is training the eye to see and the mind to grasp what is there. (Emery, 1985)

You are seeking to answer the following questions.

What do I see? What are the clues? What are the facts?

TECHNIQUES

1. Five W's & H

- **Who** is involved?
 - Author
 - Major People
 - Who are the key people involved?
 - Who was the book (chapter, passage) written to?
- **What** is (are) the event(s)?
 - Summary Sentence
 - Key Words
 - What are the key events?
 - What are the key ideas?
 - What particular problems are addressed?
- **When** did it happen?
 - Times
 - Historical Background
 - When was it written?
 - What is the historical setting?
- **Where** does it take place?
 - Major Places
 - Locations
- **Why** did it happen?
 - General Significance

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- **How** did it transpire?
 - Personal Significance

2. What to Look For ...

- Things that are *emphasized* ...
- Things that are *repeated* ...
- Things that are *related* ...
- Things that are *alike* ...
- Things that are *unlike* ...
- Things that are *true to life* ...

3. Look for Relationships ...

- Comparisons and contrasts (i.e., but, like, etc.)
- Repetition (i.e., John 15:1-8)
- Connectives (i.e., therefore, if, because, and, or, then, etc.)
- Progression (i.e., progression of an idea – Eph 4:17-24; 2 Pet 1:5-7)
- Major Ideas (i.e., themes, etc.)
- Minor Ideas (i.e., sub-themes, etc.)
- Cause and Effect (i.e., if ... then)

OBSERVATION EXERCISES:

1. Genesis 3:1-7
2. Psalm 1:1-6
3. Psalm 15:1-5
4. Psalm 139:1-18
5. Matthew 4:1-11
6. Matthew 5:1-12
7. John 4:46-54
8. John 14:23-27; 16:5-15
9. John 15:1-8
10. Romans 1:1-18
11. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
12. Galatians 5:16-26
13. Ephesians 4:1-16
14. Ephesians 4:17-24
15. Philippians 2:5-11
16. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
17. Titus 2:11-14
18. Hebrews 4:12
19. James 2:14-26
20. 1 John 2:15-17