

Observation



Observation

Discovering what
the passage says.



Observation



Observation
is the 1st stage in studying the
Bible. Observation is the
active process of trying to
discover content and
context

CONTENT

CONTEXT

CONTEXT

NEXT WEEK!

CONTENT

THIS WEEK!

Observing the content
is the discipline of discovering
the structure & specifics of



what was said.

CONTENT

Discovering the **structure** of the writing includes (1) studying the words used, (2) the amount particular words were used, (3) the original language used and (4) the writing style & tone.

CONTENT

This process also requires gathering the **specifics** of the major themes, topics & persons mentioned within the passage. We are trying to find out as much as possible about the 'what' of the writing.

Steps for Discovering Content



- Get a Note Pad & Pen
- Print off the full passage.
 - Double spaced.
 - Make wide margins.
- Make space for header/footer.

Step 1

Read and Re-read the Book



The first step
is to **read through** the
book as many times as
you can in 1-3 days.

You should **read**
through it at least
twice. Though
3-4 times is ideal.



The goal is to read the passage **1-2 times** **without** making major observations, **without** asking questions or taking notes. The goal is simply to read the book with an open mind and clear perspective.

The goal is to read the passage **1-2 more times** while beginning to make **general observations** about trends you see, major themes discussed or questions you would like to answer down the road.

Step 2

Identify the Language & Style



The second step
is to discover the
original **language** and
observe the writing
style. Was this written
in Greek? Hebrew? Is it
Poetic? Biographical?
Historic? Prophetic?



The goal is to gain perspective and become aware of the overall structure & style of the book. If you have time, for one of your 'read throughs' you may want to read a word for word, literal direct translation in the **original language.**

If you choose to do this, I recommend visiting **BibleHub.com** where you can easily read the **Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic** for any passage. This also allows for an instant scroll over concordance, defining in detail the original meaning of any word in the passage.

Step 3

Identify the Obvious Names



The third step
is to identify the
‘major players’ in the
passage. Who is being
spoken about? Who is
mentioned the most?
What can/do we know
about them?



The goal is to gain perspective and familiarity with who the passage is primarily speaking about. We want to **identify every person/group of people** mentioned. Author. Recipients. All mentions of the Trinity. Others mentioned.

Uniquely mark each person or groups of people mentioned, including their pronouns.

***I, me, my, we, us, our,
you, they, them, their,
God, Father, Him, His,
Jesus, Son, Him, His***

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits^[a] of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

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Step 4

Identify the Obvious Events



The fourth step
is to identify the
'obvious events' or
'issues' in the passage.
What is happening?
What has occurred?
What is being
addressed?



The goal is to gain perspective and familiarity with the events surrounding the passage. We want to **identify each event or issue being discussed.**

Uniquely mark any references to an event or social issue.

***Chains, Hardships, Persecutions,
Imprisonment***

All refer to recent events of suffering and attack.

Step 5

Mark Key Words & Phrases



The fifth step
is to identify the
'key words' or **'unique**
phrases' in the
passage. What is
primarily being talked
about?



The goal is to gain perspective and familiarity with what the passage is specifically trying to address. We want to **identify each key word, topic or theme being discussed.**

The more a **word** or **topic** is repeated, the more likely that word represents an **important subject**. The more that **subject** is repeated, the more likely it is that **subject represents a major theme** within the book.

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Step 6

Mark Lists & Repetitions



The sixth step

is to identify any lists or groups of items that occur/appear. Identify any rhythm and items that are repeated or restated over and over.



Labeling lists include taking note of anything given in a group or sequence.

Dates, people, places, topics, doctrines, actions, events, attributes, commands etc.

Lists, groups or repetitions don't have to occur within the same verse or paragraph.

For instance, the days of creation are spread over 31 verses and 10 paragraphs but the account contains many lists (*days, created things*) and many repeated phrases (*was day/night...it was good*).

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control; against such things
there is no law.

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Step 7

Mark Comparisons/Contrasts



The seventh step
is to identify any
comparisons, contrasts,
illustrations, analogies
or word pictures made
within the passage.



Comparison is when two or more similar things are compared or listed side by side. The words “**like**” and “**as**” typically signal a comparison is about to occur.

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Contrasts is when two or more different things are compared or listed side by side.

The words “**but**” “**not**” and “**not like**” typically signal a comparison is about to occur.

6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Illustrations, analogies, parables and other **word pictures** are more detailed ways of comparing and contrasting. The Bible is full of this type of structure and when they occur they are very important to the meaning of the text.

14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.
What is your life? For you are a mist that appears
for a little time and then vanishes.

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?^[g] 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

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Step 8

Mark Unknowns & Questions



The eighth step
is to identify any
unknown words,
concepts, themes etc.
and to note any
questions that you have.



In this stage the goal is to take note of anything that you **do not understand** or need to look into further, in order to gain a better understanding.

This may include **words** that you do not understand, **arguments** that don't quite make sense as stated, **analogies** that you don't grasp, **themes/concepts** that are new to you and even **events/occasions/cultural issues** that you don't understand.

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Step 9

Answer Content Discovery Questions



The ninth step
is to seek to
answer the
standard content
discovery
questions.



Observation



Content discovery questions;
What was said? How was it said?
What words were used to say it?
What words appear the most?
What themes were repeated?

Step 10

Discern the Main Theme



The tenth step

is to try to determine what the main theme or goal trying to be communicated is...and to write it in a summary statement.



The goal is to summarize in a sentence or two the core theme of the passage. The goal is to pin point in a brief statement the main things that God is trying to communicate through this passage.

CONTEXT

NEXT WEEK!