

Week 5 Bible Study: Introduction to Observation, CONTEXT

Observation is **Discovering what the passage says**. **Observation** is the **1st stage** in studying the Bible. Observation is the active process of trying to *discover* _____ and _____. Observing the context is the discipline of discovering the _____ & _____ of what was said.

CONTEXT

First, discovering the overall context of a passage is where we try to _____ ourselves in the world and _____ in which the passage was originally written.

This process requires becoming familiar with the **setting** in which the text was written. We try to find out as much as possible about the '**who**', '**when**' and '**where**' of the writing.

Second, this process also requires becoming familiar with the **surroundings** in which the text was written. We try to find out as much as possible about what was happening in biblical and world history **before-during-after** this writing.

Finally, discovering the context includes putting all the pieces of content & context together to paint a _____ picture of what is being said and why. This includes understanding how each paragraph and chapter fits into the main theme/message of the book.

7 Steps for Discovering Context

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

1. Answer Context Discovery Questions

The first step is to answer very important context discovery questions in order to gain a basic understanding of the setting in which the passage was written.

Context discovery questions; *Who said it? When was it said? Who was it said to? Why was it said? What was happening before it was said? What happened after it was said? When did this event/writing take place? Where was the writer located? Where were the recipients located? Why did this need to be written? What are major cultural considerations we must make?*

2. Outline the Book

The second step is to outline the entire book/passage...and divide the book by chapter and paragraph numerically. The goal is to gain perspective of the **structure** and **flow** of the book and to understand how each chapter and paragraph plays its own important **role** in developing the overall message.

Chapter 1

Paragraph 1: Verses 1-6

Paragraph 2: Verses 7-11

Paragraph 3: Verses 12-21

Chapter 2

Paragraph 1: Verses 1-8

Paragraphs should be broken by thought pattern and theme, not necessarily by the translators numerical or prearranged breaks.

3. Summarize the Book

The third step is to summarize the entire theme/point of the book into 3-4 sentences (a basic paragraph). The goal is to write an initial summary statement for the entire book.

SAMPLE: Summary of Ephesians: Ephesians is Paul's letter to the believers in Ephesus. Paul reminds the believers that they are now God's holy community, and they have gained this **great position** by His gift of grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul urges them that this holy community of believers should now **walk in accordance** with their heavenly position.

4. Summarize each Chapter

The fourth step is to summarize each chapter within the book in 1-3 sentences. The goal is to write an initial **summary statement** for each chapter within the book. The objective is to keep it simple and basic, by trying to encapsulate **the single major concept of** the book and subsequent chapters.

SAMPLE: Chapter 1 Summary The believer has a incredible **position in Christ**. We have been adopted into the family of God, we have been chosen, forgiven and redeemed. We have been marked with a seal and given the Holy Spirit as a down payment of our inheritance.

5. Summarize each Paragraph

The fifth step is to summarize each paragraph within the chapters in 1-2 sentences. The goal is to write a brief **summary statement** each paragraph within each chapter. Again, the objective is to keep it simple and basic, by focusing on **the single major concept of** the paragraph, especially as it relates to the major concepts in the chapter and book.

Chapter 1: Summary

Paragraph 1: Summary

Paragraph 2: Summary

Chapter 2: Summary

Paragraph 1: Summary

SAMPLE: Paragraph 1: God deserves incredible praise and honor for the grace that he poured on us through Christ.

SAMPLE: Paragraph 2: Through believing the Gospel, believers have been given an incredible position and inheritance, both which are guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

6. Identify Chapter Theme(s)

The sixth step is to identify the main theme of each chapter. The goal is to narrow the focus even more, by **identifying the singular main thrust** of each chapter. It is important to remember the chapter summaries and the subjects within those chapters to identify the main theme...as well as the book summary. Chapter themes should hold up, point to and support the book summary.

SAMPLE: Chapter 1: The believer's great position in Christ.

7. Identify Paragraph Theme(s)

The seventh step is to identify the main theme of each paragraph. Similarly, the goal is to narrow the focus even more, by identifying the singular main thrust of each paragraph. It is important to remember the chapter summary and the subjects within those chapters to identify the main theme of each paragraph. Again, paragraph themes should hold up, point to and support the specific chapter summary.

SAMPLE: Paragraph 1: Theme: The **glory due God** because of his grace.

SAMPLE: Paragraph 2: Theme: The **incredible position** given to believers.

NEXT WEEK: Applying observation skills to Ephesians 4.