

## Living by the Book--Observing the text: What Do I See? (Psalm 119:18)

- If our goal as believers is to please our Savior and Lord by becoming like Him (Rom. 8:29), then we must learn how to accurately understand the book God wrote that tells us how to live.
- Studying the Bible has three important parts to it: Observation, Interpretation, and Application and before you can comprehend it, you must first observe it by reading what it says.
- Observation is simply being observant noticing the obvious truths in the text. It is not trying to figure out what it means or thinking how it applies to your life. It is just seeing what is there.
- There are two major observations that need to be made

### ① Observe your heart properly (selected Scriptures)

- Before you look at the Scriptures, you need to look at the readiness of your own heart. Jesus noticed that the most Scripture-informed people in his day (Pharisees, Sadducees) did not understand the Scriptures correctly. Five times He pointedly asked them "Have you not read..." (Matt 12:2-7; 19:1-2; 21:15-16; 21:42; 22:31)
- There are six heart postures to consider:
  1. Come to the Bible with a prayerful heart (Psalm 119:18, 36)
  2. Come to the Bible with a humble heart (Deut. 32:47, Isa. 66:2).
  3. Come to the Bible with a joyful heart (Jer. 15:16; Psalm 119:24)
  4. Come to the Bible with an expectant heart (Rom. 15:4).
  5. Come to the Bible with a dependent heart (1 Cor. 2:10-14)
  6. Come to the Bible with a Christ-centered heart (John 5:39)

### ② Observe the Scriptures perceptively (selected Scriptures)

- It's easy to miss the obvious things in life when you're not focused or concentrating or are too familiar with the usual.
- Utilize the three R's of observation (read, record, and research)

#### 1. Read and re-read the text

- Don't be a browser, distracted or passive reader
- Isaiah 28:9-10 reminds us that repetition is needed as we grow from infant to adults
- Read the New Testament repetitiously (pick a book and read 4-7 chapters a day for 15 days and cement God's Word in your mind)
- Read the Old Testament straight through and look for the major themes (the truth about God, sin, obedience & blessing, the coming Messiah/Savior, God's future kingdom)
- Read from different translations

#### 2. Record your observations (see pages 11, 14, 38 for some help and resources in your booklet)

- Look for answers to **key questions** (who, what, where, when, why, how)
- Look for **key terms** (words) that are used, repeated words, connecting words (and, if), cause & effect words (therefore, so, then, for, as a result, because), action words (verbs, commands), prepositional words (by, from, with, in, upon, through, across, against, at, etc.), unfamiliar words, modifying words (adjectives, adverbs), contrasting words, (but, yet), comparison words (like, as, to. Also, similes, metaphors).
- Look at the **literary structure** (the subject, verb, object of a sentence, biographical (key people), geographical (locations), historical (times, progressions), ideological (ideas, concepts like sin, law, faith, grace, eternal life, justification, sanctification, glorification, kingdom, etc.)

- Look at **literary forms**: genres like historical narrative (Gen-Esther, Jonah, Acts), prophecy (Isa; Jer; Ezek; Dan; and 11 minor prophets), poetry (Psalms, Song of Sol., Lam}, wisdom (Job, Prov., Ecc), gospels (Matt-John), epistles (21: 1 Cor-Jude), apocalyptic (Daniel, Revelation)
3. **Research list** (Look over your observations and choose some key words, phrases, characters, promises, commands, warnings, contrasts, questions, etc. to examine closer when you begin step two of the interpretive process.