

Inductive Bible Study Pt.2



Basics of Observation

Observation

Observation describes the act of ¹taking notice, ²focusing or concentrating the mind upon something.

Prerequisites for Productive Inductive Bible Study

1. *Slow down*
2. *Carefully observe what the passage is literally saying unbiased by prior knowledge or experience*
3. *Begin with prayer: Begin with and maintain an attitude of prayer. Go to the Author of the Book before you go to the book.*

EPHESIANS 1:18-19

18 *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

19 *and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might*

PSALM 119:18

18 *Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.*

LUKE 24:34

45 *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*

The word “understand” describes the assembling of individual facts into an organized whole, as collecting the pieces of a puzzle and putting them together.

Establish the Context

Most misinterpretation (and subsequent misapplication) of Scripture is the result of taking the text out of its proper context. So the first step in the IBS method is to carefully observe the passage to establish the context. When we get an overview of the sections, chapters and entire book, it will help us discover the overall context.

CONTEXT: *the words, phrases, or passages that come before and after a particular word or passage in a speech or piece of writing and help to explain its full meaning*

CONTEXT INCLUDES:

- *The verses immediately before and after the passage*
- *The entire paragraph*
- *The book in which the passage appears*
- *Other books by the author*
- *The overall message of the entire Bible*

Establishing context forces us to examine the writer’s overall flow of thought. The meaning of any passage is nearly always established by what appears immediately before and after in the text.

Basic Principles for Determining Context

Context is established by carefully reading, re-reading and observing the text for **repeated facts and truths**. As special attention is given to repeated words, phrases, or ideas, the context will begin to emerge.

Jigsaw puzzle: Which pieces do we try to find first? The corner pieces! The next most obvious pieces are those with straight edges. This is exactly how we should study of a book of the Bible. Once we have connected all these puzzle pieces together, we have a framework or “context” in which to place the less obvious pieces of the puzzle.

Focus On the Obvious

Three things that are the most obvious and easiest to see are **people, places** and **events**. Our goal to establish the context and we do this by **observing and marking the most obvious facts**.

Observe Key Words and Key Phrases

Key words or phrases are like keys to help us “unlock” the meaning of a passage, a paragraph, a chapter or a book.

KEY WORDS – KEY PHRASES	WHAT DO I DO?
Are generally identified by the fact that they are often repeated	Read the text taking special note of those words or phrases which the author uses repeatedly. Note: not every repeated word or phrase is key.
Are vital to the understanding of the text and cannot be removed without leaving the passage devoid of meaning.	Applying the “rule of removal” helps determine whether a repeated word is truly a key word. If it can be removed it from the text, it is not a key word and is not crucial to the overall meaning of that passage, chapter or book.
May include pronouns, synonyms, closely related phrases	The author may use synonymous words or phrases in place of the more obvious key words or phrases. These synonyms may be more difficult to identify, particularly in the initial reading of a passage.
May be in a paragraph, a chapter or throughout the entire book	For example you may identify a key word/phrase in one chapter which may not be found anywhere else in the book. In that case it is key for that chapter and serves to help understand the main point of the chapter. Another chapter will have a different key because the main point is different. Does that make sense?
Always answer one or more of the 5W’s and H type questions.	Always pause and ask as many of the 5W’s and H questions as common sense and context allow. The skill of interrogation takes some practice to develop.
Should be marked in a unique way using colors and/or symbols.	Take the time to color and/or mark key words with a symbol. This visual aid will help in seeing the relationship of the key words and phrases as a whole within the section.
Often form the basis for compiling list.	In the margin of the Bible or an observation worksheet, make a list of the truths gleaned by marking and interrogating the key words or phrases.

After several readings of a section focusing on author, recipient, key words and key phrases, you should begin to understand what the main subject(s) are, which in turn will reveal the theme of the chapter or book you are observing.

Key Words/Phrases Main Subjects and Theme

Identifying key words and phrases will help us establish the context, overall theme, and author's specific purpose in writing the book. Each key word or phrase should be marked as well as well as interrogated with the "5W's and H" questions.

Mark Key Words

Marking helps us make the Scriptures our own because it helps us remember the text. As a general rule we recall 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear and 50% of what we read, hear and see.

Mark "key words" in a distinctive way, using symbols and color. If symbols are used, it is advisable to use them consistently throughout to facilitate quick recognition.

Don't forget to mark synonyms of the key word/phrase (*words that have the same meaning as other words within a particular context and that are used in place of the word*).

Interrogate Scripture Using the "5 W & H" Types of Questions

Asking the questions of the text trains us to read with an interrogative mindset. As we encounter each "key word" we should pause and interrogate the word or phrase asking... *Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?*

THE "5 W AND H" QUESTIONS

- *Who is speaking?*
- *Who is this about?*
- *Who are the main characters?*
- *To whom is this written?*
- *What is the subject or event covered in the chapter?*
- *What instructions are given?*
- *What does this tell us about the people or event?*
- *Where was it said?*
- *Why is this mentioned?*
- *Why did it happen?*
- *Why now?*
- *Why this person?*
- *How will it happen?*
- *How is it to be done?*
- *How is it illustrated?*