



Life Practices

Lesson #1 Learning the Word of God -Observation

I. Introduction

II. The Bible is an amazing book and worthy of our study

Inspiration: This incredibly book did not come from the minds of men, it came from God. See II Peter 1:21 and II Tim. 3:16.

Structure: It is an anthology of 66 books organized into the Old and New Testaments (covenants, or agreements).

OT: The Law (5 books), History (12 books), Poetry (5 books), Major Prophets (5), Minor Prophets (12).

NT: The Gospels (4), History (1), Epistles or Letters: from Paul (14), from James (1), from Peter (2), from John (3), from Jude (1) and the book of Revelation (by John).

Languages: OT was written in Hebrew with just 268 verses in little Aramaic (see Daniel 2:4b-7:28, Ezra 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26 and Jer. 10:11). NT was written in Greek with a few Aramaic phrases used (example: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"- Matt. 27:46)

Time frame: Written over 1400 years, from three different continents

Authors: By 40 authors (farmers, fishermen, priests, prophets, kings, a doctor and a tax collector)

Unique:

1. In its preservation: OT: scrolls from the caves at Qumran (1947-1957) contain some 1,100 documents, 100,000 fragments, the entire book of Isaiah, and every OT book except Esther. These scrolls are dated between the 1st and 2nd centuries BC. We can compare these scrolls to copies of the Masoretic OT (dated 935 AD). Scholars tell us that they are nearly identical.

Almost 6000 manuscripts of the NT exist today. Another 86,000 quotes of the NT can be found in the early writings of church leaders. The Bible in our laps is a remarkable match to the scriptures penned by the original NT authors.



2. With its candor: Notice how the scripture includes the “good, the bad and the ugly.” God wanted us to have an accurate view of the complexities of normal living and how He wants to walk through those experiences with us.

III. Before we begin:

A. Remember the importance of prayer This is a conversation. You talk to the Lord in prayer. He talks to you through your study of His word.

B. Learning the Word of God is a three-step process: _____, _____ and _____. In other words: what does it say; what does it mean and what does that mean to me?

IV. Step #1: Observation (Learn to Read for Understanding)

A. Read prayerfully, repeatedly, and slowly:

Practice: Read Rom. 12:1

1st reading observations:

2nd reading observations:

3rd reading observations:

Watch for (and mark) _____, _____, and _____.

B. Read shorter sections of scripture: give yourself time to meditate on what you read.

Practice: John 11:35

What kinds of things are implied in this short verse? _____

C. Read with a pen in hand:



Write in your Bible (wide-margined Bibles, Bibles to draw in) use a notebook, personal worksheets (copy pages of scripture) and/or record your thoughts on a device.

D. Watch for cause and effects:

Notice the term “then” in Isa. 58: 8, 9, 10, 14.

Notice the transition word _____ in Rom. 2:1, 5:1, 8:1, 12:1

V. Observation (Learn to Look for specific things)

A. Who: Names, People Groups

Take a look at Nehemiah 1:1-4:

Who is involved in the beginning of this story? _____

B. Where: Locations, Descriptions

Take a look at Acts 1:8:

Where should we be witnesses? _____, _____,
_____, and _____.

C. What: Events, Activities

Take a look at Isa. 6:1-5

What is happening? _____

D. When: Any Indication of Time Frame

Take another look at: Isa. 6:1:

When did this story occur? _____

E. Things Repeated, Things Emphasized, Things Related

1. Look for comparisons (“like” or “as”)

Example: “The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed ...” Matt. 13:31

2. Look for contrasts (“but” or “however”)

Example: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love...” II Tim. 1:7

3. Look for conclusions (“therefore”)

Example: “Therefore do not be ashamed...” II Tim. 1:8

Practice: Take a look at: Ps. 119:1-8



Note the terms David used for the Bible: _____, _____, _____,
 _____, _____.

VI. Observation: Learn to Summarize and develop “at a Glance” Charts

For an example, let’s look at Matt. 13:1-23

Soils	Description	Growth	Hindrances	Results
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

VII. Discussion Questions:

- Why is the Bible worthy of our study?
- Discuss the importance of prayer as a part of our studying the bible.
- What is the key element in developing good observation skills?
- Why is it important to read with a pen in your hand?
- How can things like charts help our study?
- Please share what works best for you.

VIII. Recommended Resources

- **Living by the Book* by Howard Hendricks
- **Can You Trust the Bible* by Harold Sala
- **How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* by Fee and Stuart
- **How to Study the Bible for Yourself* by Tim LaHaye
- **How to Study Your Bible* by Kay Arthur

IX. For the Overachievers Among Us:

- Memorize:** II Tim. 3:15-16
- Read and reread:** The book of Haggai
- Make a Chart:** Haggai spoke four times. Outline each message (Use headers like: When, Setting, Theme/Message, Response)



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