

Session Three

I. INTRODUCTION

In this session let's consider another technique that will unveil still more of God's mind and heart to us...as revealed through His living Word. Using our jigsaw puzzle metaphor, it would be akin to turning all the pieces right-side up so we can see the many possibilities of the developing picture. Note, however, that the tool being introduced can be used from day one with the book survey.

II. THE MANUSCRIPT SURVEY:

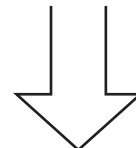
Yes, this is another survey of the book. BUT, it gets you more into the fine details of the text. This survey can be done at a book level for smaller books but will later be most beneficial when engaging a chapter or paragraph. This survey utilizes the OBSERVATION skills you learned in Personal Bible Study (First Hand Joy). Here, you move beyond reading to observing; beyond seeing to, yes, OBSERVING.

The Manuscript survey is central to every part of Personal Bible Study II, because the Biblical text is central to Bible study. That may sound obvious, but too often Bible students do not allow the text to speak for itself.

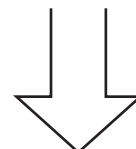
For increased effectiveness, the formatting of the text is important. Fortunately, with the aid of computers and online Bible sites, we can quickly format a scripture text that will assist us in our own manuscript observations.



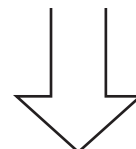
YOUR BIBLE



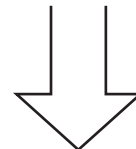
"GOD BREATHED"



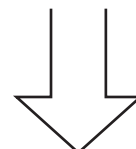
GOD SPEAKS



THROUGH HIS WORD



DIRECTLY TO YOU



THEN YOU ARE
EQUIPPED TO STUDY
OTHER RESOURCES

—PRECEPTAUSTIN.ORG

Observation

ASK THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

IDENTIFY KEY WORDS:

- Repeated words
- Theological concepts
- Emotional or strong words

CREEP:

- Commands
- Rebukes
- Exhortations
- Exaggeration
- Promises

CONNECTIONS:

- Cause-Effect
- Comparisons
- Contrasts
- Lists
- Connective or linking words

A. Formatting Steps

1. Select your preferred translation (not a paraphrase)
2. Consider the following manuscript guidelines

GUIDELINE:

1. Unbound, front side only

COMMENT:

This manuscript will become the depository of much of your work of observation, beginning with your first survey reading. Continued study, with this format, will allow you to see relationships between words and, most importantly, relationships between paragraphs (units of thought). You can begin to see the flow of the author's argument (epistles), or his message (narratives). Unbound, front-sided sheets will allow you to spread out entire books or sections of a book for comparison of sub-themes.

GUIDELINE:

2. Double-spaced with wide margins

COMMENT:

These two features will give you "elbow room" in the text. You will have room to make comments both above and below a line of text, or for longer questions and observations, margins of about 1.5" will be helpful. Titles for each paragraph can be recorded in the left-hand margin, providing a starting point for later outlining.

GUIDELINE:

3. Remove headings and notes

COMMENT:

All chapter and paragraph headings found in a Biblical text have been placed there by the publisher. This is the editor's ideas about divisions and topics. You will want to remove all such distractions. While helpful later, at this stage you want to keep your own fresh and pure eyes on the text.

GUIDELINE:

4. Title each sheet as you progress

COMMENT:

Provide enough "header" space to note the book being studied. Also, at appropriate points you will want to provide space for a chapter and/or section title. For smaller units being studied, be careful to note the passage reference. A one-inch top margin will be ample for each type of study.

"Never let good books take the place of the Bible. Drink from the well not from the streams that flow from the well."

—AMY CARMICHAEL

Observation

Ask the Fundamental Questions:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

Identify Key words:

- Repeated words
- Theological concepts
- Emotional or strong words

CREEP:

- Commands
- Rebukes
- Exhortations
- Exaggeration
- Promises

Connections:

- Cause-Effect
- Comparisons
- Contrasts
- Lists
- Connective or linking words

GENERAL COMMENT:

Some inductive Bible study purist would also have you remove all chapter and verse references. However, for purposes of accessibility and communication of the text, we would suggest that the chapter and verse references be maintained. In some translations this would also include paragraph indicators. Remember, these aforementioned items are not part of the inspired text. If different, your own conclusions about these divisions should be carefully considered. More stringent guidelines can be found in *The Bible Study Handbook*, p. 183, Lindsay Olesberg.

III. WORKSHOP

Now it's your turn. Let's practice with a type of manuscript survey. Use text on page 24 and 26.

“I study my Bible
as I gather apples.
First I shake the
whole tree that
the ripest may fall.
Then I shake each
limb, and when I
have shaken each
limb I shake each
branch and every
twig. Then I look
under every leaf.”

—MARTIN LUTHER

Workshop/Workspace