

Ephesians

Lesson #2, Chapter 1 Observation

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study, yet can often be overlooked or rushed through. Observation begins with reading through the chapter and then reading and rereading it again and again! At this stage in the Bible study you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later, I promise. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 1 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

How to Do a Chapter Observation

1. Begin with prayer. Ask God to show you how His word fits together. Ask Him to reveal the gems of His word. Pray for a clear mind and a patient heart as you look at His word for this lesson.
2. Read straight through the chapter using the Ephesians Bible Text handout in this lesson. This will show you the flow of the chapter.
3. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 1. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-2).
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 3-14).
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 15-23).

4. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: What is the main point of this chapter? How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

5. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

6. On the *Ephesians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

Mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

Just so you know: Ephesians Chapter 1 is notorious!

Notoriously difficult, that is, to identify whether the pronouns, He, Him, or His, refer to God the Father or to Jesus Christ. There are a few within this chapter that will take all your observational skills to identify, and even then, you might still feel unsure of your choice. It appears that Paul bypasses some of the usual grammar rules as he delights in the wonders of God's good plan. Don't give up! Look at Chapter 1 like you would in trying to find a certain puzzle piece. The piece is there, even if you don't see it yet. Keep looking and working on it, and as you seek the Lord, He will give you precious insights into His Word.

7. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in Ephesians chapter 1. Your chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

- Vs. 1 – by the will of *God*
- Vs. 2 – grace to you and peace from *God*
- Vs. 2 – *God* our *Father*

Vs. 3 – Blessed be the *God* and Father

Vs. 4 – just as *He* chose us

8. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter and any actions that are required of the reader.
9. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
10. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted.
11. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
12. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)
13. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
14. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *God* and *Father* from 1:1.
15. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person. For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is loving [because He loved the world]; He is giving [because He gave His Son]; He is eternal [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].
16. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action. For example, in Ephesians 1:1 *we find a list about those to whom Paul is writing. We discover 1) they are called saints; 2) they live in Ephesus; 3) they are faithful; and 4) they are in Christ.*
17. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in each chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life at this time. Your task at this time is to look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter. Have fun digging into God’s word!

Ephesians Bible Text
Chapter 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

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

20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.