

## Philippians

### Lesson #14, Chapter 4 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 that all too often can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what is in the text. 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 4 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.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 4. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 4. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (3:17-4:1).<sup>2</sup>
  - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 2-3).
  - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 4-7).

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<sup>1</sup> The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

<sup>2</sup> Most commentary writers connect Philippians 4:1 with Paul's comments at the end of Chapter 3. Though verse 1 does also provide a transitional bridge into the contents of Chapter 4.

- d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 8-9).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 10-14).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - f. Summarize paragraph 6 (verses 15-20).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - g. Summarize paragraph 7 (verses 21-23).
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2. SUMMARIZE. 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.
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3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your three to five word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.
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4. MARK. On the *Philippians Bible Text* handout mark key words. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. Start with these first. Then 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.

You can 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.

5. LIST. 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 Philippians Chapter 1. Your Chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below. Verse 2: grace to you and peace from *God*; verse 2: *God* our *Father*; verse 3: I thank *God* when I [Paul] remember you [Philippians].

6. MARK. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be.
7. LIST. Now, list the commands on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.
8. MARK. 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.
9. LIST. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.
10. MARK. 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.)
11. MARK. Mark any time *so that* is used.

12. LIST. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!
  
13. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
  
14. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.
  
15. LIST. 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. LIST. 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 Philippians 1:1 *we find a list about Paul’s thankful heart*. We discover 1) he’s thankful when he remembers the Philippians; 2) he’s shows his thankfulness by praying for them; 3) his thankfulness spills over into prayers with joy for them; 4) he’s thankful when he remembers how they participated in the gospel from the very beginning until now.
  
17. NOTE. 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!

## **Philippians Chapter 4**

1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.