

Observation - What does it say?

Take the time to really look at the passage-do not jump the gun and go to interpretation or application too soon, however tempting that may be. The longer the soup cooks, the better it will be. Make as many observations as you can. If you are alone, write them down. This will help sharpen your thoughts and you will remember it longer. Try to stick with the passage instead of dragging in your favorite doctrine, commentator or preacher at this point. Remember, **ALWAYS** read 2 verses before and 2 verses after in order to keep the verse in question in its **CONTEXT**.

Just look at the passage and ask the Who / What / When / Where?

Who?

Who is this about? And what can we know of them from the text and/or related context?

- Who is **speaking** to whom?

And/or

- Who is being **written of** or spoken about?

And/or

- Who is **writing** to whom?

What?

What is this about?

- What is the passage about? (topic / subject)
- “What is it saying about that?” (theme / complement)

Sometimes listing all the action verbs can be helpful.

When?

When is this happening?

- Do I see anything in the text or related context about **timing** or **sequence** or the **occasion** or **situation**?

Is time important?

- What events happen in what order?
- How long do they take?
- How far apart are they in time?
- How do they relate to the timing of other events?

Where?

Where is this happening?

Do I see anything in the text or related context about **location**, **geography**, **position**, or **placement**?

- What places are mentioned?
- How far apart are they?
- How are they related?
- What happens in each place?
- Who is where when why how?

Use some S.A.L.T.

• Structure

How did the author organize his thoughts?

Diagram short verses for sentence structure

Outline long passages (Summarize the paragraph)

Are there commands stated?

Are there promises?

Are there conditions involved?

Are the promises positive or negative?

• Atmosphere

What is the mood, tone, or 'feel' of the passage?

• Literature

What literary form is this passage (narrative, history, biography, a letter, instruction, exhortation,

doctrine, poetry, proverb, or dialogue)?

- **Terms**

What significant words need to be defined using an English Dictionary?

What is the key phrase or verse?

What is to be taken literally?

What is to be taken figuratively?

What figures of speech are used?

Other questions to ask

- How does it tie into the previous passage?
- How is it built?
- What is repeated?
- Are there contrasts?
- Are there comparisons?
- Are there causes and effects stated?
- How do things happen?
- What causes what?
- What is not caused?
- What is not affected?
- Is there a pattern of some kind?