

GOD, ARE YOU THERE?

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Week 1:

The Revealing “5 W’s and an H” of Bible Study

Day One

1. At the end of this book you will find all of the Gospel of John printed out in a form called **Observation Worksheets**. This is the Bible text printed with space left beside it so you can make notes. This space is called the *margin*.

When you study the Bible inductively, you *observe* the passage you are studying. To observe something is to look at it very closely to see everything there is to see.

When you observe something carefully you see

- a. what the whole thing looks like
- b. what the different parts of it are like
- c. how the parts relate to one another

A good way to observe a chapter of the Bible is to ask the **5 W’S and an H**: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW.

For instance, when you read a chapter in John you should ask questions like these:

1. WHO is this chapter about or WHAT is this chapter about?

It may be about a person—that's WHO.

OR

It may be about an event or some special subject—that's WHAT.

2. WHAT do I learn from this chapter about the person, event, or subject?
3. WHEN is this happening, or WHEN *will* it happen?
4. WHERE is this taking place, or WHERE *will* it take place?
5. WHY was this said? WHY was this mentioned? WHY did this person do this? WHY did this happen? WHY will this happen?
6. HOW was it done? HOW did it happen? Or, HOW *will* it happen?

You may not find answers to each of the 5 W's and an H in every text you study because they are not always there. When you observe the Word of God, you only need to see what God says. You do not need to read things into what He says—nor should you. If He wants you to know something, He will make it plain to you. He wants you to know truth and understand it.

He will tell you everything you need to know. You don't need to add anything to God's Word. As you carefully observe what He says, you will see truth and you will come to know Him as He really is.

You observe the text to discover what it says—that is **observation**.

In the process of observation, you'll discover what it means—that is **interpretation**.

Then, once you know what God says and what He means, you live in the light of it—that is **application**.

2. Turn to the Observation Worksheet for John 1 on page 151 of the appendix. (The appendix is the section at the back of the book, following Week 13, which contains extra materials you will need to do your study.)

Read through chapter 1 one time to see what it is about. (Remember to pray before you begin, asking God to help you.) When you finish, go to number 3.

3. What two people does this chapter talk about the most? Who are the main characters besides God? List them below.

a.

b.

That is enough for today. Tomorrow we’ll start marking key words. You will be excited about what you learn. By the way, I’m so proud of you for making the effort to see truth for yourself. You will never regret it. God is going to open a whole new world to you, and you are going to be so grateful to Him.

Day Two

When you read a chapter of the Bible, you will find that certain important words are repeated a number of times. These are what we call **key words**. Like a key, they unlock the meaning of the Bible text.

You should mark each key word in a distinctive way so that you can spot it easily. Once you decide how to mark a key word, mark it in the same way each time it appears. You can use a color (which is best), a symbol, or a combination of the two to mark a key word.

For instance, I always color the word *believe* blue. I color the word *life* blue too, but I also use a symbol with this word—I put a

box around it in green to distinguish it from *believe*. When I mark the word *devil* I just use a symbol—I use a pitchfork!

It will be helpful to list the key words which appear throughout the book you are studying on a piece of paper or a 3 x 5 card so you can use this as a bookmark. Then mark each word on the bookmark as you plan to mark it in the Gospel of John. You can use your bookmark as you go from chapter to chapter each week to remind you of how you are marking your words. I will tell you as we work through each week which words to add to your list, and even though they are on your bookmark I will remind you to continue to mark them as we go. (You won't always want to add every key word you mark because some key words are only in a particular chapter and you won't mark them after you finish your work in that chapter.)

1. Today you are going to read through John 1:1-18. As you read, you need to mark every occurrence of the key word *Word*. If you have colored pencils, you might color *Word* yellow each time it appears. If you do not have colored pencils, draw a diagram of an open book over it:

In the beginning was the *Word*, and...

2. Now read through John 1:1-18 again. This time you need to look for pronouns that refer to the key word. A **pronoun** is a word that takes the place of a noun. (Pronouns are words like *I, me, my, he, she, it, we, us, they, theirs*, and so on.) In John 1:1-18, these will be words such as *He, His, Him* which are used in the place of *Word* but refer to it. Color or mark these the same way you colored or marked the key word. Make sure the pronouns you mark refer to *Word* and not to someone else. I'll give you a clue! When you read the Bible text on your Observation Worksheet, you will

begin to notice that all pronouns that refer to God the Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit will begin with a capital letter.

3. Now that you have marked every occurrence of this key word in John 1:1-18 and every occurrence of the pronouns that refer to it, you need to mark any synonyms that refer to *Word*.

A **synonym** is a word that has the same meaning as another word or a word that refers to the same person, place, or thing. For instance, the words *God*, *Father*, and *Almighty* are all synonyms because they refer to the same person.

4. Now, lets do it. Watch for and mark the synonym(s) used in John 1:1-18 which refer to the *Word: life, light, and only begotten from the Father*.

Are you worried, my friend, that you are not getting the right answers? Don’t worry! You are going to see truth for yourself. You are off to such a good start, and I am so proud of you. Remember, those who succeed are those who determine to keep on keeping on until they learn. I always tell my students, “Hangeth, thou, in there!”

By the way, the first week’s lesson is a little long, but it’s because chapter 1 is so long! Don’t give up, though, because each week gets easier. Also, as you work through the weeks, you gain understanding and that makes it easier! Press on! Don’t quit!

Day Three

1. After you mark the key words, make a list of what you observed from marking these words. (I’ll show you how to do this a little bit later—so keep reading.) You can make your list in the margin of your Observation Worksheet. Or you can make a list on a piece of paper first and then copy it in the margin of your worksheet when you are happy with it.

Your assignment for today is to make a list of what you learn about the key word *Word*. So look at each place where you have marked *Word* or its pronouns and synonyms in John 1:1-18 and list what you learn from observing the text.

Do not put down anything that you have heard, think, feel, or believe—just put down what John 1:1-18 teaches you about the Word. (I am going to give you lots of room to make your list. You won't need all this space for your observations now, but you will need the space for an assignment you will do on Day Five.)

Now, let me get you started by showing you how to do the list. Note that I have put the verse number where I found what I saw as I listed it. I will give you the first two things that we see about the Word in this chapter:

The Word...

v. 1. was in the beginning.

v. 1. was with God.

v. ____.

v. ____.

a teacher, and maybe you didn't see everything others saw, but think of the truth you discovered for yourself—*on your own!*

Day Four

1. In John 1:1-18 you read about someone besides Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Read John 1:6. What is this man's name? Write it out.

2. Read through John 1:1-18 and mark every reference to this man. Pick a color or a symbol. If you don't have colored pencils, you might want to use this symbol: John. (The marking is to show water—he is John the Baptist!)

3. Now, make a list of what you learned from marking each reference to this man. (Once again I am going to give you more space than you need at this point. You will use the space later.)

Day Five

1. Today you need to read through the rest of chapter 1. Read verses 19-51 and mark every reference to Jesus Christ in the same way you marked every reference to the Word. Don’t forget to mark pronouns and synonyms. For instance, in John 1:19 you discover who the Word is—what His name is. Mark it like you marked *Word*. In John 1:29 Jesus is called the *Lamb of God*, therefore mark *Lamb of God* in the same way you marked *Word*. In verse 30 He is called a *Man*, so mark it like you marked *Word*.

2. Read through the same verses again and mark every reference to John, including any pronouns and synonyms. Use the color or symbol you used for him yesterday. (By the way, the John who is mentioned in verses 19-51 is not the same John who wrote this Gospel. Remember, in verses 19-51 this is John the Baptist.)

3. Now, faithful student, go back to the list you began on Day Three under number 1 (page 22) and add all that you learn from marking each reference to Jesus Christ in verses 19-51.

4. If you aren’t too tired, write down all you learn about John on the list you began on Day Four, under number 3 (page 24).

5. Now, remembering John’s purpose for writing this Gospel (John 20:30-31), look at your list about Jesus and at your list about John the Baptist and put a check mark by any truth that helps John accomplish his purpose in writing this book. Isn’t it exciting to see from the very first chapter how much John tells us about Jesus Christ! In the remainder of his Gospel, John is going to show us these truths over and over, so watch for them.

6. In the appendix on page 217 you will find a chart called JOHN AT A GLANCE. This is a chart on which you can record the main theme of each chapter of the Gospel of John. The main theme is the most important subject or event covered in a chapter. It is the subject, the topic, that is talked about the most.

Taking time to figure out the theme and write it out helps you remember what that chapter is about. When you record the theme on the JOHN AT A GLANCE chart, you have an easy, handy way to find those truths or events without having to read through the book again if you want to refer to it. You have a summary of the events and truths of John at a glance!

Recording each chapter's theme also helps you see how the chapters relate to one another and to the author's reason for writing.

Record the theme of chapter 1 beside number 1 on the first line on the JOHN AT A GLANCE chart.

7. At this point, let's take a few minutes and see if you can apply anything you have observed to your life. To help you do this, let me give you some questions to think about carefully. It would be good to write out your answers; but if you are not comfortable doing that, just answer the questions in your heart.

John says that Jesus Christ is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

When a person sins, he (meaning either he or she) runs his own life. He doesn't let Jesus be his Lord and Master, which means he does what he wants to do instead of what God tells him to do. He believes what he wants to believe even though it does not agree with what God says in His Word, the Bible. He doesn't believe Jesus is God, or if he does, he still won't honor Jesus as God and obey Him. When a person sins, he breaks or disobeys God's commandments.

- a. Are you a sinner?
- b. According to John 1:29, what will Jesus do with your sins?
- c. According to John 1:12, how does a person become a child of God?
- d. According to John 1:11, will everyone receive Jesus Christ?

This last answer is important to remember. As we continue our study, you are going to learn much about the people who refuse to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and do not receive Him as their God and Savior. You will learn what will happen to them and how they will feel about you and respond to you if you believe in Jesus Christ. You will see what you are to do because of this and how you are to respond to them if you are a child of God.

8. Finally, here is one last question asked in two parts:
 - a. What is the most interesting or exciting thing you have learned about Jesus Christ from your study this week?
 - b. What disturbs you the most about what you saw? Or what is the biggest question you have?

You have just completed your first week of study, and it was a long one! I'm proud of you! My heart rejoices over your diligence! God will use what you are doing "to set you apart" in a very special way if you simply believe what He says and live like it. This is true "personhood"—being what God designed you to be.

Now until we meet again in two days, think about all you have learned from God's book, the Bible. "Live like Jesus," is what God says about His Son.