

I continue this week with the act of piety referred to as studying the scriptures and offer the following advice as found at www.biblestudytools.com in an article entitled: “3 Simple Steps for Studying the Bible” (edited to fit format).

“One of the noblest pursuits a child of God can embark upon is to get to know and understand God better. The best way we can accomplish this is to look carefully at the book He has

written, the Bible, which communicates who He is and His plan for mankind. There are a number of ways we can study the Bible, but one of the most effective and simple approaches to reading and understanding God’s Word involves three simple steps:

Step 1: Observation—What does the passage say?

Step 2: Interpretation—What does the passage mean?

Step 3: Application—What am I going to do about what the passage says and means? “

This week, let’s look at just the **OBSERVATION** portion of these steps: “Observation is the first and most important step in how to study the Bible. As you read the Bible text, you need to look carefully at what is said, and how it is said. Look for:

- **Terms, not words.** Words can have many meanings, but terms are words used in a specific way in a specific context. (For instance, the word *trunk* could apply to a tree, a car, or a storage box. However, when you read, “That tree has a very large trunk,” you know exactly what the word means, which makes it a term.)
- **Structure.** If you look at your Bible, you will see that the text has units called paragraphs. A paragraph is a complete unit of thought. You can discover the content of the author’s message by noting and understanding each paragraph unit.
- **Emphasis.** The amount of space or the number of chapters or verses devoted to a specific topic will reveal the importance of that topic.

Disciple Life

The Wesleyan Way

Week # 21



Start the Conversation:
Provoke One Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

When you read the Bible, what is one of the main things that you notice in a passage?

- **Repetition.** This is another way an author demonstrates that something is important. One reading of [1 Corinthians 13](#), where the author uses the word “love” nine times in only 13 verses, communicates to us that love is the focal point of these 13 verses.
- **Relationships between ideas.** Pay close attention, for example, to certain relationships that appear in the text:
 - Cause-and-effect: ([Matthew 25:21](#)).
 - If*s and *then*s: ([2 Chronicles 7:14](#)).
 - Questions and answers: ([Psalms 24:8](#)).
- **Comparisons and contrasts.** ([Matthew 5:21](#)).
- **Literary form.** The Bible is literature, and the three main types of literature in the Bible are discourse (the epistles), prose (Old Testament history), and poetry (the Psalms). Considering the type of literature makes a great deal of difference when you read and interpret the Scriptures.
- **Atmosphere.** The author had a particular reason or burden for writing each passage, chapter, and book. Be sure you notice the mood or tone or urgency of the writing.

After you have considered these things, you then are ready to ask the “Wh” questions Who? What? Where? When? Who are the people in this passage? What is happening in this passage? Where is this story taking place? When in time (of day, of the year, in history) is it?

Asking those additional questions for understanding will help to build a bridge between observation (the first step) and interpretation (the second step) of the Bible study process.”