1 Thessalonians

Chapter Observations (Optional)

Observation is a critical part of Bible study, but this step is often overlooked or rushed through. We all love digging for the hidden gems buried in the text, but in order to prepare ourselves for this, we must first become familiar with what God has put there! By doing this step with each new chapter you will learn how to really slow down and look at the text of Scripture, as you read through the chapter again and again. At this stage in the Bible study you are simply noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. This step is ***optional,*** but I did want to include for those who have the time and would like to do it. These observations would be done at the beginning of each new chapter. Don’t worry if you have trouble with this step; your ability to handle God’s word skillfully and accurately will grow as you continue to examine His word with diligence.

**How to do a chapter observation.**

1. Begin by asking God to show you how His word fits together. Pray for a clear mind and a patient heart as you look at His word this week.
2. Read straight through the chapter using the *1 Thessalonians Bible Text* handout. This will help you get a feel for the flow of the chapter.
3. On the *1 Thessalonians Bible Text* handout mark ***key words***. God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit are always key words. Mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times, as well as words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

Mark words or phrases by creating a simple symbol or colored underline 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.

1. Next, on a separate sheet of paper list what you learn about the key words each time they are used, along with the verse reference. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. For example, with *God* as your key word, your list for Chapter One should look something like this:

vs. 1 – the church is in *God* the Father

vs. 2 – We give thanks to *God* for you

vs. 3 – in the presence of our *God* and Father

vs. 4 – the brethren are beloved by *God*

vs. 5 – *His* choice of you—*God* chose them

1. With an orange pencil underline any ***commands*** that are given in the chapter and any actions that are required of the reader.
2. With a red pencil underline any ***promises*** that are given, anything that God says He’ll do, or what will happen.
3. With a green pencil underline anything that describes ***salvation****.*
4. 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 that are 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.
5. Mark terms of ***conclusion***, or ***transition*** to a new topic: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Don’t look too hard for these. If they’re not obvious to you, skip it.
6. Mark terms of ***causation***: *so that, as a result, in order that*.
7. Mark expressions of ***time***: *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.
8. Write in the margins any ***attributes*** of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter.
9. Look for ***lists*** of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list on a separate sheet of paper or in the margin. This will help you see the author’s thought progression or the results of some action. For example in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 we find that the authors constantly bear in mind 1) their work of faith; 2) their labor of love; and 3) their steadfastness of hope in the Lord.
10. Record any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting.

Remember, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take notice 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!