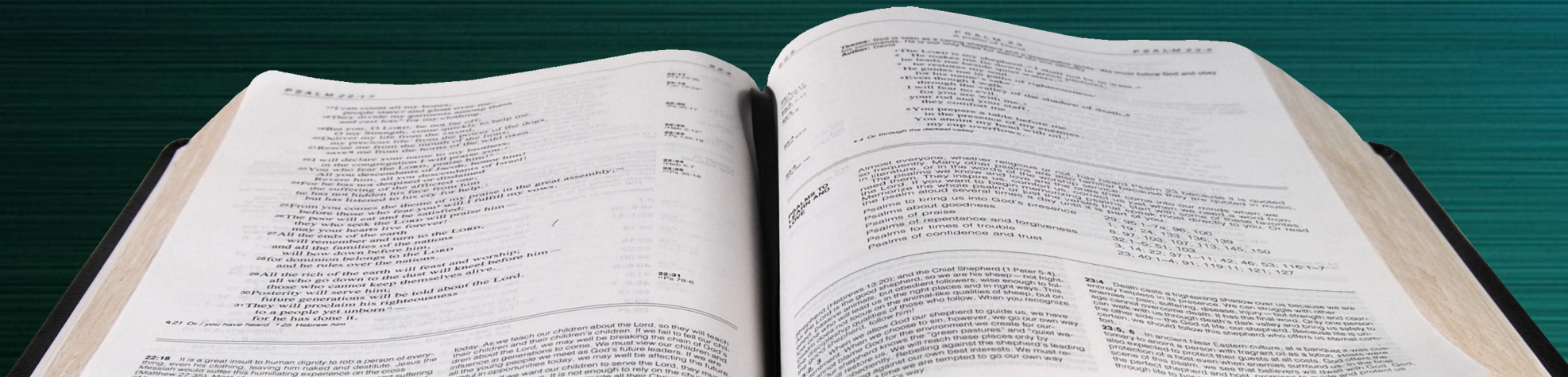


Helps for Inductive Bible Study

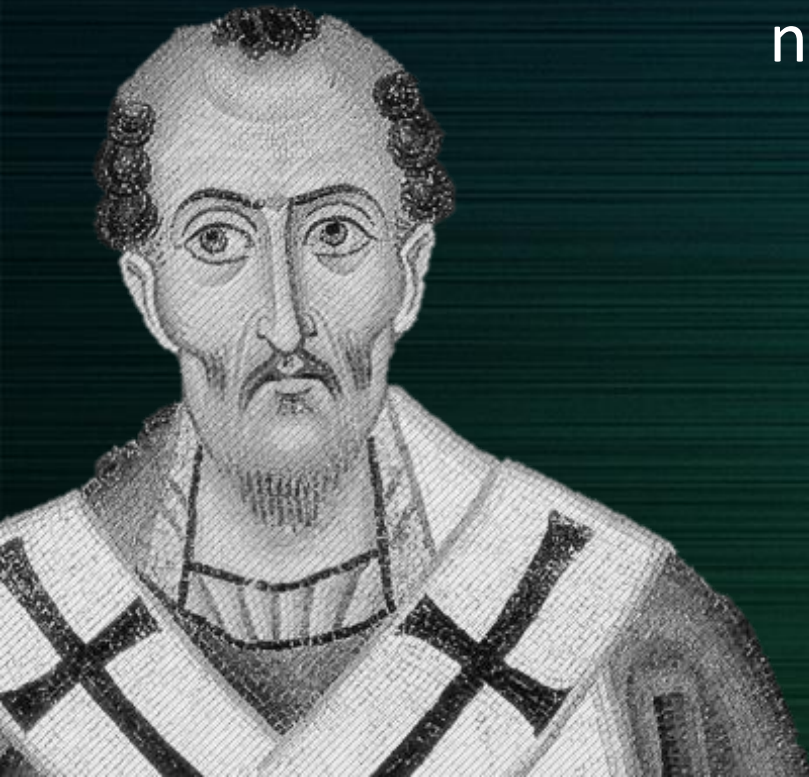
Four Practical Steps for Making Observations



“While relaxing at home, both before eating and after eating . . . take the Scriptures in your hands and gain benefit from them and provide spiritual nourishment for your soul. You see, as the body has need of material nourishment, likewise, too, the soul needs daily reminders and spiritual nourishment so that it may be strengthened

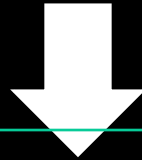
. . . A divine book in our hands, let each of us invite our neighbors to join us and refresh our minds and theirs with the divine words.”

—John Chrysostom (347–407),
Homilies on Genesis 1-17

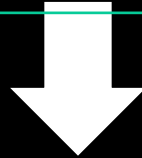


FOUR STAGES FOR BIBLE STUDY

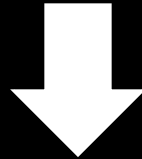
STAGE 1 – Surveying the Text's Context



STAGE 2 – Observing the Text's Content



STAGE 3 – Interpreting the Text's Meaning



STAGE 4 – Applying the Text's Message

FOUR STEPS FOR MAKING OBSERVATIONS

1. Read the Text

2. Query the Author

3. Compare the Translations

4. Examine the Particulars

What is “observation”?

- **Observation** can be defined as “the act of taking notice.”
- “The process of observation should generally resemble the absorbing process of the sponge when it is exposed to a liquid” (Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, 48).
- The primary objective of this stage is to answer the question, “**What does the text say?**”
- The personal prerequisites for this stage include: (a) *the will to observe*; (b) *a passion for precision*; and (c) *a pledge to persistence*.



1. Read the text.

PRINCIPLE: Good observation begins with a thorough acquaintance with the text, and a thorough acquaintance requires good reading.

- One cannot interpret soundly until he knows what the text before him actually says.
- Reading is needed both to inform (*what is there*) and to correct (*what is not there*).
- There is a direct correlation between how well a student *reads* and how well he *observes*.

THE FIVE LAWS OF READING

Read Prayerfully

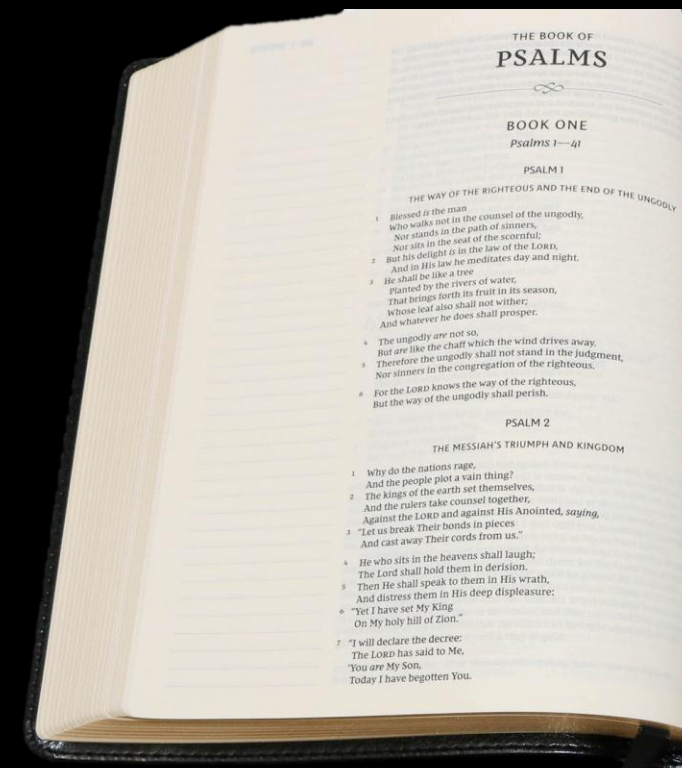
Read Inquisitively

Read Repeatedly

Read Progressively

Read Patiently

- Studying specific texts of the Bible should be done alongside the habit of general Bible reading.
 - **PLAN A (breadth):** Be reading the Bible for the big picture—for an awareness of the general storyline.
 - **PLAN B (depth):** Take opportunities to study individual texts deeply, preferably in sequence through a whole book.
- Find a Bible that is printed on good paper and that has lots of space for marking and notetaking. *Marking the text while reading increases awareness.*
- Listen to an audio version of the text or read the text out loud. *Hearing the text while reading increases awareness.*



2. Query the author.

PRINCIPLE: To increase awareness, the student should generate a leading question for each sentence of the text, creating a kind of *Q & A dialogue* with the writer.

- One of the greatest threats to sound observation is the “illusion of mastery”—the opinion that “I already know this.”
- The Q & A approach challenges this illusion, compelling the student to read more carefully and inquisitively by requiring him to generate questions appropriate to the text’s content.



- 1) Create a two-columned chart, with the column on the left designated for the “leading question,” and the column on the right for each sentence of the text.

Leading Question	Answer (Romans 8:1)
<i>What is the status before God of those who are “in Christ”?</i>	Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- 2) Paste the sentence of the text in the right column; it serves as the biblical author’s “answer.”
- 3) Generate a question that appropriately *leads into* the answer.
- 4) Each subsequent question must take into account the previous “answer” given, and lead into the next “answer.”

QUERYING THE TEXT – PSALM 1

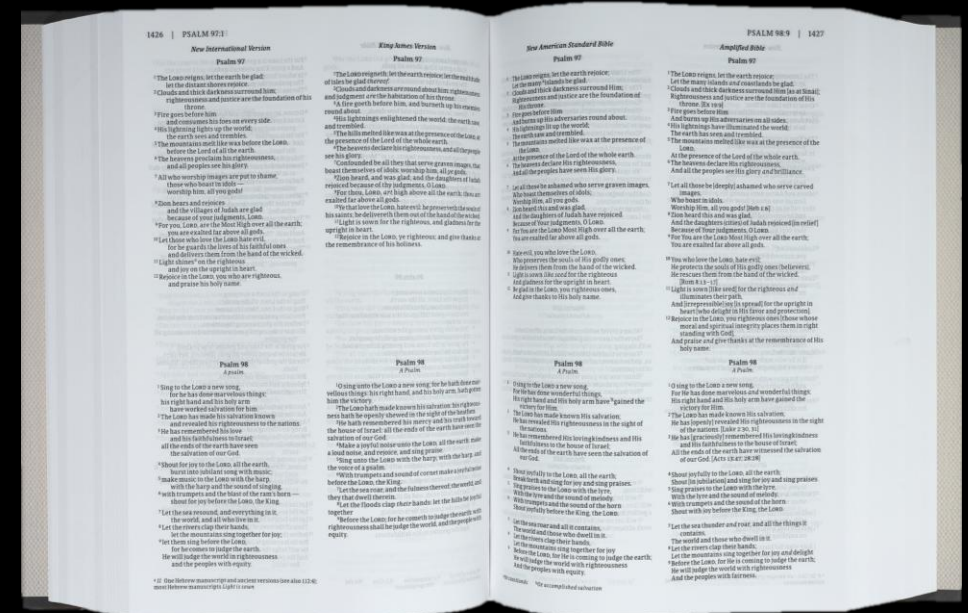
Leading Question	Answer
<i>Who is the one whom I can truly identify as “blessed”?</i>	How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
<i>If this “blessed” man has no regard for the wicked, in what, then, does he place his delight?</i>	But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.
<i>What will this “blessed” man be like, and what does the future hold for him?</i>	He will be like a tree <i>firmly</i> planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers .

Leading Question	Answer
<i>What will this “blessed” man be like, and what does the future hold for him?</i>	He will be like a tree <i>firmly</i> planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.
<i>But do not the wicked also prosper, and if not, what happens to them?</i>	The wicked are not so but they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
<i>What future, then, lies ahead for the wicked?</i>	Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
<i>Why are the futures of both groups so different?</i>	For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

3. Compare the translations.

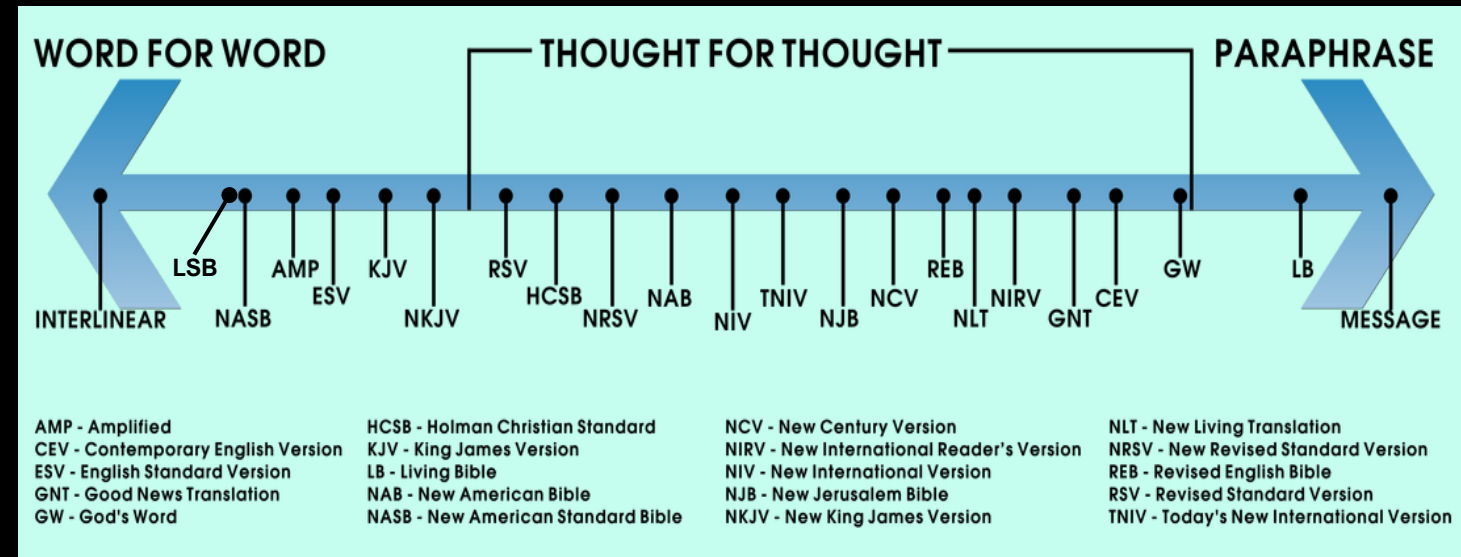
PRINCIPLE: To recognize both the simple and complex details in the text, the student should compare the text in several reputable translations.

- No other language in the history of man has as many translations as English—both good and bad.
- Comparing the text in several reputable translations is especially helpful for those who cannot read the text in its original language.



A Parallel Bible showing the NIV, KJV, NASB, and Amplified Bible translations in parallel columns.

- The translation used as the standard should be *word-for-word* translation like the NASB or the LSB; two or three other translations should be chosen for comparison.



- Commonalities in the translations show details in the text which translators find easy to translate and less susceptible to interpretive disagreement.
- Differences among the translations show details which translators find challenging to translate; these are the details which require special study in the commentaries.

- 1) Create a chart, with the standard translation in the left column and the other selected translations listed to the right.

NASB	ESV	CSB	NIV
Therefore there is now	There is therefore now	Therefore, there is now	Therefore, there is now
no condemnation	no condemnation	no condemnation	no condemnation
for those who are	for those who are	for those	for those who are
in Christ Jesus.	in Christ Jesus.	in Christ Jesus,	in Christ Jesus,

- 2) Insert a single verse of text in each row, under the appropriate translation.
- 3) Arrange the display in such a way that each line of text corresponds in each of the translations.

COMPARING THE TRANSLATIONS – ROMANS 8:26

NASB	ESV	CSB	NIV
In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for <i>us</i> with groanings too deep for words;	Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.	In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings	In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. □ We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

COMPARING THE TRANSLATIONS – ROMANS 8:27

NASB	ESV	CSB	NIV
and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.	And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.	And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God	And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

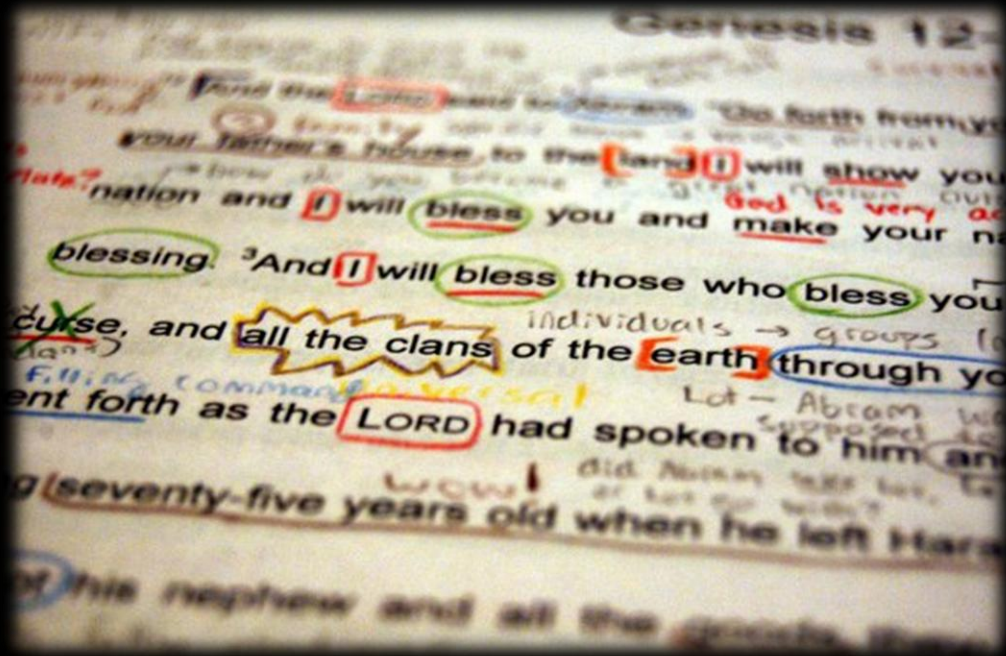
4. Examine the particulars.

PRINCIPLE: To observe the text well requires consideration of every detail. As is true for the effective investigator, no detail of the biblical text can be considered inconsequential.

- **Matthew 5:18** – “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”
- The curiosity of a meticulous investigator is crucial.
- Aim for the most “hands-on” approach as possible.

WHO?
WHAT?
WHERE?
WHEN?
WHY?
HOW?

1) Write/print the text out on paper to allow you to underline, draw arrows, circle key words, and add notes.



2) Use different color pens or highlighters to mark certain patterns.

3) Devise a personal system for marking consistently the same kinds of things (main verbs, prepositional phrases, pronouns, etc.).

4) Record your key observations and questions for further study.

EXAMINING THE PARTICULARS – ROMANS 8:1

Conjunction
expressing logical
consequence
(see preceding context)

Therefore there is now no condemnation

Present tense verb – an on-going reality/status

A new reality; opposed to “then” (when?)

Key word! Define!!

for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Introduces the
scope of this new
reality/status

The scope is
limited to a
particular
group

Denotes
sphere

Key person! Note
order of title and
name. Paul's key
focus—“in Christ”

A "Loose Leaf Bible" provides wide margins for note-taking as well.

the great deeds God has done!" 2:12 All were astounded (and greatly confused) saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 2:13 But others (jeered) at the speakers, saying, "They are drunk on new wine!"

Peter's Address on the Day of Pentecost

2:14 But Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and addressed them: "You men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, know this and listen carefully to what I say: 2:15 In spite of what you think, these men are not drunk, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 2:16 But this is what was spoken about through the prophet Joel:

2:17 'And in the last days it will be,' God says, 'that I will pour out my Spirit on all people, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 2:19 And I will perform wonders in the sky above, and miraculous signs on the earth below. Mood and dream and words of smoke. 2:20 The sun will be changed to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. 2:21 And then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 2:22 'Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man clearly attested to you by God with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs that God performed among you through him, just as you yourselves know - 2:23 this man, who was handed over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you executed by nailing him to a cross at the hands of Gentiles. 2:24 But God raised him up, having released him from the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held in its power. 2:25 For David says about him, 'I saw the Lord always in front of me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken. 2:26 Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced; my body also will live in hope, 2:27 because you will not leave my soul in Hades, nor permit your Holy One to experience decay. 2:28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of joy with your presence'

2:29 "Brothers, I can speak confidently to you about our forefather David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 2:30 So then, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to send one of his descendants on the throne, 2:31 David by foreseeing this spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his body experience decay. 2:32 This Jesus God raised up, and we are all witnesses of it. 2:33 So then, exalted to the right hand of God, and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he has poured out what you both see and hear. 2:34 For David did not ascend into heaven, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand 2:35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know beyond a doubt that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ."

The Response to Peter's Address

2:37 Now when they heard this, they were greatly distressed and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What should we do, brothers?" 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 2:39 For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call to himself." 2:40 With many other words he testified and exhorted them saying, "Save yourselves from this perverse generation!" 2:41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added.

The Fellowship of the Early Believers

2:42 They were devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 2:43 Reverential awe came over everyone, and many wonders and miraculous signs came about by the apostles. 2:44 All who believed were together, and held everything in common; 2:45 and they began selling their property and possessions and distributing the proceeds to everyone, as anyone had need. 2:46 Every day they continued to teach, or together by common consent in the temple courts, breaking bread from house to house, sharing their food with glad and humble hearts. 2:47 praising God and having the approval of all the people, and the Lord was adding to their number every day those who were being saved.

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- Characteristics:**
- common consent
 - devoted
 - glad
 - humble
 - reverent awe
 - prayerful

- what they did:**
- father in the temple
 - learned from the apostles
 - fellowship
 - ate together, Eucharist
 - prayed
 - held things in common
 - shared
 - praised God
 - enjoyed the goodwill of all
 - the Lord added to their number

prayer: proseuchēs

directly: deusas
paid attention: epescho
prayed in Jesus Name
took hold of him: egrapsen
raised him up: egeirō
ankles made strong

"receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"

"togetherness" - in common
"apostles' teaching" - fellowship
"breaking of bread" - prayer

wonders
miraculous
signs

amazement: ekstaseōs
brought into by our own power: dynamis
piety: eusebeia (godliness)
God's divine persuasion - not human confidence
faith: pistis
persuaded - he does not blame them

interpret Scripture to include prophecy

"the Lord offers to minister faith in each scene of life - so that each matters equally in eternity... not matter how insignificant they seem." Bible hits, puts

ACTS 3:1
Peter and John Heal a Lame Man at the Temple

3:1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 3:2 And a man lame from birth was being carried up, who was placed at the temple gate called "The Beautiful Gate" every day so he could beg for money from those going into the temple courts. 3:3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple courts, he asked them for money. 3:4 Peter looked directly at him (as did John) and said, "Look at us!" 3:5 So the lame man (paid attention) to them, expecting to receive something from them. 3:6 But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, stand up and walk!" 3:7 (Then Peter took hold of him by the right hand and raised him up, and at once the man's feet and ankles were made strong. 3:8 He jumped up, stood and began walking around, and he entered the temple courts with them, walking and leaping and praising God.) 3:9 All the people saw him walking and praising God. 3:10 And they recognized him as the man who used to sit and beg for donations at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. And they were filled with astonishment and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Addresses the Crowd

3:11 While the man was hanging on to Peter and John, all the people, completely astounded, ran together to them in the covered walkway called Solomon's Porch. 3:12 When Peter saw this, he declared to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Why do you stare at us as if we had made this man walk by our own power or piety? 3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate after he had decided to release him. 3:14 But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a man who was a murderer be released to you. 3:15 You killed the Originator of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this fact we are witnesses! 3:16 And on the basis of faith in Jesus' name, his very name has made this man whom you see and know - strong. The faith that is through Jesus has given him this complete health in the presence of you all. 3:17 And now, brothers, know you acted in ignorance, as your rulers did too. 3:18 But the things God foretold long ago through all the prophets - that his Christ would suffer - he has fulfilled in this way. 3:19 Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out, 3:20 so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he may send the Messiah appointed for you - that is, Jesus. 3:21 This one heaven must receive until the time all things are

And that God worked through the people

pistis: guarantee, warranty

secular: faith is always received from God - never generated by us, never worked up, but a gift; not a human virtue.

actin chronopokataseōs partōn
times of restoration of all things

restored, which God declared from times long ago through his holy prophets. 3:22 Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must obey him in everything he tells you. 3:23 Every person who does not obey that prophet will be destroyed and thus removed from the people.' 3:24 And all the prophets spoken about and announced these days. 3:25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.' 3:26 God raised up his servant and sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each one of you from your iniquities."

The Arrest and Trial of Peter and John

4:1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the commander of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them. 4:2 angry because they were teaching the people and announcing in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 4:3 So they seized them and put them in jail until the next day (for it was already evening). 4:4 But many of those who had listened to the message believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

4:5 On the next day, their rulers, elders, and experts in the law came together in Jerusalem. 4:6 Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others who were members of the high priest's family. 4:7 After making Peter and John stand in their midst, they began to inquire, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, replied, "Rulers of the people and elders, 4:9 if we are being examined today for a good deed done to a sick man - by what means this man was healed - 4:10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, this man stands before you healthy. 4:11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, that has become the cornerstone. 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved."

4:13 When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and discovered that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized these men had been with Jesus. 4:14 And because they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say against this. 4:15 But when they had ordered them to go outside the council, they began to confer with one another. 4:16 saying, "What should we do with these men? For it is plain to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable miracu-

raised out from the dead - this man is not dead, is a sign, not a stake.

high priestly descent
"no strength" - sick, infirm, weak, unformed
healed: eusebeia (piety), save, preserve
why the Nazarene? of Nazareth
healthy: hygieia, sound

salvation: sotēria
given: didonai
offered
5000 - 7000
sotēria
salvation
"delivered out of danger into safety"

must = necessary, inevitable, right, proper.

the name of him (Jesus)
the faith which is by him (Jesus)

Pulling It All Together

FOUR STRATEGIES FOR OBSERVING THE TEXT
1. Read the Text
2. Query the Author
3. Compare the Translations
4. Examine the Particulars

- Implementing these four strategies will not only acquaint the student with the text's content, it will also provide the student with the material needed as fuel for the next stage of the process: *interpretation*.