

NATE BRAMSEN

Dive In!

Accept the challenge.
Take the plunge.



A HANDS-ON GUIDE TO
STUDYING THE BIBLE
FOR YOURSELF



DIVE IN!

By Nate Bramsen

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Let's Dive In!

PART 1: BIBLE MEDITATION

PART 2: BIBLE MARKING



*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth,
but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may
be careful to do according to all that is written in it.
For then you will make your way prosperous,
and then you will have good success.
— Joshua 1:8 —*

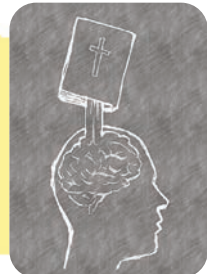
One thing that God makes crystal clear in His Word, the Bible, is that the "blessed" person (translated "happy") is the one who meditates on the Word of God. "**Blessed** is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and **on His law he meditates day and night**. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" (Psalm 1:1-3).

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

The Hebrew word translated as "meditate" is *hagah* which could also be translated as "moan, muse, or devise." In Isaiah 31:4 this word is used to depict a young lion growling (*hagah*) over his prey. The idea is a deep-seated contemplation. The biblical definition of meditation is the **polar opposite** of the world's perspective.

The world says, "Meditate!" *Empty* your mind.
God says, "Meditate." Fill your mind with My Word.

The world says, "Relax your mind."
The Word says, "Focus your mind on eternal things."



PRACTICAL MEDITATION ON GOD'S WORD

The guide I'm about to share with you is but one way to spend time in the Word of God. Over the years, I have used many techniques and formats, but I find this method exceedingly practical. It's not a perfect method, but it is a feasible way to meditate on God's Word and a good place to begin your study.

I call it "**The 20-10-5-1.**"

Here's how it works:

Whenever you open the Word of God, do so prayerfully, patiently, persistently, and purposefully. The four components are as follows:

- Twenty is for OBSERVATION.
- Ten is for INTERROGATION.
- Five is for CONTEMPLATION.
- One is for APPLICATION.



OBSERVATION 20 | 20 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PASSAGE

After prayerfully approaching the Word of God and reading the passage aloud, observe anything noteworthy about the text. By observe, I don't mean find some deep spiritual meaning or scrutinize the original Hebrew. Yes, there is a place and time for such study, but this exercise is to note **twenty observations** from a single verse or short passage.

To illustrate, if I were sitting in front of you, you would observe many things:

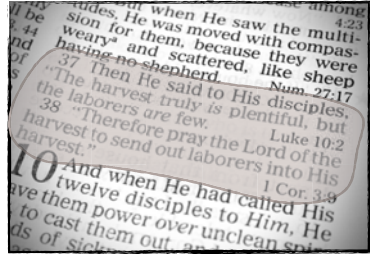
- ✓ 1) Nate is wearing a short-sleeved shirt.
- ✓ 2) He is currently barefoot.
- ✓ 3) He is drinking a soy latte.
- ✓ 4) He is working on a MacBook Air.
- ✓ 5) He is quite bald.
- ✓ 6) He is sitting in a hotel room.
- ✓ 7) He is writing a book...and the list could go on!



Now go to Scripture. Take Matthew 9:37-38 as an example.

Let's make a few observations from this text.

- ✓ 1) Jesus is the one speaking (**He** said to His disciples).
- ✓ 2) There is a surety of a harvest (*the harvest is plentiful*).
- ✓ 3) There is a shortage of workers in His field (*the laborers are few*).
- ✓ 4) Christ's priority is for His disciples to be seeking Him first (*therefore pray*).
- ✓ 5) The Lord's work is the subject of our prayers (*pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest*).
- ✓ 6) Prayer is a serious responsibility (*pray earnestly*).
- ✓ 7) God does the sending of workers into His field (*pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers*).



Though such observations may seem mundane, as you dig into a passage in this way (not stopping after one or two observations), you will begin to think deeply on the scene that has been set, and the Holy Spirit will begin to open your mind to what He is thinking. Don't give in to the temptation to stop after a few reflections. **Find a minimum of twenty observations in each verse.** Seem impossible? It's not. A couple of friends and I found more than twenty observations in Christ's words from the cross, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

During this process of observation, expect to read the passage 10-15 times. Feel stuck? Read it again and again. Maybe read it in another respected version of Scripture in order to hear the same truth with slightly different wording.

Keep a journal of your observations, and you'll soon have your own commentary! After finding twenty such observations, you may want to listen to a sermon or read a commentary on the passage – and find twenty more. Better yet, invite a friend to muse on the passage with you, and keep adding to the list.



INTERROGATION 10 | 10 QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE

After finding your observations, interrogate the passage. Though the mark is set at ten questions, I usually find this to be too few.

Asking questions about the passage will feed further study (for later), connect the original passage to other passages in Scripture, and bring to light thoughts you had never considered. Be like a crime scene investigator on Sherlock Holmes, Criminal Minds, Psyche, or Monk. Ask the basic investigative questions: Who? What? Why? Where? When? How?

Go back to Matthew 9:37-38. Let's interrogate the passage.

- Why is Jesus speaking to His disciples?
- What does it mean that the harvest is plentiful?
- What or who is the harvest?
- Why are the laborers presently few?
- Why does Jesus call His disciples to first pray instead of saying "Go!"?
- What does it mean that Jesus is "Lord of the harvest"?
- How will we know when He sends us out into His harvest?



*I keep six honest
serving-men
(they taught me
all I knew);
Their names are
What and Why
and When
And How and
Where and Who.
- Rudyard Kipling*

The questions could go on and on. As a side note, most of my sermons are born from such interrogation of a passage.



OBSERVATIONS

Try to make as many observations as you can from the above passage.

1. GOD SPEAKS AND COMMUNICATES TO US.
2. GOD'S WORD, NOT MY THOUGHTS OR SOMEONE ELSE'S OPINION, IS THE LAMP AND LIGHT FOR MY JOURNEY.
3. THE VERSE IS WRITTEN IN THE PRESENT TENSE. GOD'S WORD IS ACTIVE AND APPROPRIATE FOR TODAY.
4. GOD HAS NOT LEFT US IN DARKNESS.
5. GOD'S WORD IS CALLED A "LAMP TO MY FEET"—NOT A FLOODLIGHT. ENOUGH TO SHOW ME THE NEXT STEP.
6. "A LAMP TO MY FEET" IS A VIVID REMINDER THAT I AM TO BE OBEIENT TO GOD'S WORD TODAY AND NOT FOCUS TOO FAR FORWARD.
7. LAMPS IN BIBLICAL TIMES REQUIRED FREQUENT (ARE MORE OIL)...A PICTURE OF (CONSTANTLY COMING BACK TO THE WORD AND DEPENDENCE ON THE SPIRIT OF GOD (PICTURED AS OIL IN SCRIPTURE)
8. LIGHT GOES BEFORE THE TRAVELER...THE WORD OF GOD MUST LEAD MY STEPS IN LIFE.
9. A LAMP DOESN'T HELP A TRAVELER UNLESS THEY CHOOSE TO USE IT. WE CAN HAVE GOD'S WORD, BUT WE MUST KNOW AND APPLY IT TO BE GUIDED BY IT.
10. A LAMP KEEPS A TRAVELER FROM STUMBLING.
11. A LIGHT PROTECTS THE TRAVELER FROM THE DANGERS OF DARKNESS...GOD'S WORD IS A SECURITY, SHIELD, AND DEFENSE.
12. THE LAMP IS THE SOURCE, THE LIGHT IS THE RESULT. GOD'S WORD IS THE SOURCE AND BRINGS LIGHT.
13. LIGHT CLARIFIES A CONFUSING ENVIRONMENT. LIKEWISE, GOD'S WORD BRINGS CLARITY TO LIFE'S CONFUSING CIRCUMSTANCES.
14. LIGHT DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE...IT SHOWS BOTH THE GOOD GROUND AND THE ROCKS.
15. GOD CARES ABOUT WHERE MY FEET STEP IN LIFE.
16. A "LAMP TO MY FEET" INDICATES THE NEXT STEP, BUT "A LIGHT TO MY PATH" INDICATES THE BIGGER PICTURE. GOD'S WORD GUIDES US DAILY, BUT ALSO REMINDS AND LEADS US WHERE WE ARE GOING.
17. A "LAMP TO MY FEET" INDICATES A STEP, NOT A RUN. THOUGH RUNNING IS A PICTURE IN SCRIPTURE AS WELL, PSALM 119:105 SHOWS US THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSISTENT WALKING IN THE WORD.
18. THERE IS A PATH FOR MY LIFE.
19. A PATH INDICATES A PLACE OTHERS HAVE WALKED BEFORE. "THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES..." (HEBREWS 12:1)
20. "YOUR WORD" IS A TITLE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

...and a light unto my path.”

INTERROGATION

Try to think of as many questions as you can from the above passage.

1. WHAT IS GOD'S WORD?
2. WHY IS GOD'S WORD REFERRED TO AS A LAMP RATHER THAN THE SUN?
3. WHY DOES IT SEEM THAT GOD WANTS TO SHOW US THE NEXT STEP RATHER THAN THE WHOLE JOURNEY BEFORE US?
4. HOW MIGHT I ACT INDEPENDENT OF GOD IF HE SHOWED ME THE WHOLE JOURNEY INSTEAD OF GUIDING ME STEP BY STEP?
5. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LAMP AND A LIGHT?
6. HOW DOES THE AUTHOR COMMUNICATE A DIFFERENT THOUGHT IN USING "MY FEET" AND THEN USING "MY PATH"?
7. HOW IS A LAMP/LIGHT A SECURITY FOR THE TRAVELER?
8. DO I TRY TO USE OTHER LIGHTS OUTSIDE OF THE WORD OF GOD TO NAVIGATE LIFE? WHICH ONES? HOW AM I USING THE LIGHT GOD HAS GIVEN ME?
9. HOW DO I IGNORE THE LAMP GOD HAS PROVIDED?
10. HOW DOES THIS VERSE SHOW ATTRIBUTES OF CHRIST SINCE HE IS "THE WORD OF GOD" (JOHN 1:1-3)?



*When we walk
with the Lord
in the light of His Word,
What a glory
He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will
trust and obey.*

— JOHN HENRY SAMMIS

 CONTEMPLATION **5** | CONTEMPLATION OF THE PASSAGE

Allow me to encourage you to spend **five minutes** in absolute silence following your time of observation and interrogation. This silence is not for sleeping or waiting for the clock to tick 300 times. It is a time to ponder the observations and questions you have scribbled down. It is an opportunity to soak in the meditations you have had and to allow the Lord to convict you of what needs to happen next. Good news. He will communicate His mind to you.

APPPLICATION **1** | APPLICATION FOR YOUR LIFE

Whether I'm in a group of twenty youth or by myself, **one application** per person is suggested. James 1:22-25 compares the Word of God to a mirror. I don't use a mirror to clean my face or body, nor do I use it to examine others. Its purpose is to reflect my own face, that I might respond accordingly. In the same way, when I look into the law of the Lord (God's love letter to me), I am mercifully given the opportunity to see what it exposes in my life, with the intent that I become more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. A good question to ask ourselves as we go through our day is this: How is this day different, and how have I changed as a result of marinating in God's Word?

A BONUS

I hesitate to write this since I don't want to rob you of the delight of discovering it for yourself, but some of you might need the extra motivation, so here it is: I have found that there is a wonderful by-product of studying the Word of God in this manner. Not only do you glean incalculable blessings from meditating on and marinating in God's Word, but, without trying, **you memorize it as well**. While I can quote hundreds of verses, the majority of the ones most deeply ingrained in my mind and heart are not the ones memorized intentionally. Many of the verses I know best entered my memory bank as a result of deeply meditating on the Word of God and hiding it in the depths of my heart.

My friends, "**20-10-5-1**" might sound overly simplistic, but I invite you to dive humbly and prayerfully into Scripture with this approach. Get ready for the Holy Spirit to communicate to you the things of Christ. And, as you meditate on the Holy Scriptures, remember this: *The one who meditates day and night on the Word of God will be the one who **prosper**s.*



Let's Dive In!

PART 1: BIBLE MEDITATION

PART 2: BIBLE MARKING



Let me say this at the outset.

*You can mark up your Bible all you want,
but if you don't let your Bible mark you,
it is a worthless practice.*

This is not about having a colorful Bible; rather, it's about having an intimate walk with Jesus Christ. Additionally, let me say that not everyone feels comfortable highlighting and making notes in their Bible, and that is fine. Think of Bible marking as a helpful tool rather than a rigid requirement. That said, **I share the following ideas because they have made a great difference in my own personal study and meditation of God's Word.**

Solomon wrote, *"If you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God"* (Proverbs 2:3-5). There is a phrase in the 2001 movie *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* which has been made famous by memes. The character Boromir says, "One does not simply walk into Mordor." **Similarly, we can say, "One does not simply find the hidden gems of Scripture on the surface."** I am not saying that great truths cannot be quickly gleaned, but I am saying that the deeper you dig, the greater the eternal riches you will discover.

Additionally, by systematic and organized highlighting, it is easier to go back and continue digging where you left off rather than starting the excavation over again.

*"IF YOU CALL OUT
FOR INSIGHT...
IF YOU SEEK IT LIKE
SILVER AND SEARCH
FOR IT AS FOR
HIDDEN TREASURES,
THEN YOU WILL
UNDERSTAND THE
FEAR OF THE LORD
AND FIND THE
KNOWLEDGE OF
GOD" (PROVERBS 2)*

WHY MARK UP YOUR BIBLE?

As we discuss practical components of Bible marking, let me suggest a few reasons this can be a valuable practice:

- ✓ • In my study of the Word, marking allows me **to remember things the Holy Spirit has emphasized to my mind and heart.**
- ✓ • Also, it greatly helps me to **quickly reference Scriptures** when I want to go back to them.
- ✓ • Finally, when teaching God's Word, I can jump from thought to thought in a succinct and organized fashion by **seeing where the connecting thoughts are found** on the page.

Consider the way the Word of God is described. First, it is described as a sword. *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). A person who wishes to use a sword skillfully must be trained in swordsmanship or fencing. One is not born with such mastery. Likewise, we must be trained in the Word of God. *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Many other analogies could be listed. The Word of God is described as a **light**. The psalmist penned, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"* (Psalm 119:105). It is referenced as nourishment or **bread**. *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4). Also, *"Is not my word like **fire**, declares the Lord, and like a **hammer** that breaks the rock in pieces?"* (Jeremiah 23:29). **As we dive into studying God's Word, it is helpful to understand that this is not so much about creativity as it is about intentionality.** This is about being intentional in getting to know God and in making Him known.

THE FOUR STEPS IN BIBLE MARKING

Let's limit our Bible marking principles to four simple steps.

- (1) Plan
- (2) Prime
- (3) Perceive
- (4) Preserve



STEP 1 PLAN

– Reading & Resources –

READING: When I say plan, I'm not presently referring to a Bible reading plan. At various times in my life I have used Bible reading plans, but I prefer to not limit my reading to a schedule or a chapter ending. Even lovers of the Word can get discouraged when they fall behind or might simply stop because they are "done" for the day. I love being neither ahead nor behind! Rather, I take a certain allotment of time and just read Scripture, putting a bookmark where I left off. If later in the day I have more free time, why not spend some of it absorbing the Word of God?

Now if you struggle with discipline and order, then a reading plan might be the way to go. But I would suggest that you switch up the order in which you read through the Scriptures. Obviously, read the Word from front to back (Genesis to Revelation), but maybe on another occasion, read the Scriptures chronologically (the order in which the books were written or took place), or read the Old Testament in parallel with the New Testament. But be intentional and consistent as you work your way through books and passages of Scripture. Avoid randomly jumping around. And the main thing is this: Be in the Word of God "day and night" (Psalm 1:2).

RESOURCES: Along with your systematic reading of Scripture, be prepared with tools to mark your Bible. A quick list of supplies would include:

- **A RELIABLE TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURE** (I PREFER HARD COPY RATHER THAN DIGITAL.) PERSONALLY, I CHOOSE TO USE THE ESV, NKJV, NLT, OR THE NASB. IT IS OFTEN USEFUL TO LOOK AT A COUPLE ENGLISH VERSIONS WHEN DOING AN IN-DEPTH STUDY AS SLIGHT DIFFERENCES CAN INDICATE AN ORIGINAL WORD WITH A DEEPER MEANING. IN SUCH CASES, A WORD STUDY MAY BE IN ORDER.
- **FINE-POINT BLACK PENS FOR MAKING NOTES** (BRANDS AND QUALITY CHANGE, SO DO YOUR RESEARCH.) SOME PREFER TO USE A MECHANICAL PENCIL WITH AN ERASER, ALLOWING THEM TO CORRECT OR FINE-TUNE THEIR NOTES ALONG THE WAY.
- **SET OF HIGHLIGHTERS** (THAT DO NOT EASILY BLEED THROUGH THE PAGE) WITH AT LEAST FIVE DIFFERENT COLORS. ANOTHER OPTION IS TO USE COLORED PENCILS, SOMETIMES PREFERRED BY THOSE WITH AN ARTISTIC FLAIR.
- **A NOTEBOOK** (FOR WRITING DOWN YOUR GLEANINGS FROM THE WORD). YOU WILL NOT WANT TO INCLUDE ALL THE NOTES FROM YOUR NOTEBOOK IN THE MARGINS OF YOUR BIBLE. A NOTEBOOK ALLOWS YOU TO RECORD AND SORT THE THOUGHTS THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES YOU TO PROCESS.

STEP 2

PRIME



Prime can mean “to put liquid into a pump to seal the moving parts and facilitate the operation,” or it can be a neutral color of paint you apply to a wall to get it ready for the final color. Simply put, when you prime something, you are preparing it for greater use. This is the idea. We want to prime the passage. How do we do that?

DISCLAIMER: There are many ways to begin marking a passage, and I am not claiming my method is better than another. I am simply sharing how I do it.

GREEN

- I begin by using a **green highlighter** and marking **all references to God** (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). This may include pronouns along with other names of God in the passage. This is merely a priming of the passage. I want to see what God is saying, doing, asking, commanding, or teaching.

ORANGE

- Then, I take the **orange highlighter** and highlight **all the questions found in the passage**, whatever ends in a question mark. This allows me to identify what is being discussed.

YELLOW

- On most occasions, I keep my **yellow highlighter** close by since I use it **for verses and thoughts that stand out to me or remind me of a truth I need to return to often and remember**. And if there is something going on in my life at the time when this truth hits home, I take my fine-point pen and make a small note of when and how this verse impacted my life (this is part of STEP 4: PRESERVE).

RED

- Though this point will fall under the next category (PERCEIVE), I should mention that I use my **red highlighter** throughout Scripture for **references to the gospel (death, burial, and resurrection of Christ)**. Remember that Christ can be seen in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27), so I use this color also in the Old Testament – wherever I see pictures and prophecies that point to the Messiah and His redemptive work. Some students of the Word choose to simply draw a small cross next to such passages.

A FEW MORE TIPS

Since each book of the Bible contains different themes, I tend to make a **marking key at the start of a book**, which helps me be consistent with the colors and symbols being used for each aspect. For example, in the book of Proverbs, I may draw a small heart next to each verse which speaks of the heart, or, for every verse that contains a warning for the fool, I may put an exclamation mark by the text. Regardless, **consistency** is paramount in marking if you want to maintain clarity. That said, I always use **green, orange, yellow, and red** for the aforementioned subjects and topics.

LET'S PRACTICE!

LUKE 24:45

He Is Risen

24 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, these and certain other women with them came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

25 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

26 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

27 And it happened, as they were (greatly) perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

28 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

29 "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee,

30 saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

31 And they remembered His words.

32 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

33 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

34 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

35 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

The Road to Emmaus

36 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

37 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

38 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

39 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

40 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

41 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have you not known the things which happened there in these days?"

42 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.

43 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

44 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel! Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

45 "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

46 "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

47 "And certain of those who were with us went

1. READ THE TEXT TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE "BIG PICTURE" OF THE PASSAGE.

2. AS YOU READ, START THINKING ABOUT THEMES THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO HIGHLIGHT

to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

48 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

49 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

50 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

The Disciples' Eyes Opened

51 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

52 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

53 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

54 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

55 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

56 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together.

57 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

58 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

59 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"

60 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

61 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

62 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.

63 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

64 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

65 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.

66 And He took it and ate in their presence.

The Scriptures Opened

67 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

68 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

1. USING THE SUGGESTED COLOR KEY ON THE NEXT PAGE, RE-READ THE TEXT AND MARK THE VERSES ON PAGE 17.
2. THERE ARE MANY OTHER RECURRING IDEAS. WHAT OTHER THEMES WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT?

MENTION OF GOD

QUESTIONS

PERSONAL EMPHASIS

"THE THINGS"

WORK OF CHRIST

"ALL"

THE WORD OF GOD

FOCUS ON THE TOMB

(LOOKING FOR CHRIST IN DEAD PLACES)

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23 "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

24 "And certain of those who were with us went

to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

The Disciples' Eyes Opened

28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone further.

29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

31 Then their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven, and those who were with them gathered together.

34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you."

37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.

43 And He took it and ate in their presence.

The Scriptures Opened

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

MENTION OF GOD

QUESTIONS

PERSONAL EMPHASIS

"THE THINGS"

WORK OF CHRIST

"ALL"

THE WORD OF GOD

FOCUS ON THE TOMB

(LOOKING FOR CHRIST IN DEAD PLACES)

LUKE 24:45

He Is Risen

24 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

6 "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee.

7 "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

8 And they remembered His words.

9 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb, and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

The Road to Emmaus

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

20 "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

22 "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

23 "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

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STEP 3

PERCEIVE



Perceive means to “become aware or conscious of (something); come to realize or understand.” Solomon wrote, “*The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth*” (Ecclesiastes 12:10). As we study the Word of God and find such words of delight, **it is wise to stop, take note of them, and mark them for remembrance.** You can do this in the margins, in your journal, or simply in a notebook.

In the journey of perceiving, **let me emphasize that we must do this prayerfully and cautiously.** Prayerfully because, without the Spirit of God, we will be unable to understand what God wants to communicate. “*Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God*” (1 Corinthians 2:12). Cautiously because we are commanded to accurately handle “*the Word of Truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15).

There are many ways we can observe a passage, but I’ll share eight angles (outside of the ones previously mentioned) that I look for. As you do a **20-10-5-1** through a passage, these aspects will become visible. These various points set to the acrostic “**D.I.S.C.O.V.E.R.**” will be seven keys that will help you “discover” God’s Word:



1. Look for THE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S CHARACTERISTICS (mercy, love, grace, faithfulness, power, justice, etc.). We have already covered the identification of God’s presence (green highlighting) on the pages of Scripture, but I would strongly encourage taking the time to separately mark God’s characteristics.



2. Look for INSPIRING PROMISES TO CLAIM. As we walk through the Word, it is important for us to build our life on the foundation which never changes. “*God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?*” (Numbers 23:19). If “*the worlds were framed by the word of God*” (Hebrews 11:3 NKJV), how much more should our lives be framed by God’s Word? In times of confusion, disappointment, and discouragement, how sweet it is to walk through the Word and discover afresh those highlighted portions of God’s promises.

3. *Look for* **SINS TO AVOID**. Keep in mind that salvation is not obtained by avoiding sin but by receiving God's gift of eternal life through the finished work of Jesus Christ. As followers of Christ, our passion to avoid sin is not in order to have a relationship with God but because we have been given a relationship with Him through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 2:1-10). The one who desires to walk with Jesus Christ and enjoy intimacy with Him will be looking for anything that misses *the mark* (the definition of sin). "*Since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'*" (1 Peter 1:16).



4. *Look for* **COMMANDS TO OBEY**. These commands are not meant to limit our joy, but to show us His love. They are an invitation to know the heart of God. As Jesus said in John 14:21, "*Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*"



5. *Look for* **OVERALL CONTEXT (PEOPLE & PLACES / TIME FRAMES & THINGS)**. Remember that "*all Scripture is breathed out by God*" (2 Timothy 3:16). These details will often link passages and reveal a deeper understanding of a passage or story. All of the Bible is ultimately one story, and oftentimes, when these ideas repeat themselves, it is a call for us to connect the dots. Connecting the dots is much easier when we can quickly go back and see the color-coordinated highlights that remind us of what was said.



6. *Look for* **VERY IMPORTANT WORDS & PHRASES**. Just as a physical key unlocks a door, keywords will be those words which unlock the meaning of the passage, the main thought being conveyed. Highlighting such words will give you a deeper understanding of what God is saying. Find the dictionary definition of the word, look up other times that same word is used in Scripture (you can do this online using a Bible search tool), and take time to investigate the word using *Strong's Concordance* (available free in many places online) to understand the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word being used.





7. *Look for* **EXAMPLES THAT BOTH ENCOURAGE & WARN**. The stories of Scripture not only point us to our need for Jesus Christ, but they also direct us in the way in which we should walk. While the Bible sets before us many good examples to follow, it is also replete with bad examples to not follow. *“Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come”* (1 Corinthians 10:11). We have examples recorded for us throughout the pages of Scripture, showing us how God thinks and responds to the lives of women and men. And what does God want? The prophet Isaiah shared, *“But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at My Word”* (Isaiah 66:2). In a spirit of humility and trembling, may we submit to God’s Word.



8. *Look for* **REPETITION**. What is the Word of God reiterating? Perhaps you will want to highlight or underline the themes running through the passage. This repetition may be a word, phrase, character, or idea.

STEP 4 PRESERVE 

Finally, we must preserve what we gleaned. Scripture commands us to *“Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth”* (Proverbs 4:5). A subtle pitfall is that of meditating on God’s Word and gleaning from its precious truths only to walk away without doing as Moses commanded the children of Israel: *“These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall **teach them diligently** to your children, and shall **talk of them when you sit in your house**, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall **bind them as a sign on your hand**, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall **write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates**”* (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

I have found it helpful, while studying Scripture, to make notes in a notebook or on a piece of paper. Then, at the end of the time, I take those notes and **summarize my gleanings from that verse or passage in concise statements or brief outlines which I then neatly write out in the margins of my Bible for later reference.**

The Word of God commands us to “*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits*” (Psalm 103:2). As you walk through life guided by God’s Word, there will be many moments where certain Scriptures minister to your spirit and change your course of action, attitude, or perspective. I have appreciated the simple practice of **making a small note of the date and event in the margin next to a verse that particularly impacted my life.** It serves as a memorial of thanksgiving to the Lord for meeting me at that place and time in His Word.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Regardless of your methods of study, your time in God’s Word will be a catalyst to intimately knowing and enjoying the Lord Jesus Christ in all His beauty and glory. Our preferences of reading plans, study techniques, highlighting, or note-taking may differ (and that is fine), but may we all agree on this: God does not intend for us to merely accommodate His Word. He wants it to transform us.

As we read, study, sing, meditate upon, memorize, pray through, and speak God’s Word, it will be ingrained upon our heart, mind, and life. Marking Scripture will simply be a tool to help us in our daily practice as we consciously live in God’s presence, dwell on His Word, and allow it (Him!) to be our focus “*day and night*” (Psalm 1:2). The reality is that “*the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever*” (Isaiah 40:8). All who choose such a life – focused on God’s Word – will be “*like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither*” (Psalm 1:3), and in **all** that they do, they **will PROSPER.**

IT'S TIME FOR **YOU** TO
Dive In!



PRACTICE PAGES

PRACTICE PAGE #1

CHOOSE A TEXT:

20 OBSERVATIONS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

10 QUESTIONS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
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9. _____
10. _____

5 MINUTES FOR MEDITATION ON THE POINTS YOU'VE CONSIDERED ABOVE

1 LIFE APPLICATION

PRACTICE PAGE #2

CHOOSE A TEXT:

20 OBSERVATIONS

1. _____
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4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
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11. _____
12. _____
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15. _____
16. _____
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18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

10 QUESTIONS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

5 MINUTES FOR MEDITATION ON THE POINTS YOU'VE CONSIDERED ABOVE

1 LIFE APPLICATION

PRACTICE PAGE #3

CHOOSE A TEXT:

20 OBSERVATIONS

1. _____
2. _____
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4. _____
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6. _____
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20. _____

10 QUESTIONS

1. _____
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5 MINUTES FOR MEDITATION ON THE POINTS YOU'VE CONSIDERED ABOVE

1 LIFE APPLICATION

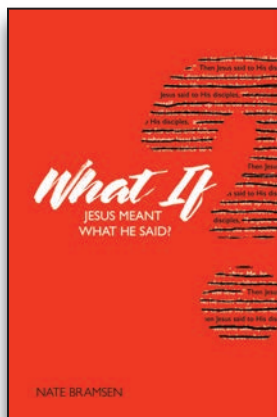


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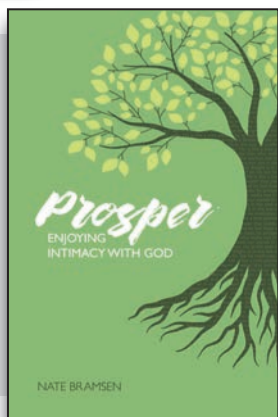
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Bible Meditation 20-10-5-1

After selecting a passage:

OBSERVATION 20
Jot down 20 observations.

INTERROGATION 10
Think of 10 questions.

CONTEMPLATION 5
Take 5 minutes to meditate on the points above.

APPLICATION 1
Write down 1 life application.



Bible Marking SUGGESTED KEY

- GREEN** God Preferences
- ORANGE** Questions
- YELLOW** Attention-getters
- RED** Gospel-related
- OTHER** Not covered above

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*God's
Word*

DEMONSTRATION OF
God's character

INSPIRING PROMISES
we are to claim

SINS THAT WE ARE
told to avoid

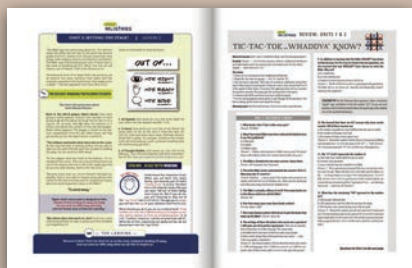
COMMANDS WE ARE
to obey

OVERALL CONTEXT:
People, Places, Time

VERY IMPORTANT:
Words & Phrases

EXAMPLES THAT:
Engourage & Warn

REPETITION OF:
Words & Ideas



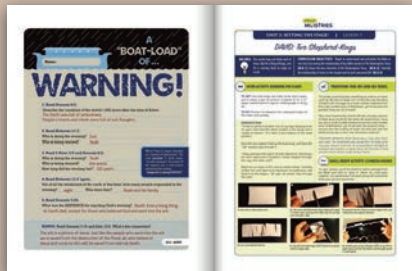
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