

ENJOY YOUR BIBLE!

SIMPLE METHODS FOR REWARDING BIBLE READING AND STUDY



by Berry Kercheville

Preparing Our Hearts

- I. Our Purpose & Approach
 - A. In this series of lessons we want to learn two things:
 1. How to:
 2. How to:
 - B. The key to enjoying Bible study is:
 - C. Testing your perception of Bible study:
 1. How many hours would it take you to read the entire New Testament if you read the text out loud, slowly?
 2. How many hours would it take you to read the Old Testament in the same way?
- II. The Proper Approach to Bible Study: The Inductive Method
 - A. To practice the inductive method properly, we first want to:
 - B. The character of the inductive method:
 1. It is an **independent** study. Therefore:
 2. Above all else, the student desires to:
 3. The student must be a **careful observer**. Therefore:
 4. The method is **scientific** in its procedure:
 - a. It begins with:
 - b. It follows with:
 - c. It pleads for:
 - d. It concludes with:
 5. That being said, what is our final object/goal in study? It is to see, know, and savor God, to the ultimate purpose of a deep, personal relationship with him..

III. Motivated to Study

A. Psalm 139:17 *"How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"* List ways or reasons God's word should be precious to you:

B. How should you read? Let's ask the question another way. How would you read a love letter? Imagine you just received a love letter. *How would you go about reading it?*

C. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. List ways this passage teaches us how to approach Bible study and how to retain what we read and study:

IV. Suggestions for Finding a Pattern & Time for Bible Study:

V. A Word about Versions & Editions of the Bible:

Definition and Purpose of Observation

I. Definition:

- A. Observation is *"the act or faculty of...taking notice; the act or result of considering or marking attentively."* (Webster) Dr. H. T. Kuist defines it as *"the art of seeing things as they really are."* He suggests that it entails seeing *"impartially, intensely, and fearlessly."*
- B. Observation goes beyond mere physical sight; it involves real perception. It is essentially **AWARENESS**.
- C. The general function of observation is to enable one to become **SATURATED** with the particulars of a passage so that one is thoroughly conscious of their existence and of the need for their explanation. Observation supplies the raw materials upon which the mind may operate in order to proceed to accurate interpretation. **WE TOO OFTEN JUMP TO THE INTERPRETIVE STEP BEFORE PRACTICING GOOD OBSERVATION!** This leads to erroneous interpretations.

II. Prerequisites Of Good Observation

- A. **THE WILL TO OBSERVE.** The Bible contains a wealth of material. We all recognize and admit this. But finding and applying that wealth depends totally on the student's own eyes and the *DISPOSITION* which he brings to this task of exploration. Jesus admonished, "Seek and ye shall find" (Matt.7:7). And Proverbs 4:7 tells us, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. and in all your getting, get understanding." *Unwilled* observation soon goes to sleep. If we get a will behind the eye, the eye will become a searchlight and the familiar is made to disclose undreamed treasure.
- B. **EXACTNESS IN OBSERVATION.** "Sir William Osler, the eminent physician, always sought to impress upon young medical students the importance of observing details. While stressing this point in a lecture before a student group he indicated a bottle on his desk. 'This bottle contains a sample for analysis,' he announced. 'It's possible by testing it to determine the disease from which the patient suffers.' Suiting actions to words, he dipped a finger into the fluid and then into his mouth. 'Now,' he continued, 'I am going to pass this bottle around. Each of you taste the contents as I did and see if you can diagnose the case.' As the bottle was passed from row to row, each student gingerly poked his finger in and bravely sampled the contents. Osler then retrieved the bottle. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'Now you will understand what I mean when I speak about details. Had you been observant you would have seen that I put my index finger into the bottle but my middle finger into my mouth.'"

C. **PERSISTENCE IN OBSERVATION.**

"Peering into the mists of gray
That shroud the surface of the bay,
Nothing I see except a veil
Of fog surrounding every sail.
Then suddenly against a cape
A vast and silent form takes shape,
A great ship lies against the shore
Where nothing has appeared before.

Who sees a truth must often gaze
Into a fog for many days;
It may seem very sure to him
Nothing is there but mist-clouds dim.
Then, suddenly, his eyes will see
A shape where nothing used to be.
Discoveries are missed each day
By men who turn too soon away."

Let's Practice Observation Skills

The following story (taken from INDEPENDENT BIBLE STUDY, by Irving Jensen) will be read aloud in class. Follow along and mark those parts of the story that teach a principle about observation skills. The class will be asked to share their findings at the end of the reading. This story is of a student's crisis experience in method under the great scientist and teacher, Professor J. Louis Agassiz. It has become a classic in introducing the fundamentals of original firsthand study.

The Student, the Fish, and Agassiz

By the Student

It was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz, and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterwards proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire, and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter I replied that while I wished to be well grounded in all departments of zoology, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

"When do you wish to begin?" he asked.

"Now," I replied.

This seemed to please him, and with an energetic "Very well," he reached from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

"Take this fish," said he, "and look at it; we call it a Haemulon [pronounced Hem-yu-lon] by and by I will ask what you have seen."

With that he left me, but in a moment returned with explicit instructions as to the care of the object entrusted to me.

"No man is fit to be a naturalist," said he, "who does not know how to take care of specimens."

I was to keep the fish before me in a tin tray, and occasionally moisten the surface with alcohol from the jar, always taking care to replace the stopper tightly. Those were not the days of ground glass stoppers, and elegantly shaped exhibition jars; all the old students will recall the huge, neckless glass bottles with the leaky, wax-besmeared corks half eaten by insects and begrimed with cellar dust. Entomology was a cleaner science than ichthyology, but the example of the professor, who had unhesitatingly plunged to the bottom of the jar to produce the fish, was infectious; and though this alcohol had "a very ancient and fishlike smell," I really dared not show any aversion within these sacred precincts, and treated the alcohol as though it were pure water. Still I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. My friends at home, too, were annoyed, when they discovered that no amount of eau de cologne would drown the perfume which haunted me like a shadow.

In ten minutes I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the

professor, who had, however left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, my specimen was dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate it from a fainting-fit, and looked with anxiety for a return of the normal sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed, an hour, another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around; looked it in the face — ghastly; from behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three-quarter's view — just as ghastly. I was in despair; at an early hour I concluded that lunch was necessary; so, with infinite relief, the fish was carefully replaced in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation again looked at it. I might not use a magnifying glass; instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish; it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my finger down its throat to feel how sharp its teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me — I would draw the fish; and now with surprise I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.

"That is right," said he; "a pencil is one of the best of eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet and your bottle corked."

With these encouraging words he added,

"Well, what is it like?"

He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me: the fringed gill — arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips, and lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fin, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body. When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then, with an air of disappointment, —

"You have not looked very carefully; "why," he continued, more earnestly, "you haven't seen one of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plainly before your eyes as the fish itself; look again, look again!" and he left me to my misery.

I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish! But now I set myself to my task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, until I saw how just the professor's criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly, and when, towards its close, the professor inquired, —

"Do you see it yet?"

"No," I replied, "I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before."

"That is next best," said he earnestly, "but I won't hear you now; put away your fish and go home; perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you before you look at the fish."

This was disconcerting; not only must I think of my fish all night, studying, without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be; but also without

reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had a bad memory; so I walked home by Charles River in a distracted state, with my two perplexities.

The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring; here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw.

"Do you perhaps mean," I asked, "that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired organs?"

His thoroughly pleased, "Of course, of course!" repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he had discoursed most happily and enthusiastically — as he always did — upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

"Oh, look at your fish!" he said, and left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour he returned and heard my new catalogue.

"That is good, that is good!" he repeated, "but that is not all; go on." And so, for three long days, he placed that fish before my eyes, forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. "Look, look, look," was his repeated injunction.

This was the best entomological lesson I ever had — a lesson whose influence has extended to the details of every subsequent study; a legacy the professor has left to me, as he has left it to many others, of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part.

A year afterward, some of us were amusing ourselves with chalking outlandish beasts upon the museum blackboard. We drew prancing star-fishes; frogs in mortal combat; hydraheaded worms; stately crawl-fishes, standing on their tails, bearing aloft umbrellas; and grotesque fishes, with gaping mouths and staring eyes. The professor came in shortly after, and was amused as any, at our experiments. He looked at the fishes.

"Haemulons, every one of them," he said.

"Mr. -----drew them."

True; and to this day, if I attempt to draw a fish, I can draw nothing but Haemulons.

The fourth day, a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblances and differences between the two; another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves; the odor had become a pleasant perfume; and even now, the sight of an old, six-inch, worm-eaten cork brings fragrant memories!

The whole group of Haemulons was thus brought in review; and, whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, the preparation and examination of the bony framework, or the description of the various parts, Agassiz's training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them.

"Facts are stupid things," he would say, "until brought into connection with some general law."

At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects; but what I had gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

Seeing Structure in a Text

- I. In the observation process we are to observe two main things: (1) What God says and (2) How God says it. Example: Matthew 1:1-7.
 - A. What did God say:

 - B. How did God say it:

- II. In observing structure, look for the following laws of composition:
 - A. Radiation:

 - B. Repetition:

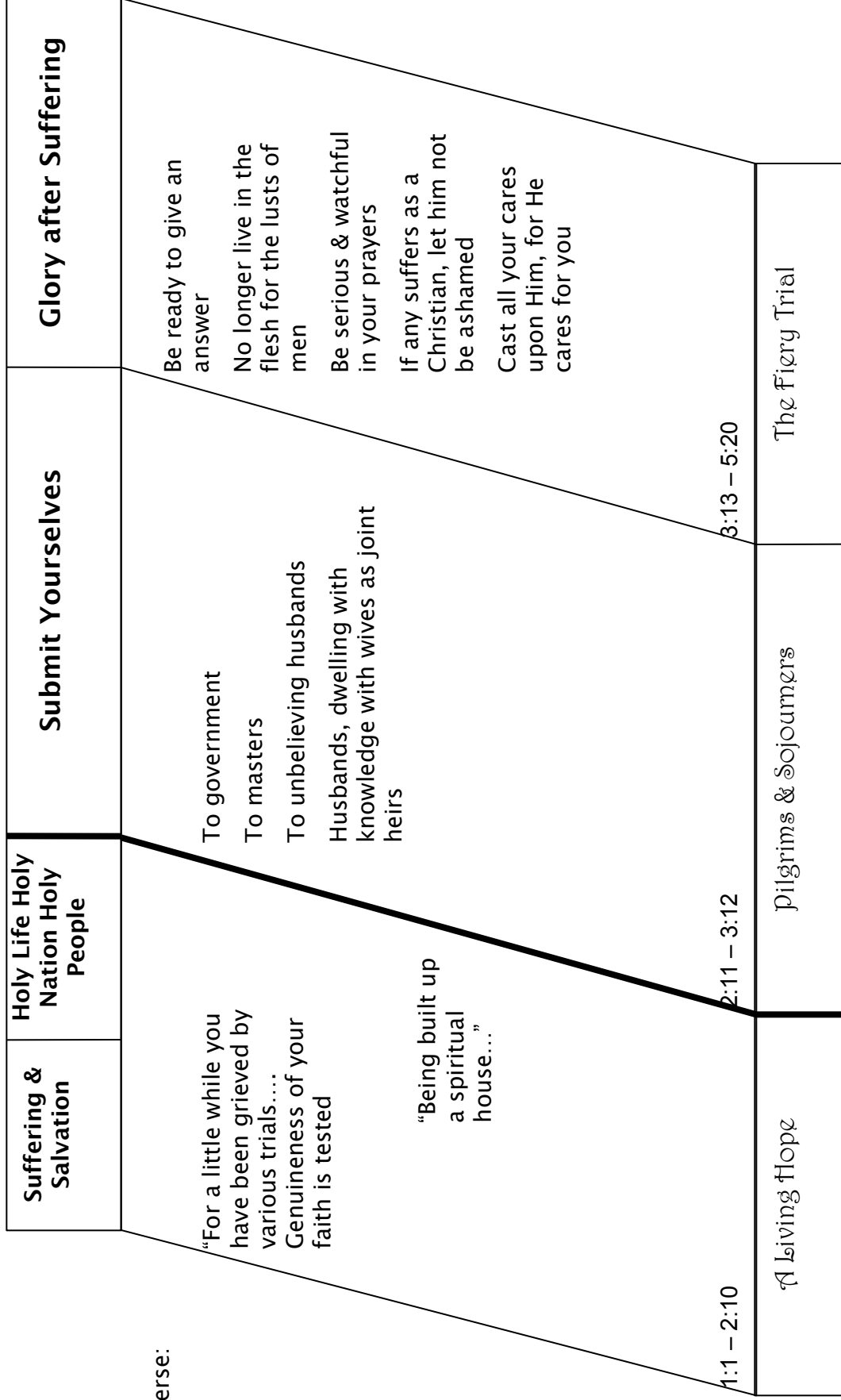
 - C. Progression:

 - D. Contrast:

 - E. Alternation:

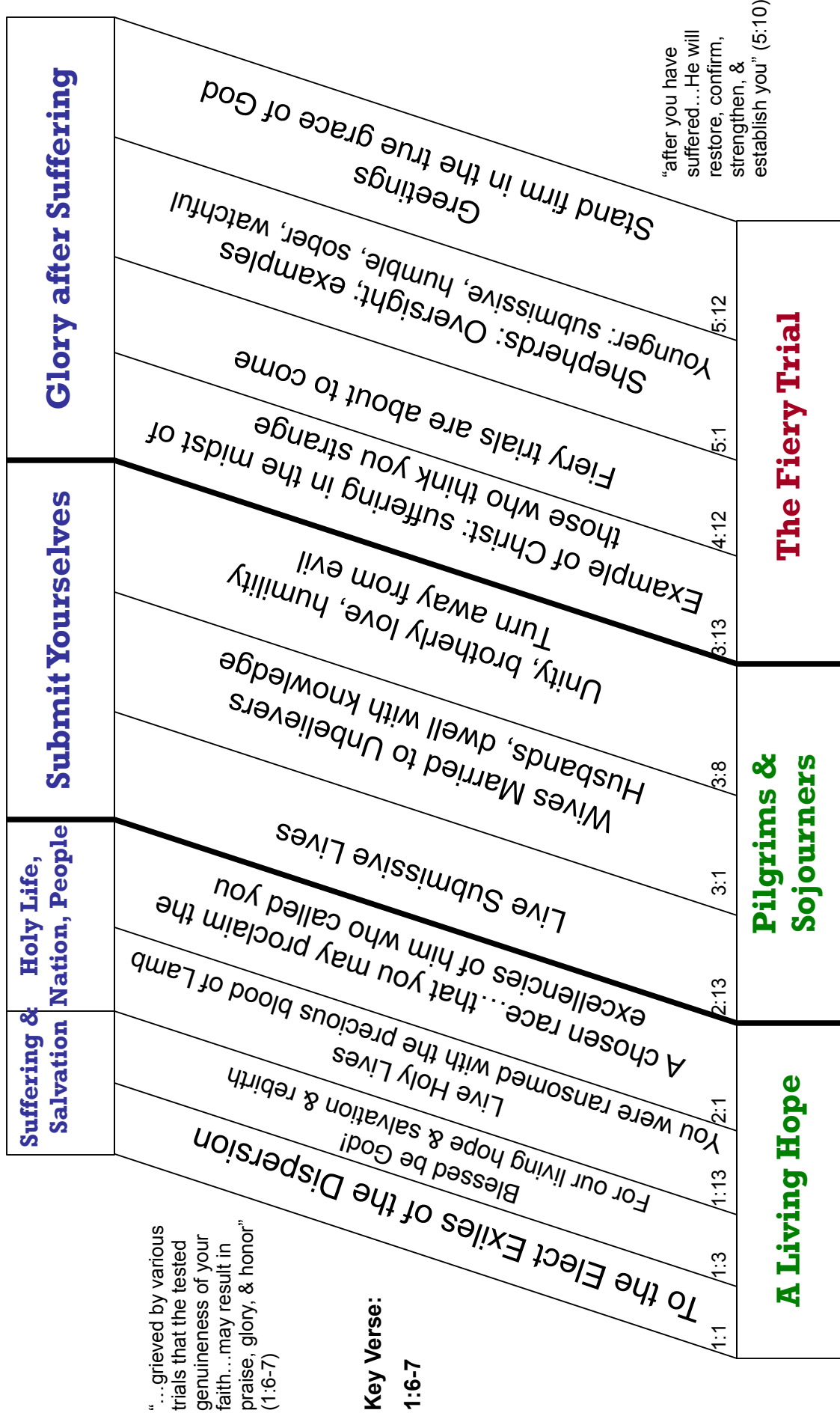
 - F. Pivot:

1 Peter: A Living Hope Amid Trials from Without



Key Verse:
1:6-7

1 Peter: Hope Amid Trials from Without



“...grieved by various trials that the tested genuineness of your faith...may result in praise, glory, & honor” (1:6-7)

Key Verse:

1:6-7

RECIPIENTS: Exiles from Rome Living in Northern Asia Minor

2 Peter:

Key Verses:

1

2

3

Surveying a Book

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Where does one begin in Bible study? The proper order is always: Image the whole, then execute the parts; survey study, then analytical study. There are three main reasons for the *Survey*:
 - 1. To see each part in its intended emphasis
 - 2. To see each part in its relation to the other parts
 - 3. To give you a "map" of the book
- B. Most are aware of the importance of background information on a book before actual study begins. Therefore we briefly mention that one should know something about:
 - 1. The historical background
 - 2. The author
 - 3. The date of writing
 - 4. The purpose of the book

II. THE SURVEY PROCESS

- A. Read, read, read. There is no short-cut. The *survey* process usually involves at least two brief or cursory readings:
 - 1. The first reading should be done in one sitting if possible to simply get a feel of the book and enjoy the content and see the highlights. In this reading, pay no attention to organization or chapter divisions. Remember, the pencil is the best eyes, therefore make notations and at the end of the reading write down some of your initial impressions such as main characters, key thoughts, geography, purposes, and general theme.
 - 2. In the second reading, seek to discover the organization of the book, how the writer accomplished his goal, and the outline of the book. Remember, both readings are somewhat cursory in nature. Do not get bogged down in studying the details.
- B. Making a **Survey Chart** involves the following:
 - 1. Assign chapter titles to each chapter. Sometimes you may see that a segment needs to be a little longer or shorter than a chapter depending on the flow of thought. Start with a chapter length and then make adjustments as you go along.
 - 2. Look at *repeated* items (words and events) in the book which gives clues to the organization of the book. Note these and look for ways to incorporate such thoughts on the chart. In historical books, contrast the first and last chapters for clues to the scope and progression of the book.
 - 3. Find the main *division(s)* in the book and note this by a thick line on the chart.
 - 4. Assign a theme, stated in as few words as possible. Place this at the top of the chart. Choose a key verse that might summarize the theme of the book.

Directions for Textual Worksheet

The following worksheet is one of the most important Bible study tools you will every use. Most of us feel inhibited about writing too many notes or doing too much underlining, etc, in our personal Bibles. The textual worksheet allows us to do all the underlining and "coloring" of the texts that we wish without fear of making a mess. Since we have already noted that the first rule of good observation is *"the pencil is one of the best eyes,"* the worksheet is an excellent tool to allow you to see as much as you can in a text. I have often spent up to four and five hours on one worksheet, savoring and enjoying all that the Holy Spirit revealed in His word. This is truly one of the most enjoyable and profitable ways of studying a text.

The following text from Hebrews 10 will be done in class as an example of the value of this method of study. Spend the next fifteen minutes noting all you can see and making observations on your sheet. Underline, box, circle, color, make arrows, and whatever else comes to mind to allow your mind the freedom to see all there is that God has revealed. Remember, until you have actually written your thoughts down or made notations, your mind is not free to see more. So use your pencils and practice. At the conclusion of the fifteen minutes we will go around the class asking for you to share the things you saw in the text.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,
20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,
25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.
28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.
29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?
30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people."
31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

TEXTUAL RE-CREATION

1 JOHN 1:1-4

THAT

WHICH WAS FROM THE **BEGINNING**

1. we have **HEARD**
2. we have **SEEN**
3. we have **LOOKED UPON**
4. our hands have **HANDLED**

THE WORD OF LIFE of

(for the **LIFE WAS MANIFESTED**

- and we have **SEEN**
- and bear **WITNESS**
- and **SHOW** unto you

THAT ETERNAL LIFE

--which was **WITH THE FATHER**

--and was **MANIFESTED** unto us)

(that which we have seen and heard)

DECLARE WE UNTO YOU

THAT

You also may have **FELLOWSHIP** with US and truly **OUR FELLOWSHIP** is

1. with the **FATHER &**
2. with His Son **JESUS CHRIST**

AND

THESE THINGS WE WRITE.....THAT

YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL

NOTES

Christ's life manifested for the purpose of us having eternal life.

Apostles have confirmed this to us by an eyewitness account.

Through this account we obtain fellowship with God and Christ.

This was done so our joy could be complete

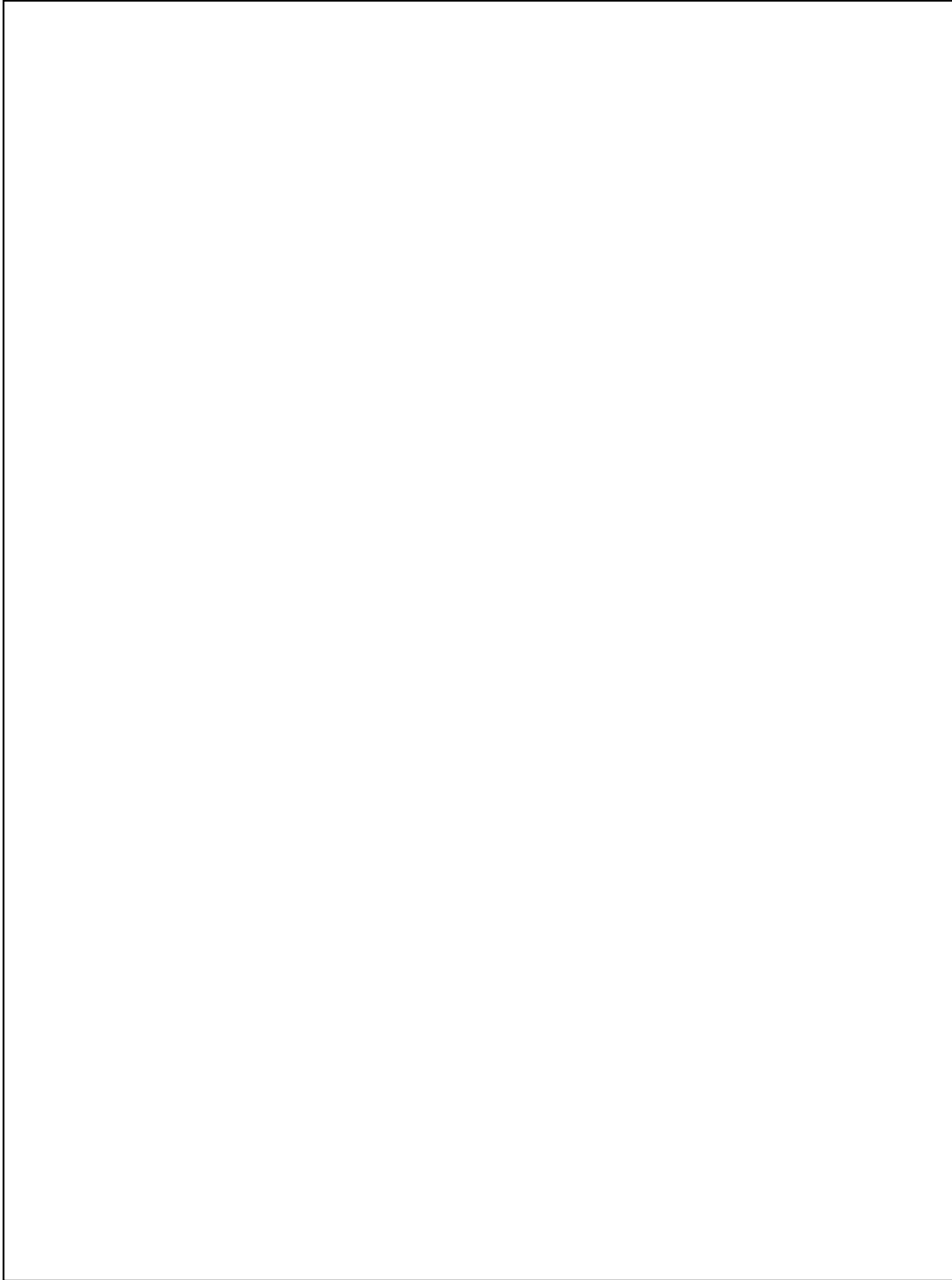
APPLICATIONS

1. Our faith is based on eyewitness accounts.
2. To have fellowship with God, we must have fellowship with the apostles' message
3. In this fellowship we can have complete joy

TEXTUAL RE-CREATION

1 JOHN 1:5-10

NOTES:



APPLICATIONS