

Specific Things to Observe When Reading Scripture

1. Key Words.
When you first read, look for key words, words that you think are important to the passage. Repetition of words will sometimes help you identify them. Underline them. Each word gets a different color
2. Advice, Admonition, Warnings, Promises.
Be alert to what the passage tells you to do: Commands. Advice, Admonitions, Warnings, Promises and Encouragement. Look for imperative words. ie. Give, clean, Do, Take, don't.
3. Reasons for doing things, Results of doing things.
When the passage counsels you to do something, does the passage give a reason for this advice? Is there a cause and effect relationship; If you do this, this will happen. Often with warnings there will be results listed.
4. Contrasts, Comparisons, Illustrations.
Make special note of the way the passage uses contrast a, comparisons, illustration to develop the ideas. Comparison associates things that are similar. Contrasts associate things that are opposite often introduced with "but".
5. Repetition or Progression of Ideas.
Be on the lookout for repetition of words, ideas or phrases. This will give you an idea as to the purpose of the passage.
Take special note of images, and how they develop the ideas. Is there an order? How do the ideas build to a key idea or point?
6. Questions.
Watch for how questions are used. Is it used to introduce an idea? Is a question used to summarize an idea or to challenge thinking.
7. Important.
Connectives are important in revealing.
But – introduces contrast, **If**- introduces a conditional clause, **For, before, therefore** – introduce reason and result, **In, Into, with** – important connectives, **In order that** – sets forth a purpose.
8. Grammatical Construction: verbs/ nouns/ pronouns/adverbs/adjectives.
The term grammar may worry you. Fight that fear – How statements are constructed tells us a lot.
Watch for verbs and their tenses. How are pronouns used? Watch for the use of verbs and adverbs and how they describe things.
9. Atmosphere / Emphatic Statements.
What is the tone of the passage? What is the mood! Caution, humble, joyful, thanksgiving, zeal, anger, concern, encouragement, commanding?
How does the author use emphatic statements, words or phrases to reveal his feelings?
10. Literary Form.
Always note the literary form: discourse (communication or debate), narrative (spoken or written account of connected events; a story), poetic (verse), dramatic, parable (simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson), apocalyptic (resembling the end of the world). Is the writer using literal or figurative terms? General Structure. Note the arrangement of ideas in a passage, the relationship of verses and section to one another. Sometimes the author makes a general statement and then explains the examples. Other times he may list he may list a series of ideas and summarizes with a general statement.