



# How To Read the Book

# How Hungry Are You?

Finding the meat in God's Word will require some work on your part.

Moving beyond the baby food that comes from casual reading will require serious resolve.



# Before You Start

Make the prayer of the Psalmist (119:18) your own before you start:

“Open my eyes [that is, my spiritual understanding] that I may see wonderful things in your law.”



# Cut the Scripture Straight

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

• 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV



# Cut the Scripture Straight

To “rightly divide” — an expression from Paul’s tent-making experience — means “to cut straight.” Tents were made of smaller skins sewn together. If not cut straight pieces wouldn’t fit together properly.



# SENTENCES

There are 31,173 verses in the Bible made up of 773,746 words used in very short sentences like “Jesus wept” and very long sentences as in Paul’s letters.

The cat is black.

The cat is green.

The cat is purple.

The cat is orange.

# See the Details

One of the most critical skills needed in reading the Bible is the ability to see the details.

Go over and over and over the text, looking for details and connections.



# Observation

- Read seriously.



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- Note as many details as possible.



# Observation

- Read seriously.
- Note as many details as possible.
- Refrain from interpreting or applying the text at this point.



# Consider The Details

Repetition of words

Contrasts / Comparisons

Lists

Cause and Effects

Figures of Speech

Conjunctions / Grammar



# Context Matters

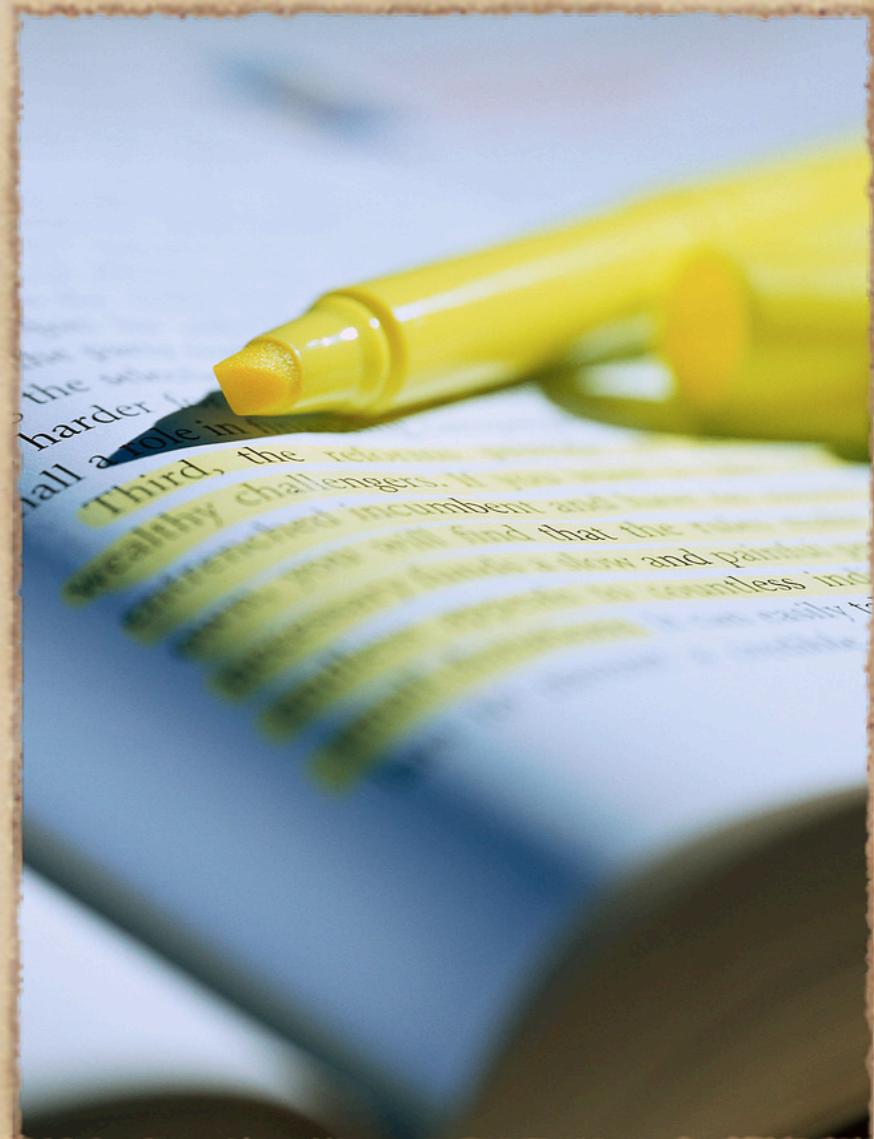
Analyze and understand small pieces of text.



Analyze and understand big pieces of text.

# Repetition of Words

Look for words and phrases that repeat.



# Repetition of Words

## 1 John 2

<sup>15</sup> Do not **love** the **world** or anything in the **world**. If anyone **loves** the **world**, **love** for the Father is not in them.

<sup>16</sup> For everything in the **world**—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the **world**.

<sup>17</sup> The **world** and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

# Contrasts

Look for items, ideas, or individuals that are contrasted with each other. Remember that contrast focuses on differences.



# Contrasts

The one who despises the word

will be in debt to it,

But the one who fears the commandment

will be rewarded.

• Proverbs 13:13

# Comparisons

Look for items, ideas, or individuals that are compared with each other. Remember that comparison focuses on similarities.



# Comparisons

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

• Matthew 13:31-32

# Lists

Explore the significance of lists (more than two items) and consider...

- the order
- groupings

**15** therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;

<sup>b</sup>in a moment he will be broken  
<sup>c</sup>beyond healing.

**16** There are <sup>d</sup>six things that the LORD hates,

<sup>d</sup>seven that are an abomination to him:

**17** <sup>e</sup>haughty eyes, <sup>f</sup>a lying tongue, and <sup>g</sup>hands that shed innocent blood,

**18** <sup>h</sup>a heart that devises wicked plans, <sup>i</sup>feet that make haste to run to evil,

**19** <sup>j</sup>a false witness who <sup>k</sup>breathes out lies, and one who <sup>a</sup>sows discord among brothers.

# Cause and Effect

As you read look for a stated cause and then the effect of that cause.

Note that there may be more than one effect from a single cause mentioned in the text.



# Cause and Effect

## CAUSE

A gentle answer

but a harsh word



## EFFECT

turns away wrath,

stirs up anger.

• Proverbs 15:1

# Cause and Effect

## CAUSE

For he who does wrong



## EFFECT

will receive the consequences of the wrong  
which he has done, and that without partiality.

• Colossians 3:25

# Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are images in which words are used in a sense other than the normal, literal sense. They paint images to which we can relate.



# Figures of Speech

Identify the figures of speech in Psalm 119:105

Thy word is a lamp to my feet,

And a light to my path.

# Conjunctions

Conjunctions are like the couplings that hold train cars together. They connect things. Identify the function of the conjunction and determine what the conjunction connects.



# Conjunctions

Examples of Conjunctions:

- And
- For
- But
- Therefore
- Since
- Because

FANBOYS = For / And / Not / But / Or / Yet / So

# Conjunctions

But generally indicates a contrast.

Therefore or So usually presents some type of conclusion based on earlier arguments or reasons.

Where you see a “therefore” find out what it’s there for.

# Conjunctions

Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the Lord had given great victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, **but** he was a leper.

• 2 Kings 5:1

# Verbs

Verbs communicate the action of the sentence.

Note whether the verbal action in the text is past, present, future, active, passive, or imperative.



# Note the Tense

Past Tense = I went

Present Tense = I go

Future Tense = I will go

Note especially imperative verbs like "Go" because these are often God's commands to us.

# Note the Tense

Active Verbs = the subject is doing the action

Passive Verbs = the subject is acted upon

Note: In Paul's letters passive verbs often underscore what God has done for us and active verbs define what we do for God or what He commands us to do.

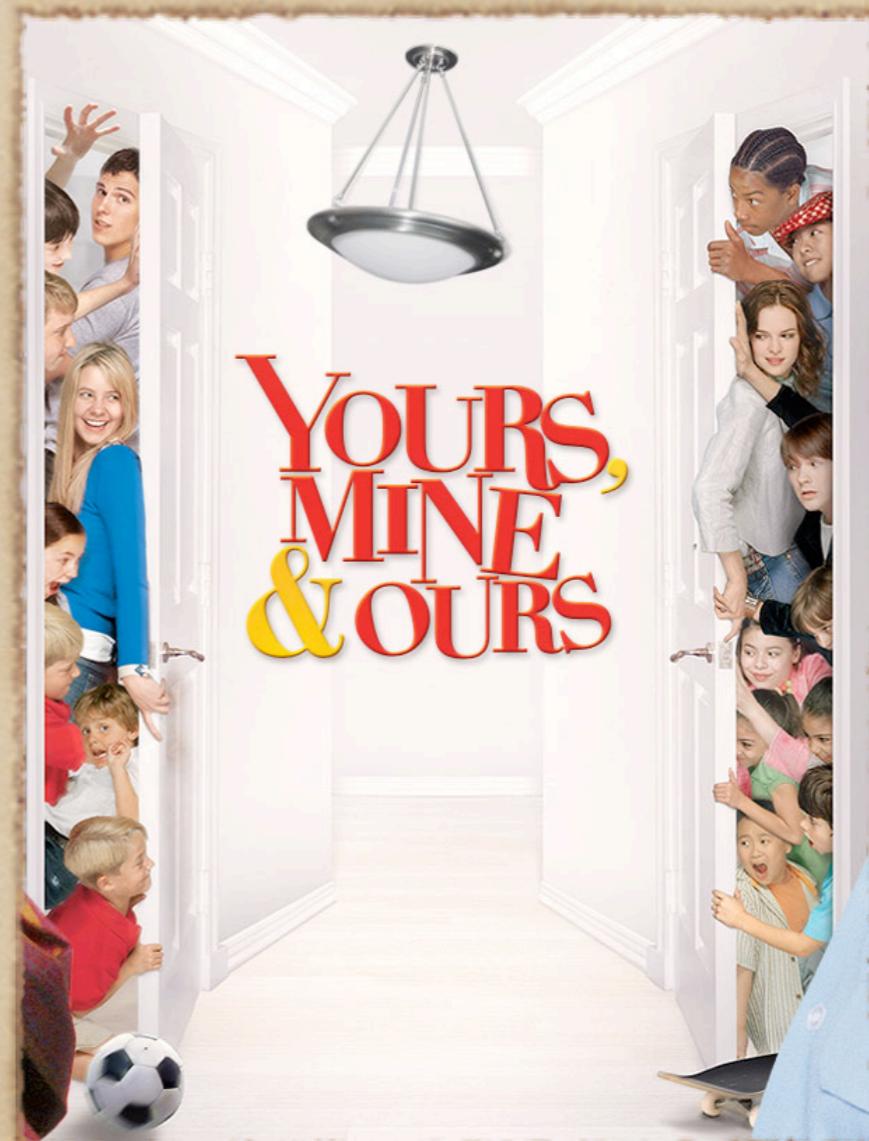
# Note the Tense

Since then, you **have been raised** [passive] with Christ,  
**set** [active] your hearts on things above, where Christ  
is, seated at the right hand of God.

• Colossians 3:1

# Pronouns

Pay attention to all pronouns and be sure to identify the antecedent (to whom or what the pronoun refers).



v. 7 ← CONJUNCTION  
TIMING BUT You WILL RECEIVE Power WHEN  
DEFINITE ARTICLE THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ON YOU; AND \*

LIST Near to Far  
YOU - WILL - BE MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM  
AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE \*  
\* FIGURE OF SPEECH  
ENDS OF THE EARTH.

# Observations in Acts 1:8

But [conjunction] you [plural] will [future tense] receive [passive verb] power [see "Holy Spirit"] when [cause/effect; timing] the [definite article] Holy Spirit [the person of "power"] comes [passive] on you [plural]; and [conjunction] you [plural] will [future tense] be [active verb] my [antecedent in v. 7] witnesses [plural; purpose of "power"] in [note the following list from near to far and smaller to larger] Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to [note figure of speech] the ends of the earth.

# PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs are longer and more complex units of text. Apply the same methods of observation used at the sentence level plus some additional methods.

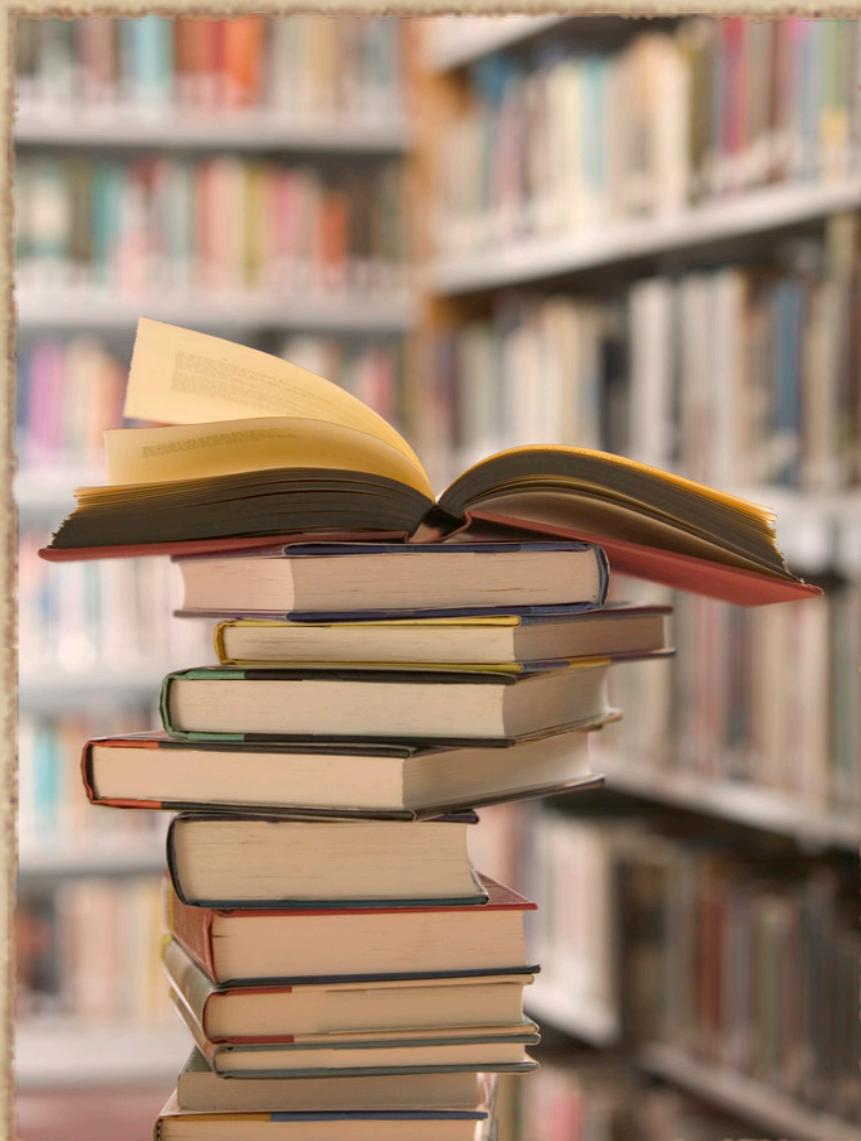
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# General and Specific

Observe how a paragraph begins. Consider if there is movement from a general statement to specifics of the idea or from specifics to a general statement.



# General to Specific

And Asa did good and right  
in the sight of the Lord his God.

2 Chronicles 14:2



Explanation of how Asa, king of  
Judah, did good and right  
in the sight of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 14:3-8

# Specific to General

Specifics about the  
nature of love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8



General statement or  
summary about the  
nature of love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

# Questions & Answers

Note if the text is built  
on a question and  
answer format.



# Questions and Answers

who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?

Psalm 24:3



Answer follows in verse 4 (note the list)

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood,  
And has not sworn deceitfully.

# Dialogue

If the text includes dialogue, note who is speaking and to whom.



# Dialogue

- Who are the participants?
- Who is speaking to whom?
- What is the setting?
- Are other people around?
- Are they listening?
- Are they participating in the dialogue?
- Is the dialogue an argument, discussion, lecture, chat?
- What is the point of the dialogue?

# Dialogue

Then the Lord sent  
Nathan to David. And he  
came to him and said...

2 Samuel 12:1-15



# Purpose/Result Statements

Look for phrases or sentences that describe the reason, the result, or the consequence of some action.



# Purpose/Result Statements

Purpose/Result statements are frequently introduced by result-oriented conjunctions such as “that,” “in order that,” and “so that.”

I have hidden your word in my heart that I may not sin against you.

• Psalm 119:11

# Means

Note if a sentence indicates that something was done by means of someone or something (answers how). See if you can insert “by means of” into the sentence.



# Means

How can a young man  
keep his way pure?

Purpose or  
action desired.

By keeping it according  
to Thy word.

The means for  
accomplishing  
that action.

• Psalm 119:9

# Conditional Clauses

Conditional clauses present conditions whereby some action, consequence, reality, or result will happen.



# Conditional Clauses

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways

Conditional aspect introduced by the conditional conjunction “if.”

then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Resultant action sometimes (not always) introduced by “then.”

• 2 Chronicles 7:14

# Conditional Clauses

If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in darkness,

we lie and do not live out the truth.

• 1 John 1:6

Conditional aspect introduced by the conditional conjunction “if.”

Resultant action has no specific introductory words.

# Actions

Take note of the actions of people and those of God in the passage. Who does what? What is the connection between what God does and what people do? Is God described in relational terms like Father?



# Actions

The Rich Man and Lazarus | Luke 16:19-31

There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores.

# Emotional Terms

The Bible is a book about relationships, primarily relationships between God and people. Look for words that convey emotion.



# Emotional Terms

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and **felt compassion**, and **ran** and **embraced** him and **kissed** him.

• Luke 15:20



# The Tone of the Passage

Note the overall tone of the passage. The tone will be closely related to the identification of emotional terms. Look for joy, anger, passion, disappointment, etc.



# The Tone of the Passage

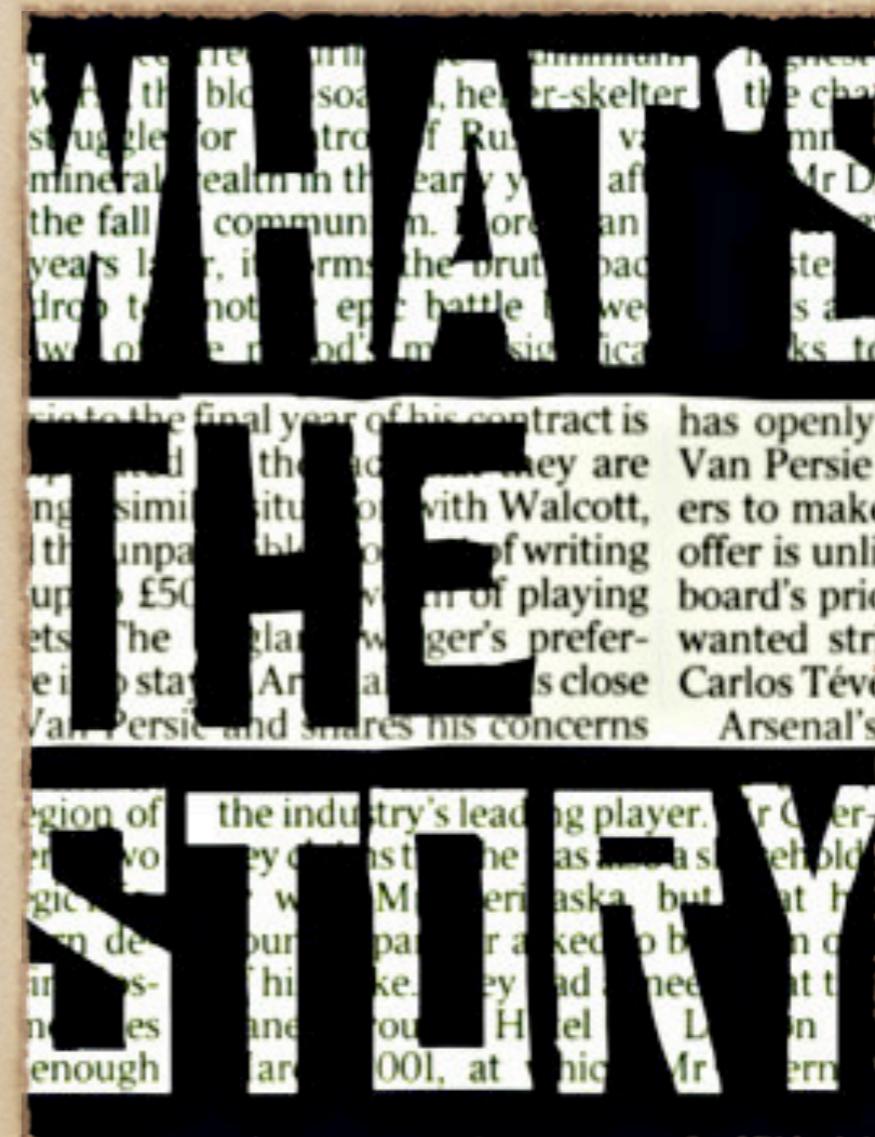
Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they servants of Abraham? So am I.

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

• 2 Corinthians 11:22-23

# DISCOURSES

Units of text that are longer than paragraphs. When reading these longer units of biblical text, apply the lessons about observation that you use in reading sentences and paragraphs.



# Read Carefully

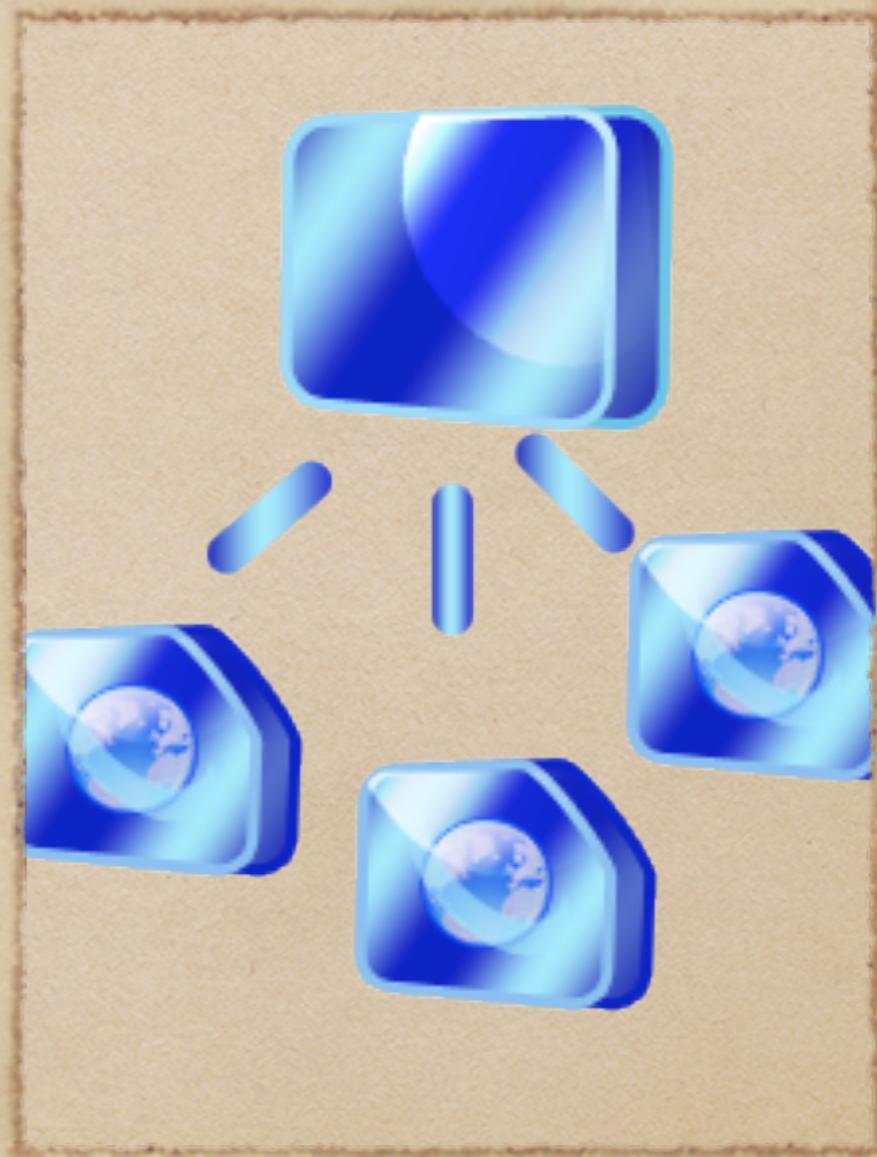
“It’s not what you look at  
that matters, it’s what  
you see.”

• Henry David Thoreau



# Connections

Consider how the paragraphs and discourses you are reading relate to and connect with the paragraphs/episodes that come before and after the one you are studying.



# Connections

Look for connections...

- repeated words
- repeated themes
- cause-and-effect
- conjunctions between paragraphs
- time sequence

# Connections

Mark 8:14-21

Dialogue between Jesus and disciples. Note that they do not really understand who Jesus is.

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Dialogue between Jesus and a blind man. Illustrates that insight often comes slowly.

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Mark 8:14-21

Dialogue between Jesus and disciples. Note that they do not really understand who Jesus is.

Mark 8:22-26

Dialogue between Jesus and a blind man. Illustrates that insight often comes slowly.

Mark 8:27-30

Dialogue between Jesus and disciples. Peter acknowledges that he now sees Jesus clearly.

# Story Shifts

Look for places where  
the story seems to take  
a new turn.



# Story Shifts

Example:

In Paul's letters shifts take the form of a major break.

Ephesians in a nutshell:

Chapters 1-3  
Doctrinal



Chapters 4-6  
Practical Living

In Chapters 1-3 Paul used explanatory or descriptive types of verbs that describe what Christ has done for us.



In Chapters 4-6 Paul used imperative verbs that call us to live in a manner worthy of Christ and all He has done for us.

# Story Shifts

In narrative passages shifts are usually signaled by episodes. These episodes function as pivots on which the story shifts or takes a new turn.



# Story Shifts

2 Samuel 1-10

David is strong, victorious, and confident.

# Story Shifts

2 Samuel 1-10

David is strong, victorious and confident.

2 Samuel 13-24

David is insecure, weak, and indecisive.

# Story Shifts

2 Samuel 1-10

David is strong, victorious and confident.

2 Samuel 11-12

David sins by committing adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband killed.



Pivot  
Event

2 Samuel 13-24

David is insecure, weak, and indecisive.

# Interchange

A literary device, used primarily in narrative, that involves contrasting or comparing two stories at the same time as part of the story development.



# Interchange

1 Samuel 1-3

Eli the priest



Hophni & Phinehas  
Disobedient sons

Hannah, wife of Elkanah



Barren  
Begged God for a Son  
Mother of Samuel

# Interchange

1:1-2:11 | Hannah and Samuel

2:12-17 | Hophni & Phinehas

2:18-21 | Samuel

2:22-25 | Hophni & Phinehas

2:26 | Samuel

2:27-36 | Hophni & Phinehas

3:1-9 | Samuel

3:10-21 | Both stories come together

# Chiasm

A literary feature especially used in the Old Testament. In a chiasm a list of items, ideas, or events is structured in such a way that the first item parallels the last, the second item parallels the second to the last item, and so forth.

<b>B</b> Beta (bay-tah)	<b>Γ</b> Gamma (gam-ah)	<b>Δ</b> Delta (del-ta)	<b>Ε</b> Epsilon (ep-si-lon)
<b>Θ</b> Theta (thay-tah)	<b>Ι</b> Iota (eye-o-tah)	<b>Κ</b> Kappa (kap-pah)	<b>Λ</b> Lambda (lamb-dah)
<b>Ξ</b> Xi (zie)	<b>Ο</b> Omicron (om-e-cron)	<b>Π</b> Pi (pie)	<b>Ρ</b> Rho (roe)
<b>Υ</b> Upsilon (yu-si-lon)	<b>Φ</b> Phi (fee)	<b>Χ</b> Chi (kie)	<b>Ψ</b> Psi (sigh)

# Chiasm

These verses are  
called 'chiastic'  
because in making of  
the Greek letter X  
(chi), you draw lines  
from right to left and  
left to right.

# Chiasm

They are called 'chiastic' because in making of the Greek letter X (chi), you draw lines from right to left and left to right.

Genesis 9:6

- (1) whoever sheds
- (2) the blood
- (3) of man,
- (3') by man
- (2') shall his blood
- (1') be shed

# Inclusió

Closely related to chiasm, but not as complicated. A literary technique in which a passage (a story, poem, etc) has the same or similar word, statement, event, or theme at the beginning and the end.



# Inclusio

O Lord, our Lord,  
How majestic is Thy name  
in all the earth. • Psalm 8:1

Verses 2-8

O Lord, our Lord,  
How majestic is Thy name  
in all the earth. • Psalm 8:9

Inclusio is also called  
bracketing or framing.



# Remember

You will not graduate  
from Bible study until  
you meet the Author  
face to face.



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