

Observation, looks at the facts of the text and gathers historical information. Historical background is the bridge to interpretation. Interpretation attempts to discover what the text meant to the original audience in its proper historical context.

Interpretation always asks two basic questions:

1 - What was the writer saying?

2 - How does that relate to life today?

Looking for a Spiritual Lesson. A spiritual lesson is a **timeless truth** that applies regardless of time, audience or culture. It is a principle about God or His relationship with man that is valuable for Christians of all times.

Questions to ask when looking for a spiritual lesson:

- ✦ Why did the author write this?
- ✦ What was the affect on the original audience?
- ✦ What does this teach about God? What does it say about man?
- ✦ Is there a command to obey?
- ✦ Is there a promise to claim? A condition to that promise?
- ✦ Is there a warning to heed? An example to follow or avoid?

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...2 Tim 3:16 The lessons we learn from scripture are spiritual principles that are applicable for all time. Ask yourself:

- ✦ How did God deal with the person or people involved?
- ✦ How did they respond to their circumstances?
- ✦ How did they conduct themselves in a crisis? How did they cope with setbacks?
- ✦ What did they accomplish? How did they influence others?
- ✦ What strengths/talents are revealed? What spiritual fruit or personal growth?
- ✦ What faults/shortcomings are exposed? Did they learn from their failures?
- ✦ How do they treat other people?
- ✦ How is the worldview different today?

State a spiritual lesson in one brief, simple sentence. Note: It takes time to boil it down to a short concise sentence, for the benefit of the group's understanding.

Something to think about:

- ✦ Look for Scripture that backs up the lesson.
- ✦ Don't pressure yourself to come up with something profound. Your goal is to make the lesson clear, easy to remember and practical to apply.