

EXPLORING THE BIBLE | 4 • OBSERVATION

SMALL GROUP STUDY | EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

WEEK 4: Exploring the Bible | Observation

Invite group members to share their results from verse mapping on their own.

Play the teaching video for Week 4.

- [You Tube](#)
- [Vimeo](#)

Discussion Questions

- Why is it essential to understand Bible verses in their context? How much did you see that as you did verse mapping? Can you think of an example of a Bible verse being misinterpreted by taking it out of context?
- How can studying the ancient culture and circumstances when the Old and New Testaments were written help us understand and glean wisdom applicable to our modern world?
- Referring to the New Testament letters, Jake explained, “When you understand who the authors are, their shared history with the audience, and the audience’s context, it helps you better understand the content.” Reading these letters is like listening to only one side of a phone conversation. The issues addressed are clues as to what was going on among the people to whom the letters were directed.

These letters supply vital information about our faith that holds true throughout time and culture, whether we are facing similar specific issues that they were or not.

Can you think of an issue mentioned in one of the New Testament letters that was happening in their culture and time but not ours? What principles did you learn from it that you could apply today?

- Based on the example in the sermon from the book of Philippians, what key themes or messages did the authors want to convey?

How can you apply these themes to your own life and circumstances?

Going Deeper | Put into Practice

- Read Philippians 2:1-18. Pull out your observation sheet and fill it out. Use the list and resources below to help you.
- Jake listed the following literary devices authors use to indicate when something is important and how to apply them in observing the scriptures. Keep this list handy as you study.
 - Lists: When you see a list of things, write them out as bullet points.
 - Contrasts and Comparisons: Notice when the author pits two things against one another. Contrasts compare opposite things like good and bad. Comparisons highlight similarities by using the words *like* and *as*.
 - Terms of Conclusion: Sections starting with *Therefore*, *Thus*, *So that*, and *For this reason* are called “terms of conclusion.”
 - Repeated Concepts: Notice recurring words or ideas. These direct us towards the author’s main idea.
 - Commands: Is there anything the readers or the audience are being told to do?
 - Timing: If there’s a comment about how much time has passed, note it.
 - Geographic Locations: Pay attention to the setting and locations that are mentioned.
- Check out a study Bible or two this week to familiarize yourself with its features. Here are some links to online sources.
 - Blueletterbible.com
 - Biblestudytools.com
 - Biblestudyhub.com
 - NIV Study Bible
 - [Selection of study Bibles](#)