

1 John 1:1 – 4

English Standard Version

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard,
2 which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and
3 have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—
4 ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify
5 to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the
6 Father and was made manifest to us—³ that which we have
7 seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may
8 have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the
9 Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing
10 these things so that our joy may be complete.

*Use the suggestions on the back page as a starting point for your own **Observation, Interpretation, and Application.***

Observation (What does it say?):

Circle the verbs in the passage. What verb tenses does John use?

Underline words that are repeated in the passage.

How does the beginning of this letter compare with what you may have seen in other New Testament letters, such as those from Paul? What are similarities? What are differences?

What ideas or themes are mentioned that you recall from the Gospel that John wrote?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What is the difference between saying, “We heard” and “We have heard” in this passage?

What is the main idea that seems to be on John’s mind as he wrote this? What headline would you write for this brief passage (three words maximum)?

Based on John’s opening, what impression do you get about the recipients? What issues was he addressing that he thought they needed to hear right at the beginning of the letter?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

What in this passage most stirs your thinking?

What does it mean to have fellowship with the Father and with his Son? What does that look like in your life?

How are fellowship and joy related?

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)