

1 John 1:1-5

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
3 and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of
4 life—² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and
5 testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was
6 with the Father and was made manifest to us—³ that which
7 we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you
8 too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is
9 with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are
10 writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵ This
11 is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,
12 that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Observation (*What does it say?*):

Read through the passage once to start. Then:

- Circle the pronouns (*we, us, our, etc.*)
- Underline the verbs (*what “we” did*).
- *What does the writer say about his reason for writing? What was his purpose?*
- *What other repeated words do you notice?*

Interpretation (*What does it mean?*):

After observing the passage:

- *Why do you think “we” and “us” and “our” pronouns are used so many times?*
- *How might the repetition of the pronouns relate to the writer’s purpose?*
- *How is verse 5 about light related to the beginning of the passage?*
- *How would what the writer says be attractive to his readers (in the first century and today)?*
- *How would you title this passage?*

Application (*What does it mean for me?*):

- *How would you write this passage based on your own experience with God? What would be the verbs you would use to describe that experience?*
- *How attractive is your testimony to others? What about your story would draw them toward Christ?*

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)**