

# Lesson 2: Reading the Bible & Deciphering Its Theme

## Effective Bible Study

2 Timothy 2:15

Read It, Explain It, Apply It

### Learn to Observe as You Read

A. When reading within a particular text, be sure to note the following four things:

#### 1. Terms

- The words are the basic building blocks with which you decipher the meaning of the text.
- The Gospel of John uses the term “believe” very purposefully. That term unlocks meaning.

#### 2. Structure

- Look for the *grammatical* structure. What is the subject? The object? The main verb?
- Look for the *literary* structure. There are questions and answers, climax and resolution, cause and effect, etcetera.

#### 3. Literary Form

- What is the genre of the book?
- Remember: 5-12-5-5-12 (Old Testament) // 4-1-21-1 (New Testament)

#### 4. Atmosphere

- What was it like to be in the writer’s shoes?
- This is an exercise for the imagination, not just for the intellect.

B. When reading the Bible in general, look for things that are ...

**Emphasized** – Look for the amount of space used [ex: Paul’s epistles], a stated purpose [John 20:30-31], order [Genesis 2:15; 3:17-24], and pivot moments [2 Samuel 11-12; Acts 2]

**Repeated** – Look for terms, phrases, clauses [Hebrews 11], characters [Barnabas in Acts], incidents and circumstances [Judges 21:25], patterns [Isaac & Jesus], and the NT use of OT passages [Matthew 12:39-41].

**Related** – Look for movement from general to specific [Genesis 1], questions and answers [Matthew 26:40; Romans 6:1, 15], and cause and effect [Acts 8:1-4].

**Alike (Comparisons)** – Look for similes [Psalm 42:1; 1 Peter 2:2] and metaphors [John 3:3-7; 15:1].

**Unlike (Contrasts)** – Look for the use of the word “but” [Galatians 5:22-23], negative metaphors [cf. Luke 18:1-8], and irony [cf. Luke 8:43-48].



**True to Life** – What does the passage tell you about reality?  
What parts of it resonate with your experience?

### The Theme of the Bible

A. The primary point of biblical emphasis is the redemption of fallen man, by means of the mission of Christ, to the ultimate glory of God.

Write next week’s assignment below to help you remember it.