MODULE 7: SESSION 4

APPLIED THEOLOGY
HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE
Observation Part 3: Getting Ready for Interpretation

Today's topics:
- Making sense of and summarizing your observations
- Inculcating your cross references and word studies into your observation summaries
- One useful tool: The Value of Charts [use a sample chart to put in major observations, cross-references, word study]
- Finding the theology in your passage—Rules for formulating doctrinal implications
- Observation Assignment Continued

TONIGHT: Going to exclusively use our example from Ephesians 4:31-32

1. Making sense of and summarizing your observations (half-way point of processing observations)—this is the positive side of getting rid of the dead weight in your observations. You are now trying to boil down to the richest material.--
   a. Ephesians 4:31–32 (ESV) — 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.—
   b. Combining 72 observations in Ephesians 4:31-32: (we are not interpreting yet; just observing still—we will do Interpretive Summary Statements later)—(you may still refer to your detailed observations when preparing a Bible Lesson, but these are synthesizes statements)—SAMPLE combinations:
      i. Paul is speaking to the Ephesian believers on the topic of dealing with someone who has offended them. The context is walking worthy from 4:1.
      ii. He tells them what not to do and what to do, that they must put off and put on
      iii. They are to put off holding grudges, judging someone worthy of wrath, murderous attitude, making trouble, harming reputations, and malicious actions—three internal and three external sins

      iv. They are to put on an empathetic internal attitude, actions which match this, including and highlighted by forgiveness.

      v. Outward sinful actions betray what is in the heart and outward righteous actions reflect what is in the heart.

      vi. In context of Ephesians, the power of the Spirit (5:18) enables one to obey these commands.

2. Putting your cross reference and word study notes into your observation summaries — (copying and pasting) — JUST an organizational tool to help speed the process of lesson formation — by now you have a LOT of information and have to start reminding yourself of what you have

   a. Paul is speaking to the Ephesian believers on the topic of dealing with someone who has offended them. The context is walking worthy from 4:1.

   b. He tells them what not to do and what to do, that they must put off and put on

   c. They are to put off holding grudges, judging someone worthy of wrath, murderous attitude, making trouble, harming reputations, and malicious actions — three internal and three external sins

      i. See James 4:11 CR study for "clamor and slander"

      ii. See WS for "bitterness"

   d. They are to put on an empathetic internal attitude, actions which match this, including and highlighted by forgiveness.

      i. See Colossians 3:12 CR study for kindness

      ii. See Psalm 25:11 CR study for forgiveness

      iii. See WS for "kind"

   e. Outward sinful actions betray what is in the heart and outward righteous actions reflect what is in the heart.

   f. In context of Ephesians, the power of the Spirit (5:18) enables one to obey these commands.

3. One useful tool: The Chart

   a. Charts are like the Sabbath — made for man, not man made for charts = they are tools to help you organize information in a meaningful way AND to see patterns in your passage more clearly

   b. There is not a right or wrong way to do charts and you can be as creative as you want — I personally make charts for nearly every sermon I preach to help me organize my thoughts

   c. Examples: (These are not official categories — you can do these any way you like!)

      i. Observation Summary Chart —

      ii. Topical Summary Chart ---

iii. Progression Chart
iv. Possible presentation organization chart (by now you are seeing the passage in detail and are naturally thinking about how to synthesize this meaningfully in a way that others would understand)—
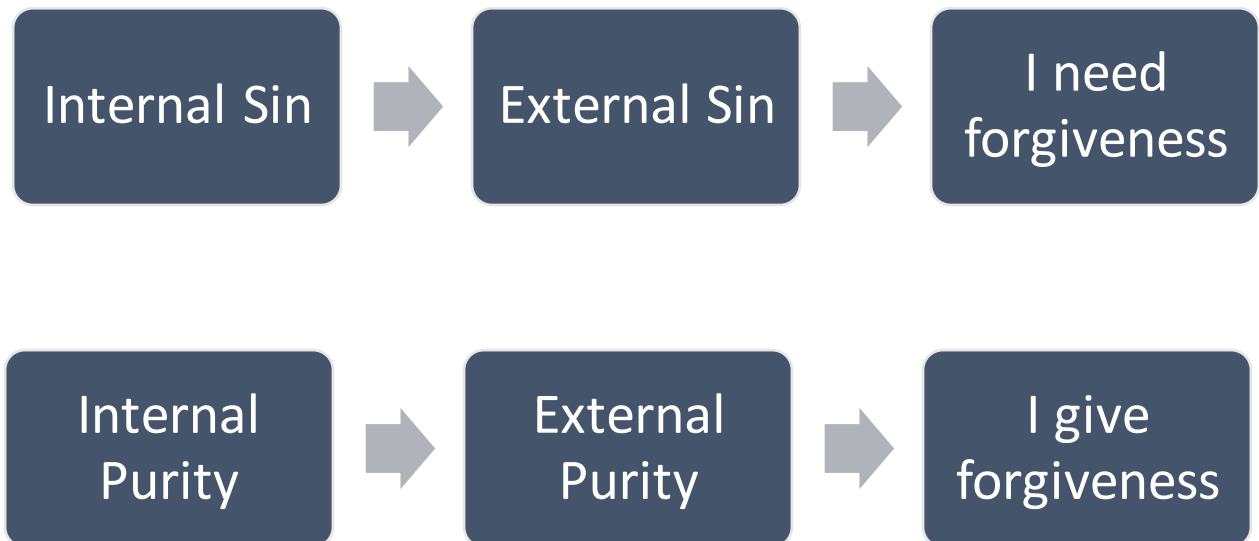
OBSERVATION SUMMARY CHART:

Context	Putting Off	Putting On
• Dealing with offense • Walking worthy (Eph 4:1)	• Grudges • Judgment • Murderous attitude • Making trouble • Harming reputations • Malicious acts • SEE James 4:11 • SEE "bitterness"	• Empathy • Kindness • Forgiveness • SEE Col 3:12 • SEE Ps 25:11 • See "kind"

TOPICAL SUMMARY CHART:

Internal Sin	External Sin	Internal Purity	External Purity
✓ Bitterness ✓ Wrath ✓ Anger	✓ Clamor ✓ Slander ✓ Malice	✓ Tender-hearted ✓ Forgiving one another (in attitude)	✓ Kind ✓ Forgiving one another (in action)

PROGRESSION CHART:

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┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│ Internal Sin │  ▷   │ External Sin │  ▷   │   I need     │
│              │      │              │      │ forgiveness  │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘

┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│  Internal    │  ▷   │  External    │  ▷   │   I give     │
│   Purity     │      │   Purity     │      │ forgiveness  │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
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POSSIBLE PRESENTATION ORGANIZATION (you are still thinking this through as you study)

The Path to Peace: Finding Your Way After Losing the Trail—Ephesians 4:31-32	
Look Around— Recognize Faulty Steps	**Turn Around**— Retrace Your Steps
CHECK YOUR COMPASS: Bitterness, wrath, anger	GET A NEW COMPASS: Kind to one another, tenderhearted
CHECK YOUR MAP: Clamor, Slander, Malice	GET A NEW MAP: Forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you

4. Finding the Theology in Your Passage — Rules for Formulating doctrinal implications (this is somewhat a side issue but importance nonetheless)[1]
    a. All Scripture reflects some theological principle. This is why a doctrinal foundation is important to you as you study the Scripture.
    b. RULE 1: Formation of doctrine should rest mainly on literal versus figurative language.
        i. Example: Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 — the main idea being taught is that God is a forgiving God. The parable serves to illustrate the doctrine but is not the sole basis for the doctrine. We utilize the clearer teaching portion of Scripture to formulate theology.
    c. RULE 2: Formation of Doctrine should be sensitive to progressive revelation. Therefore, the clarity given in the New Testament sheds light on the OT (although the NT doesn't REINTERPRET the OT)
        i. The doctrine of the Trinity is definitely present in the OT (Genesis 1-2; Isaiah 48; Psalm 2, etc) — *BUT* the NT gives us the fullest picture and an OT-only reader would not come to the same fullness of understanding until the NT sheds more light.
    d. RULE 3: Historical narrative serves to confirm and illustrate what is taught directly in teaching passages.
        i. NOTE: It IS possible to completely DISCOUNT narrative (story) passages as having NO say-so in theology — this is an over-reaction. All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.
        ii. EXAMPLE: We do not completely form our Ecclesiology (study of the Church) based on the narrative of the book of Acts.
            1. Transitional time — many unique occurrences that are DESCRIPTIVE rather than PRESCRIPTIVE
            2. BUT: When taken alongside the Ecclesiology we understand from the epistles, Acts is instructive in seeing many many principles worked out in real life.
    e. RULE 4: Do not form doctrine based solely on an unclear passage — use clearer passages to shed light on the less clear (Scripture interprets Scripture)
        i. EXAMPLE: Acts 2:38 (ESV) — 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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[1] Adapted from Dr. James Parker, *Hermeneutics*, Faith Overseas Mission 1999.

  ii. POINT: CANNOT now form a doctrine of baptismal regeneration on the basis of this one verse (by the way, grammatically, there is a serious argument to be made the "and be baptized" should be in parenthesis)

f. RULE 5: Base final conclusions about doctrine based on the study of ALL the passages on the subject
  i. Based solely on Revelation 3:5, one could conclude that all are born righteous and as you reject God, He then rejects you-- Revelation 3:5 (ESV) — 5 The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
  ii. Doesn't take into account Psalm 51, Romans 3, Romans 5, etc

g. RULE 6: Draw conclusions carefully and logically
  i. Doctrine makes sense and is never irrational. Some doctrines (we might argue ALL doctrine) are beyond our ability to fully grasp, but this doesn't make them less true
  ii. BEWARE of forming doctrine on the basis of whether you think it is POSSIBLE or not---
  iii. EXAMPLE: Doctrine of the Trinity—there is no place in Scripture that just says, "Let me explain the Triune God." This doctrine is drawn from countless passages.
    1. Is it completely UNDERSTANDABLE? NO!
    2. Is it completely LOGICAL? YES! Three examples:
      a. A God who has never experienced relationship has needs and therefore is not all-sufficient.
      b. A Son who is not deity cannot be a sufficient sacrifice since only God is perfect and a perfect sacrifice is necessary.
      c. A Spirit who is not deity cannot be powerfully involved in creation nor can He transform me to be like God

h. RULE 7: Keep the Same Emphasis Scripture has—you are probably not going to formulate a new doctrine unless you want to start a cult
  i. False religions start by taking one small teaching of Scripture and emphasizing it way out of proportion to what Scripture teaches.
  ii. EXAMPLE: Charismatic movement has created a false doctrine of the PRIMACY of the doctrine of the HS. The HS, fully God and integral to the redemptive plan of God, is NOT, however, the head of the church nor the primary emphasis. As a result, in an effort to supposedly ELEVATE the HS, the Charismatic Movement has

actually denigrated and offended the HS by attributing to Him false signs and wonders.

    i. RULE 8: Make careful distinctions between persons, places, time periods, contexts, and events. Do not confuse them or attempt to mix them to come to a pre-conceived doctrinal conclusion. —

        i. EXAMPLES:

            1. Understanding of the context of Covenant is necessary for proper doctrinal formation

            2. Do not confuse the persons of the Trinity: The Father did not die on the cross.

    j. DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS FROM OUR EXAMPLE: Ephesians 4:31–32 (ESV) — 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. — (NOTE: This takes practice and knowledge of theology so don't expect to get this quickly)

        i. Forgiveness of Sin is given by God by means of Christ (Soteriology).

        ii. There are expectations of the Christian in response to salvation (Doctrine of Sanctification).

        iii. God has the right to command you to obey Him (Ecclesiology, Soteriology of Lordship)

        iv. Christians are not yet fully sanctified and perfected (Anthropology)

        v. NOTE: you can go through your BTI notes or Ryrie's *Basic Theology* table of contents and simply use the different categories of theology as a checklist:

            1. What does this teach me about God?

            2. What does this teach me about Christ?

            3. …the Spirit?

            4. …the Church?

            5. …Soteriology?

            6. …Anthropology (nature of man), etc.

5. ASSIGNMENT — continuing your Observation Assignment:

    a. Summarize your observations combining some into more detailed, richer statements.

    b. Try making one helpful chart — REMEMBER: There is no right or wrong way to do this — just view this as an experiment.

    c. Draw 2-3 theological observations from your texts — REMEMBER that if you have a narrative text (such as Acts) draw doctrinal conclusions

tentatively. If you were doing a fuller study, you would find cross references for the doctrinal concepts involved. Remember that you can use Ryrie's *Basic Theology* table of contents as a guide. DON'T spend hours and hours doing this—just make a few theological thoughts which can be developed later for your lesson.