**S.O.A.P. – Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer**

**Scripture**: When you come to the Scriptures, begin by asking the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you. Then read the passage. You can choose to read an entire Psalm or a portion of a Psalm.

**Observation**: Read the passage again and make some observations about what you’re noticing or what stands out to you. You may want to record your observations in question form if you do not know the answers. For example: “A particular word stood out to me in vs. 5. Does it have any additional meanings or other interpretations?” Try not to rush through Observation but spend time observing. It’s also really helpful to write down your observations and questions. As you make observations, ask: what is this passage saying and what can I learn about God?

**Application**: Now that I understand what this passage is saying, how does this apply to my life? What is one thing I will take away from this passage and apply to my life? How will I be different as a result of spending time in God’s word today?

**Prayer**: Talk to God about what you read and/or other things that are on your mind and heart.

**Added notes on OBSERVATION ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

Try to observe the following three things that can help lead you to new understandings of a passage:

1. **Observe the Context of the Passage** – observe what is going on around the passage, before and after.
2. **Observe the Historical Context of the Passage** – this will require some work on your part. Resources include a good study Bible, a Bible dictionary, or a Bible commentary. Some are available online. For a study Bible, we recommend the [ESV Study Bible](https://www.amazon.com/ESV-Study-Bible-Bibles-Crossway/dp/1433502410/ref%3Dsr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=esv+study+bible&qid=1620860292&sr=8-1).
3. **Observe the Use of the Words** – remember that words mean things, and sometimes the meaning is not what we would first think.

**When making observations, look for:**

People

Places

Times

Promises

Commands

Relationships

Contrasts

Context

Key Words

Progressions

Questions

Answers

Details

Warnings

Repeating words

Cause/Effect

Comparisons

Verb Tense

Themes

Lists

Emphasis

Exhortations

What’s not said

**Always ask: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?**