



I.

I. Example James 1:5-8

A. Steps of Observation

1. Identify the genre and consider your interpretive keys (from handout biblical genres)
2. Determining a pericope –
3. Read your pericope in a couple different translations

NASB – But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

NIV – If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

NKJV – If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

ESV – If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person

must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

4. Identify the grammar of the text - Who are the people involved? Who is doing the action? What is the action in the verse? Who? What? When? Where? Why? Do not make too much or too little but make enough of what is really there.

Key Nouns –

Key Verbs –

Modifiers –

Prepositional phrases –

Conjunctions –

Who is doing the action? Ask this question using the verbs.

How is that action done? Use this question using the verbs.

What happens because of the action? Use this question with the verbs.

Notice the figure of speech –

Determine the main clauses –

5. Sentence diagramming –

Sentence diagram –

Phrase diagram

6. Lexical analysis – Two kinds of studies for each word that you must do when you do a word study: you need to understand the dictionary definition. You must also understand the way the word is developed and used within a context/text.

Wisdom –

Faith –

Generously –

Reproach –

Let him ask –

7. Last make sure you pay attention to how the parts fit into the whole – Three characteristics you should pay attention to – what is happening in the pericope itself? What is happening with the pericopes surrounding the text in question? What is happening in the bigger picture in the book and how does the text in question relate to the bigger picture of the entire writing. Biblical theology – what is the message of this section and how does it play into the larger picture of theology?

B. Combine all that you have done to identify the main idea of the pericope. Once we see or observe what the verse says, we are ready to ask, "What does the verse mean?"

The two Questions:

What is James talking about?

What is he saying about what he is talking about?

Put it all together –

Put it in exegetical terms –

Put it in a theological expression –