

# The POUR Method™

## What is the POUR Method?

The acronym POUR stands for Pray, Observe, Unwrap, and Respond. This method is similar to other popular Bible study methods, with one key differentiator—the POUR method is intended to lead the reader in a deeper hermeneutical approach to interpreting Scripture. This means that the goal of the POUR method is to take the reader beyond an introductory understanding of God's Word. Instead, when executed properly, the reader will have obtained a stronger grasp of the original intent of the source by examining the text through various context lenses. Furthermore, once they have rightly divided the word of truth, they will be able to rightly apply it.

## What is the purpose of these worksheets?

The worksheets are intended to provide a template for your hermeneutical study. We desire that you enjoy your time getting lost in the beauty and richness of God's Word. Therefore, these worksheets have been provided as a tool in hopes that the process will not deter you from your enjoyment.

We understand that following such a meticulous process can be daunting to many, especially when first starting out, and we do not want you feeling overwhelmed. Utilizing these worksheets will aid you in focusing on each specific step in the process and guide your study. After using these worksheets a few times, you will become more acquainted with the POUR Method and may choose to no longer use them. That is perfectly okay. These worksheets are not required; use them as needed.

## How do I use these worksheets?

The worksheets focus on two aspects of hermeneutics—context (first page) and sentence structure (subsequent pages). By answering the questions on the first page, you will begin to identify some of the basic factors surrounding the passage. This practice of preliminary identification is what we have described as the *Observe* phase of the POUR Method. In the *Observe* phase, the goal is not to dive too deep into the passage. Instead, it is to identify the major components of the passage being examined. You will be able to leverage this information as a baseline or foundation as you proceed through the remaining worksheets.

Beginning with the second page, the remaining worksheets turn your attention to the underlying grammar itself. The pages will help you focus on various word structures that comprise the ingredients of the passage along with those structures in their original, respective language.

To properly leverage the second set of worksheets, focus on the single component of the sheet. If the sheet is focused on verbs, then list all verbs in the left column, then parse them in the remaining columns, noting the subject, direct object, and various tenses of the verb. If the sheet is focused on comparisons or contrasts, list them in the first column, then identify in the right column what the identified object is being compared to or contrast with, respectively. Finally, at the bottom of each page, collect your thoughts. Perhaps, what you've discovered on the page has provided some additional insights of which you were previously unaware. Write them down. Or, maybe your discovery has prompted some questions that require further exploration. Capture them at the bottom of the page, then return to them later, when appropriate.

The goal of these pages is to help you focus on each piece of the puzzle in isolation first. Then, after constructing each piece and then properly arranging the pieces, you begin to see a much clearer meaning of the author's or speaker's original intent. These are the beginning steps to a good hermeneutical approach to studying the Bible. Take your time; don't try to rush the process. Take breaks, and enjoy what you discover. Finally, go through each page in the worksheet a few times. You may be surprised by what you miss on your first pass. However, after going through this process a few times, you may find these elements starting to immediately jump off the page each time you read the Bible, and what has been invisible for so long will become much easier to recognize.

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## Historical Context

Who are the actors in this passage?

When did this passage take place?

Observe events that occurred before and after the passage.

Where did this passage take place?

Observe specific locations (e.g., a city, town, region, sea, or temple) or general ones (e.g., a mountain, hillside, or by a stream).

Why did this passage take place?

## Literary Context

What is the literary genre of this passage?

What is the mood of the author?

Are there other passages that share similar ideas?

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## Cause and Effect

Instructions:

Look for outcomes due to specific causes. There may be more than one effect from a single cause mentioned in the text, or there may be multiple causes resulting in a single effect.

Cause

Effect

## Additional Thoughts, Ideas, or Questions for Consideration

Capture ideas, topics, or other insights that you may wish to explore further.

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## Comparisons

Instructions:

Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that are compared with each other. Attempt to identify their *similarities* and possibly why they are being compared.

Ideas, individuals, and/or items that are being compared (similarities)

What are they being compared to?

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## Conjunctions

Instructions:

Notice terms that join units, such as “and,” “but,” or “for.” Note what people, places, or items the conjunctions are connecting.

Conjunction (terms that join like “and,” “but,” and “for”)

What is being connected?

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## Contrasts

Instructions:

Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that are contrasted with each other. Attempt to identify their *differences* and possibly why they are being compared.

Ideas, individuals, and/or terms that are being contrasted (differences)

What are they being compared to?

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## Figures of Speech

Instructions:

Look for expressions that convey an image, using words in a sense other than the literal sense. Figures of speech could be what are known as “word pictures,” or they could be colloquialisms of the period.

Expressions that convey and image or idea

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## Lists

Instructions:

Note where the text mentions more than two items. Pay special attention to lists containing five items.

Where more than two items are listed

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## Nouns

Instructions:

Aside from *formal nouns* (i.e., actors), look for other generic places or things. These could include seemingly random locations or items. If the place or thing is included in the passage, more than likely there is a specific reason.

Places or things that are not actors

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## Pronouns

Instructions:

Identify the each pronoun and its antecedent (who or what the pronoun is referring to). Again, when necessary, note the number, form, and case.

Pronoun	Number, form, and case (when necessary)	Antecedent (who or what is the pronoun referring to?)

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## Repetition of Words

Instructions:

Look for words or phrases that repeat. Attempt to identify the importance of the repetition and what the speaker/author is trying to communicate by doing so.

Repetitive words (words that are being repeated)

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## Verbs

Instructions:

Note whether a verb is past, present, or future, and determine if it is active or passive. Also look for imperatives, which would be a person commanding someone or something to perform an action.

Verb	Who/what is performing the action?	Who/what is receiving the action?	Past, present, or future?	Active or passive?	Imperative? (a command)

## Additional Thoughts, Ideas, or Questions for Consideration

Capture ideas, topics, or other insights that you may wish to explore further.