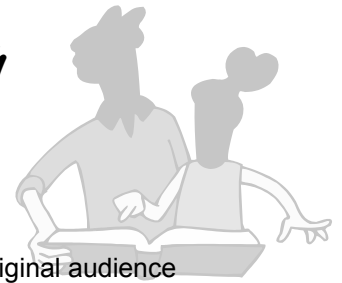


How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Introduction: The Need to Interpret



Definitions

Exegesis – to carefully study the Bible to determine its intended meaning to the original audience

Hermeneutics – taking the intended message for the original audience and translating it to today's audience (you)

Approaching the text

Everyone is an **interpreter**! We bring many things with us to the text. Our backgrounds, knowledge, and abilities can all aid us in interpreting scriptures. However, we need to make sure we don't bring a new **meaning** with us.

God's Word is for **us**. However, it was first God's Word to the original **audience**.

- We may get specific **answers** if we have the same **situation**.
- We may get specific **principles** to apply if we have a **different** situation.

Understanding the text (Exegesis)

There are Three Keys to Understanding the Bible:

- 1) Carefully **reading** the text
- 2) Asking the right **questions** (and knowing where to find the **answers**)
- 3) **Seeking** until the Lord opens the meaning up to you
 - a) **Pray** for understanding
 - b) Keep **repeating** steps 1 and 2.

What Questions Should I Ask?

- 1) What is the **Historical Context** of the Passage?

Example: Why did Jesus tell the disciples to look for a man carrying a pitcher of water as a sign in Mark 14:13?
Answer: It was customary for a woman to be carrying water.
- 2) What is the **Literary Context** of the Passage?

Example: Does 1 Corinthians 6:12, "All things are lawful for me ..." teach that it is okay to have an affair?
Answer: No, it is just the opposite. It teaches that we shouldn't give into the flesh.
- 3) What are the meanings of the **words**?

Example: What does the word, "peculiar" mean in Titus 2:14?
Answer: It means, "owned" or "called out"

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4) Are there other **passages** in the Bible that help us to understand this passage?

Example: How can you harmonize Luke 14:26, which tells us we must hate our parents, spouses, children and even ourselves if we are to be Christ's disciple and Ephesians 6:2, which tells us to honor our parents?

Answer: Hate, in the context of Luke 14:26, means to love less. If you look at the context, you will see Jesus' parable about those who were too consumed with everything else to serve Him. We must love Him above all.

Where do I find the Answers?

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
What is the Historical Context?	Atlas, History Books, Study Bibles, Bible Dictionaries, Some good commentaries
What is the Literary Context?	Reading the surrounding chapter(s) and the entire book. Outlines from Study Bibles can also help.
What do these words mean?	A More Modern Version of the Bible, Bible Dictionaries
What other passages might help?	Topical Resources like the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge and Nave's Topical Reference

We are only as good as our tools – the most important is an accurate, understandable **Bible**.

Applying the text to our lives (Hermeneutics)

To apply the Bible to our lives today, we must understand how it applied to the **original** audience.

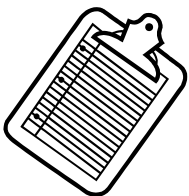
Find the underlying principle in passages that don't have a clear application to today.

Example: How does Proverbs 22:28 apply to us today? How could it be misused if we didn't seek to understand what it meant to the original audience?

Answer: Landmarks were used to set boundaries on their fields. If someone moved a landmark, they would be stealing property from their neighbors.

This process is important when we approach **EVERY** text, not just the more difficult ones.

Next week's assignment:



- Read Chapter Two: *The Basic Tool, A Good Translation*
- Continue to memorize the names of the first 22 books of the bible (Genesis through Song of Solomon) – we will move on next week!
- there will be an incentive for memorizing all 66 books in order!
- Answer the following question using your new skills:
 - At least one denomination refuses to pay their Pastors based on 1 Timothy 3:3. Do you agree with their understanding of this passage? Why or why not?