

Bible for Life: *How to Study the Bible*

CLASS 1: CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT!

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS

The study of how to interpret the Bible is called _____.

Hermeneutics is both an _____ and a _____.

1.2 RESOURCES

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth (Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart)

Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible (Howard & William Hendricks)

Basic Bible Interpretation (Roy B. Zuck)

The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation (Grant R. Osborne)

1.3 THE HOLY SPIRIT AND INTERPRETATION

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 –

- Paul says two things about the natural man/unbeliever here:

- 1) The natural person does not _____ the things of the Spirit of God, because they are _____ to him.
- 2) The natural person is not able to _____ spiritual things, because they are spiritually _____.

- The Holy Spirit works to _____ the minds and hearts of believers in order to rightly understand, apply and embrace God's truth in the Bible.

Psalm 119:18, 34 –

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 –

1.4 CONTEXT

- The most important word in Bible Study is _____

Example: Job 22:21

Example: 2 Samuel 15:29

Different Kinds of Context:

A. _____ Context – Where is the verse in the flow of the argument? How does the argument shape, limit and explain the verse? (Ex: Genesis 39:11-12)

B. _____ Context – When, to whom and why was the book written?
(Ex: Kings vs Chronicles / Galatians)

- 1) Authorship – who wrote it?
- 2) Date – when was it written?
- 3) Audience – to whom was it written?
- 4) Purpose – why did the author write it?

C. _____ Context – How do the surrounding landmarks or topography of the land impact interpretation? (Ex: 1 Samuel 16:1-2; cf. 15:34)

- 1) Does the text mention any geographical features?
- 2) What was the terrain like?
- 3) What features of the topography are unique? Are any mentioned in the text?
- 4) What was the weather like?
- 5) Where is this town in relation to other places mentioned in the text?
- 6) Did any major roads pass through this town? If so, from where, to where, and why?
- 7) How big is the town/city/location?
- 8) Was this town famous for anything?
- 9) Is this town known by any other names in the Bible?
- 10) Does this town show up in any other Bible stories? If so, what's the significance?

D. _____ Context – How does the cultural situation in which this book was written and/or the story takes place impact interpretation? (Ex: Esther)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

Questions to ask:

- a) How much Scripture did the person who wrote this passage have?
- b) Where does this passage fit into the scheme of “Progressive Revelation”?
- c) What other texts (in OT and NT) relate to this passage?

CLASS 2: OBSERVATION

2.1 TWO IMPORTANT TERMS

_____ : Reading a meaning _____ of a text

_____ : Reading a meaning _____ a text

Example: Jeremiah 29:11 –

2.2 THREE STEPS TO EXEGESIS

Three main steps of exegesis:

Step One: _____ : What do I _____?

Step Two: _____ : What does it _____?

Step Three: _____ : How does it _____ me?

This is the _____ of Bible Study.

2.3 OBSERVATION: WHAT DO I SEE?

The goal of observation is to make you a better _____ of the Bible.

Observation asks the following questions:

_____?: Who wrote it? Who did they write it to? Who are the major/minor characters?

_____?: What are the key terms? What terms are repeated? What are the major events? What figures of speech are used? What's the reason the author wrote this? What are the contexts? From what perspective is it written? What does the author focus on? What is left out?

_____?: Where does this take place? Are any other places mentioned?

_____?: When did the author write? When does this story take place?

_____?: How does the text say what it says?

Helpful Hints:

- 1) Read _____, emphasizing different words/parts
- 2) Read thoughtfully, patiently, repeatedly, prayerfully

Hendricks (*Living by the Book*, chs 19-23) gives six things to look for:

- 1) Things that are emphasized
- 2) Things that are _____
- 3) Things that are _____
- 4) Things that are alike
- 5) Things that are unlike
- 6) Things that are true to life

2.4 PRACTICE – 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

Observations:

CLASS 3: INTERPRETATION

3.1 REVIEW

3.2 INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Principles of Interpretation:

1) _____ interprets _____

2) Interpret the Bible according to the normal rules of _____

Good rule of thumb: "If the plain sense of Scripture makes _____ sense,
seek no other sense."

3) Interpret the Bible according to the _____

4) Interpret the Bible according to _____

5) Interpretation is aided by _____

6) Try to distill the thought of the author into a _____

My rule of thumb: _____ words or less.

3.3 MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Hendricks lists six major mistakes that we ought to avoid (*Living by the Book*, ch. 28):

1) _____ the text

2) _____ the text

3) _____ the text

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

3.4 PRACTICE – 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

1) Take one or more of the following Observations that we noticed last week and answer the question, *What does it mean?* (Interpret the Observation!)

a) David was anointed (vss 12-13).

b) David was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome (vs 12).

c) The Lord looks at the heart (vs 7).

d) God “provides” (vs 1), “rejects” (vss 1, 7), and “chooses” (vss 8-10).

2) Summarize the Big Idea for 1 Samuel 16:1-13 (in 10 words or less!).

CLASS 4: APPLICATION

4.1 REVIEW

Matthew 7:24-27 –

4.2 APPLICATION

Steps to Application:

1) Observe and _____ the text

A) Correct Application is only built on correct Observation and Interpretation
Ex: John 11:35

B) Determine how the _____ applied the text
Ex: 1 Samuel 17

C) Determine what present day readers _____ with the original readers
Ex: Romans 16:16a

2) _____ what applies to today

A) General Rule: Receive it _____ and _____ unless
something in the text or another biblical teaching limits the application
Ex: 10 Commandments; Colossians 2:16-17; Romans 14:5

B) Find the main _____ in the text
Ex: 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Deuteronomy 25:4

3) Interpret your own _____

How does this change my relationship with God?

How does this change me?

How does this change my relationship with others? Friends? Family? Enemies?

- Ask the questions...

Is there an example for me to follow?

Is there a sin to avoid?

Is there a promise to claim?

Is there a prayer to repeat?

Is there a command to obey?

Is there a condition to meet?

Is there a verse to memorize?

Is there a theological error to avoid?

Is there a challenge to face? [adapted from Hendricks, ch. 44]

4) Pray that the _____ will help you *understand, remember, and apply* the Bible

1 Corinthians 2:10, 12 –

5) _____ it out!

James 1:22-25 –

4.3 TWO WORDS OF WARNING

First Warning: _____: A method of ignoring the literal meaning of a text in favor of seeking to uncover deeper, hidden spiritual truths.

The main problem: allegorical interpretation knows no _____ and ignores the _____ meaning of a passage.

Second Warning: Application must be _____ to Interpretation and is not totally subjective.

Ex: Matthew 18:20

4.4 PRACTICE – 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

1) How were the original readers expected to apply this?

2) What are some specific application we can draw from this?

CLASS 5: GENRES, PART I

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO GENRES

Genre: a type of literature with certain _____ and reader _____

5.2 NARRATIVE/HISTORY

Definition: Historically-accurate stories with _____ application

Examples: Genesis, first half of Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Gospels, Acts

A) All history is necessarily _____

B) All historical narratives have a _____ agenda
Ex: 2 Kings

C) Narrative _____ rather than _____
Ex: Esther 2:10

D) Note the _____ of a good story: plot, character, POV
Ex: 1 Samuel 16

E) Note the other narrative _____: repetition, highlighting, amount of space, foreshadowing, etc.

RESOURCES:

The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative, Steven Dale Mathewson

The Art of Biblical Narrative, Robert Alter

5.3 POETRY/PSALMS

Definition: compact writing with a high degree of _____ language

Examples: Psalms, Lamentations, Isaiah (and many other prophets), Job

A) Differentiate between _____ headings and the _____ headings
Ex: Psalm 3

B) Each Psalm has a theological _____ and a _____ to tell
Ex: Psalm 119:42, 61

C) Consider what kind of _____ each line contains

1) _____ Parallelism: Both lines say something similar
Ex: Jonah 2:2

2) _____ Parallelism: Both lines contrast each other
Ex: Jonah 2:8-9

3) _____ Parallelism: Second line develops the first line further
Ex: Jonah 2:8

D) Consider how the _____ language is being used

1) Interpret all figures of speech according to their immediate _____
Ex: Psalm 1:3

2) Discover the point of comparison with _____

3) Don't assume figures always mean the _____ thing
Ex: Hosea 6:4; 14:5

4) Don't read into it more than the author _____
- There is usually only *one* primary point of comparison with reality.

E) _____ down and think!

RESOURCES:

Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, E. W. Bullinger
The Art of Biblical Poetry, Robert Alter

5.4 EPISTLE/LETTER

Definition: An epistle is a letter with propositional statements and commands

Examples: Paul's letters (Galatians, Romans, etc.), 1-2 Peter, James, etc.

A) Note the _____ of the writing (context!)

B) Determine how the _____ audience would have understood the statement

C) Think in terms of _____ and _____

D) Try to explain the _____ of the argument of the letter

E) Articulate the _____ in the text and apply it to genuinely comparable situations

RESOURCES:

Interpreting the Pauline Epistles, 2nd ed., Thomas Schreiner

CLASS 6: GENRES, PART II

6.1 WISDOM LITERATURE/PROVERBS

Definition: Practical advice and theological musings about life

Examples: Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Job, certain Psalms

A) Know how to handle a _____

- 1) Proverbs are _____, not _____
- 2) Proverbs are _____ truths, not precise _____
- 3) Proverbs are _____ of truth, not the whole _____

Proverbs 26:4-5 –

Ecclesiastes 3:7 –

B) Understand the concept of the “_____ of the LORD.”

Proverbs 1:7 –

Biblical wisdom is becoming an _____ at fearing the LORD.

C) Wisdom Literature typically deals with _____ realities and outcomes

RESOURCES:

Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction, 3rd ed., James L. Crenshaw

6.2 LAW

Definition: The body of literature from Exodus to Deuteronomy that represents God’s code of conduct for Israelites.

Examples: Exodus 20–23; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy

A) Differentiate between different types of laws

- 1) _____ – absolute laws worded broadly with application for any time
Ex: 10 Commandments
- 2) _____ – case laws (usually beginning with “if” or “when”)
Ex: Leviticus 20:18

B) Remember that the Law was never a means by which Israelites were _____

Galatians 3:10-11 –

C) Consider several principles to help interpret the Law:

- 1) The Law reveals how to love _____
- 2) The Law reveals how to love _____
Matthew 22:36-40 –
Deuteronomy 22:8 –
- 3) The Law reflects the character of _____ (1 Peter 1:15-16)
- 4) The Law reflects the character of _____ (Romans 3:20)
- 5) The Law points forward to the _____ of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:4)
- 6) Christians interpret according to the _____ of the law
- 7) The Law has a _____ focus (Deuteronomy 4:6-8)

RESOURCES:

Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application, Roy Gane
The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses, Verne Poythress.

6.3 APOCALYPTIC/PROPHECY

Definition: Literature that is highly predictive and figurative/symbolic.

Examples: Daniel; Ezekiel; Revelation

- A) Consider if the _____ context helps with interpretation
Ex: Daniel 2
- B) Consider if the _____ context helps with interpretation
Ex: Daniel 7
Ex: Revelation
- C) Note the original _____ context of the prophet's message.
Ex: Jonah
Ex: Revelation 2–3
Ex: Daniel
- D) Look for clues within Scripture to interpret the _____
Ex: Revelation – “beast” from the sea
Ex: Revelation – “seal” on the forehead

RESOURCES:

Revelation Unveiled, Tim LaHaye
Understanding End Times Prophecy, Paul Benware

CLASS 8: STUDY TOOLS, PART I

8.1 STUDY BIBLE

A Study Bible is a condensed _____ in the notes of a Bible

Characteristics of a good Study Bible:

- 1) Helpful insights that don't just _____ the text
- 2) Written by Bible _____
- 3) Colorful and useful maps and _____
- 4) Helpful _____ to each book
- 5) _____ references
- 6) Concordance and other helpful references in the back
- 7) _____ options

Online: netbible.org

Recommendations: ESV Study Bible; NASB Study Bible; NLT Study Bible

8.2 COMMENTARY

A commentary is a verse-by-verse _____ of a biblical book of part of the Bible.

Characteristics of a good commentary:

- 1) Evenly discusses the problems and proposed _____
- 2) Gives strengths/weaknesses of all the views
- 3) Gives explanation *and* _____
- 4) Points to other _____
- 5) Individual books written by different _____

Online: blueletterbible.org; Biblestudytools.com

Recommendations: Tyndale OT/NT Commentary; Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary
New American Commentary series

8.3 BIBLE DICTIONARY & ENCYCLOPEDIA

Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedia's offer _____ about biblical terms, themes, people and other related matter.

Characteristics of a good Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia:

- 1) Articles written by different _____
- 2) _____ articles
- 3) _____ articles
- 4) _____!
- 5) Points to other resources and Scripture

Recommendations:

Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (5 volumes).
 Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (4 volumes)
 Online: biblestudytools.com

8.4 BIBLE ATLAS

A Bible Atlas is a geographical _____ book, usually with plenty of information on places, topography and other geographical features.

Characteristics of a good Bible Atlas:

- 1) Well-_____ (either by Scripture or location)
- 2) _____ pictures (online, CD, etc.)
- 3) Not too _____, but not too general
- 4) Gives more information than just locations (topography, climate patterns, etc.)
- 5) Clear _____ apparatus

Recommendations: The MacMillan Bible Atlas, 3rd ed.; Zondervan NIV Atlas of the Bible, rev. ed.; ESV Bible Atlas.

Online: bible.ca/maps

8.5 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

A Systematic Theology is a resource that discusses the major _____ systematically.

Characteristics of a good Systematic Theology:

- 1) Discusses various sides _____ and seriously
- 2) Gives strengths/weaknesses of _____ approach
- 3) Interacts with historical figures and positions
- 4) Uses plenty of _____
- 5) Topical and Scriptural _____

Recommendations: Ryrie's *Basic Theology*; Grudem's *Systematic Theology*

Online: bible.org

CLASS 9: STUDY TOOLS, PART II

9.1 CRAZY WORDS

Word Study: studying the meaning of a word in its original _____ and _____

9.2 CONCORDANCE

A concordance is a resource that lists all the _____ in the Bible alphabetically, along with their Scripture references, a few surrounding words for context and their original language root.

Ex: 1 Samuel 16:7 – “rejected”

Resource: *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*
or *Zondervan NASB Exhaustive Concordance*

Free Online Resource: blueletterbible.org

Expensive but Great Resource: Logos Bible Software

When doing a word study, pay attention to:

- 1) The word in its _____ context
- 2) Other usages in the same _____
- 3) Other usages by the same _____
- 4) Other usages in the _____
- 5) Other usages _____ the New Testament

9.3 LEXICON

- A lexicon is an alphabetical index of _____ language words and their possible meanings (lexical range).

Standard Greek Lexicon: BDAG [HANDOUT #1]

Free Online Greek Lexicon: Thayer's Lexicon (biblestudytools.com)

Standard Hebrew Lexicon: BDB [HANDOUT #2]

Free Online Hebrew Lexicons: https://scriptureworkshop.com/bh/resources_bh_hb.html

9.4 WORD STUDY DICTIONARIES

A Word Study Dictionary is a resource which gives an _____ on each word used in the Bible.

Hebrew: NIDOTTE (5 vol) [HANDOUT #3-4]

Greek: TDNT (10 vol) [HANDOUT #5-6]

Recommended Resource: *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*

9.5 TOPICAL STUDY RESOURCES

A Topical Study Resource is a book that organizes all the verses on a single _____ in the Bible.

Resource: Nave's Topical Bible [HANDOUT #7]

Three easy steps to a good topic study:

1) Select a _____

2) Gather _____

3) _____ and _____ your findings

- Look for common threads/principles.
- Keep the contexts in mind as you study.
- State your conclusions in principles.

CLASS 10: PERSONAL STUDY PLAN

10.1 DEVELOPING A PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY PLAN

A. Set a _____

- ~ What book, chapter, character or topic do you want to study?
- ~ What are you trying to accomplish or gain?

Hint: Start with a topic that _____ you

B. Make a _____

- Set a date when you want to finish the study.
- Then work backwards to determine smaller goals.
- Think about what resources you will use to accomplish your goal.
- When will you make time to accomplish your goal?

C. Develop your _____

- 1) Develop the discipline of setting goals and studying.
- 2) Develop the discipline of studying.

| **Psalm 119:100** *I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.*

10.2 SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES RELATED TO BIBLE STUDY

A. _____ (or meditation)

- 1) Memorize individual verses.
- 2) Memorize passages and books.

B. _____

- Read the Bible for the fun of it – read it for application.
- Oftentimes topics for serious study will come from your devotions.

C. _____ Readings

Deuteronomy 31:10-13 –

D. _____ through Scripture

- Turn the prayers of Scripture into your own prayers.
- Turn other Scripture into prayer – what can you pray about as a result of this passage? How can you turn the application into prayer?

E. Commit to participate in a _____

- Don't underestimate the value of studying in a community.