Studying the Bible
A TUMI Intensive Course
**Purpose:** To give students an understanding of how to study the Bible. They will be able to select any passage of Scripture and use the tools they learn about to help them understand, interpret, exegete, and apply the principles and truths found in that Scripture. The basis of the class will be the Three-Step Model of Bible Interpretation as taught in Module 5 of the Capstone Curriculum of The Urban Ministry Institute.

**Format:** A four-hour intensive class will be held which will utilize hands-on group work, individual work, training with reference books, a workbook, a summarizing project, memory verses, a course text, reading responses, and a ministry-sharing project.

**Resources:**

Bible Atlases

Bible Commentaries

Bible Encyclopedias

Bible Study Tools Worksheet (Appendix 21 of the Bible Interpretation TUMI Module) by Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis

Biblical Translations-functional equivalents (meaning-based), formal equivalents (word-for-word), and paraphrases

Comparison of Translation Philosophies, A (Appendix 17 of the Bible Interpretation TUMI Module) by Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis

Concordances


Cross-References

Dictionaries

Figures of Speech (Appendix 20 of the Bible Interpretation TUMI Module) by Bob Smith, *Basics of Bible Interpretation*

How to Interpret a Narrative (Story) (Appendix 26 of the Bible Interpretation TUMI Module) by Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis

Keys to Bible Interpretation (Appendix 28 of the Bible Interpretation TUMI Module) by Terry Cornett and Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis, rev. ed.

Lexicons

“My Favorite Passage that’s Not in the Bible.” by Daniel B. Wallace, PhD.

Steps in Studying the Word of God

Use of Reference Tools for Interpreting the Bible (Appendix 24 of the Bible Interpretation TUMI Module) by Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis
Credit Options:

1-credit option
Exegetical Paper
Ministry Project
Memory Verses
Read one of the following:
- *New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study, The* by Oletta Wald
- *To Understand the Bible Look for Jesus* by Norman Geisler
Reading Responses from each chapter of one of the above texts.

2-credit option
Exegetical Paper
Ministry Project
Memory Verses
Read both of the following:
- *New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study, The* by Oletta Wald
- *To Understand the Bible Look for Jesus* by Norman Geisler
Reading Responses from each chapter of the above texts.

Grading: Attendance and Participation 30%, Exegetical Project 25%, Ministry Project 15%, Memory Verses 15%, Reading Responses 15%.

Exegetical Project: Students will put into practice everything the class has equipped them for by choosing a passage of Scripture from the list below and completely exegeting it. They will demonstrate the Three-Step Model of Bible Interpretation and write a paper of at least five pages explaining the original context, the universal principles, and the applications of these principles in their current context. They will utilize at least three of the tools from the resources list and explain how they used these tools in the exegesis.

Possible Exegetical Passages

Deuteronomy 15:1-11
Psalm 1
Matthew 15:21-28
Luke 10:1-12
Romans 8:1-8
I Corinthians 11:2-12
I Timothy 2:8-15
Philemon 1:1-25
Hebrews 2:14-18
Revelation 3:14-22

Ministry Project: This project is intended to reproduce on at least a partial level with someone else what you learned from this class. You are to share what you learned from this project, utilizing your final project as an aid, with someone or some group. This may be with your spouse, disciple, Sunday School class, church, small group, or family. Be creative! The written portion of the ministry project should include:

- What you shared
- Who you shared with, where, and why
- The reaction and questions of the person/people you shared with
- What you learned from this sharing experience
Memory Verses:
II Peter 1:19-21
II Timothy 3:14-17
II Timothy 2:15

Course Schedule:

Hour One: Course Intro, Importance of Proper Bible Interpretation
Hour Two: The Three-Step Model of Bible Interpretation, Exegetical sample
Hour Three: Bible Interpretation Tools, Resources, Handouts, Q&A
Hour Four: Exegetical Bible Study Worksheet
Introduction

When you approach Scripture to read or study it, you have two options. One is to discover meaning out of it. The other is to put meaning into it. The first approach wants to hear what God is saying, while the second comes with an already-formed idea and wants to find Scripture to back it up. The first is called exegesis, which literally means, “to draw out.” The second, eisegesis, is the opposite, and means, “to draw in.” History is riddled with many individuals, schools, seminaries, cults, leaders, cultures, and movements that have done the latter, to the destruction of many. Ideas and words are important. God meant something when He had his Word written down through the 40 some authors of the Bible. He did not design His Word to be Jell-O, which fits into whatever mold we want it. He designed it to be the mold, by which we are formed. As we begin this course, let us remember the wisdom and exhortation given to Timothy from the Apostle Paul almost 2000 years ago: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15 (NAS)

Importance of Proper Bible Interpretation

“Believe it or not, everyone has a method of interpreting the Bible. But not all methods are equally profitable. Some use the magic finger approach. It consists of acting upon some supposed divine directive, locating a particular verse – usually with the eyes closed – and taking that portion of Scripture as an answer or truth provided by God. We may laugh at that, but often come quite close to that when we ignore contexts. Then there are those who read the Bible a lot, but never seem to get very far in putting it altogether. They can quote at great length, but have difficulty seeing what the passage means. Others follow an extreme devotional approach. They read only what “warms” them at the moment, as if the Bible were intended to make them feel good continually. All of these people have systems of interpreting the Bible, and it is not difficult to see why such methods do not lead to spiritual soundness. As a result of these approaches – which are really partly Bible study methods and partly interpreting methods – many are spiritually weak and discouraged about their prospects of getting anything solid from the Bible. Such practices never lead to a mature ability to handle the Bible with power and fruitfulness. Methods of interpretation can be haphazard or systematic, and even systematic interpretation can be either profitable, or unprofitable, so that it does violence to the meaning of the Bible. God’s desire is that believers come to the place where they are able to read the Bible with understanding, balance, and facility in relating various portions of the Scriptures to each other:

- Paul Karleen. The Handbook to Bible Study [electronic ed.].

I. We are representatives of the King and His Kingdom.
   a. II Corinthians 5:20
   b. II Timothy 4:7-8
   c. Colossians 2:6-10

II. We are in a spiritual battle zone.
   a. Ephesians 6:10-18
   b. Christ Jesus used the Word in Battle
      1. Matthew 4:1-11
   c. Satan misuses the Word
      1. Genesis 3:1-4
      2. Matthew 4:6
III. It is the cost of Discipleship.

“All biblical interpretation is given in order to strengthen our discipleship in Christ, and is essentially a variation on the common themes emphasized throughout the Scriptures. Love for God and neighbor and using our freedom to build up others and glorify God, constitute the heart of the Bible’s ethic in both the Old and New Testaments. Don Davis, Bible Interpretation, Module 5.

Matthew 11:29; Luke 9:23. “These verses tell us that to be a disciple of Jesus means, at the very least, to learn from and follow Him. Learning and following involve discipline, for those who only learn accidentally and follow incidentally are not true disciples.” Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, Page 20.

NOTES
The Three-Step Model of Bible Interpretation

Definition: To understand the original situation so that you can discover general principles that can be applied to our personal lives in the Spirit’s freedom.

Step one: To understand the meaning of the original situation: the first step focuses on
_____________________________________________________________________________

Step two: So that we may discover the principles of truth: the second step focuses on
_____________________________________________________________________________

Step three: That may be applied in our personal lives in the Spirit’s freedom: the third step is applying
_____________________________________________________________________________

Purpose:
1. To learn what the author meant in the original context of its original writing.
2. To discover Biblical principles that summarize the teaching of scripture and offer God’s wisdom and insight which are binding upon all and can be applied to all.
3. To change our belief and practices and conform our lives to the truths contained in the Word of God.

Step one
Why do we do it?
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Some questions we answer in this step:
1. Who was the _______ of the text and what do we know about him?
2. Gain an understanding of the ______ of the ________ (what was happening with the audience at the time the book was written)
3. Who was the ________, where did they ________, and what were their ________?
4. What was the ________ of writing the book?
5. How does this passage (that you’re studying) contribute to the ________ ________?

A key attitude in this step of the model is: ________________ [James 1:5]

Step two
Focus of the step: __________________________________________________________________________

Summarize what you believe the author was trying to say.

Definition of a Biblical principle:
1. Simple declarative sentence statement.
2. That expresses a clear truth found within the Bible passage
3. ________________________________
4. That is binding on everyone in every place [expresses God’s will or God’s mind on a subject or theme]
5. ______________________________________________________

Key attitude: ____________________ [Acts 17:11]

1. Develop a willingness to search out the Word to find universal truths
2. Refuse to jump to conclusions without checking them against the Scriptures
3. Orient yourself to patiently pray and discuss, in your search, for principles in the Word of God.

Step three
Definition: __________________________________________________________
________________________
____________________________________________________.

Recognize the goal of all the application ____________ and the advancement of the
____________________ __ ____________.

Why should we apply God’s word to our lives?

1. We are to be ________of the Word and not merely ___________ of the Word.
   [James 1:22-25]
2. Disciplined ___________ of the Word produces ___________. [I Tim. 4:7-9]
3. By consistent application of the Word we mature and become able to teach others.
   [Hebrews 5:11-6:2]
4. Faith without ___________ is _______________. [James 2:14-17]
5. Applying the Word establishes our lives on a ____________ ____________.
   [Matt. 7:24-27]

Key attitude: ___________ __ ________________[Gal. 5:1, Rom 7:6]
Avoid stern legalistic tendencies in your application.

Steps to applying the Word of God

1. __________________________________________________________________________.
2. Listen to your heart and let God speak.
3. __________________________________________________________________________.
4. Ask your mentors and body members to hold you accountable.
Literary Types in the Bible

Genre: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

**Biblical genre**: different types of writing in the Bible found within the books of the Bible, all are inspired by God, and all reveal His truth and His will, but told in different ways, and at the same time complimenting each other.

**Knowing the genre is very important in interpreting the Word of God.**

**Similes and Metaphors**
Similes: the emphasis of the comparison is on the point of ________________ between two ideas, groups, actions... it uses “like” or “as” and the subject and the “thing” are kept ________________.

For example: ________________________________________________________

Metaphor: unexpressed comparison, does not use like or as, subject and “thing” are ________________ – they are identified as one; the author does not intend for it to be taken ________________.

For example: ________________________________________________________

**Narrative:** ________________________________________________________

Example of historical: story of Joseph’s life in the Old Testament (OT stories, stories in Acts, stories in the Gospels...)

Example of imaginative: the Prodigal son (parables)
The heart of God’s communication with us is shown by the use of stories in the Bible; they are used to involve us in the complexity and richness of human experience and therefore give us insight into our own lives!

**Law:** legal writings; commandments and codes detailing demands, prohibitions and conditions of God’s will in a particular context

Types of law
- Imperative laws: _________________________________________________
- Prohibitive laws: _________________________________________________
- Conditional laws: _________________________________________________

**Epistles:** letters written by the apostles to Christian churches. The purpose of these letters was ________________________________________________

The early churches viewed the letters as __________ for the apostles themselves; they are either __________ or ________________.

Letters were written to meet practical needs:
- Clearly define an issue (Thessalonians)
- Address doctrinal problem (Colossians)
- Confront readers about their behavior (James)
- When reading the epistles we have to consider ________________________________________________.

For example: Galatians emphasizes freedom in Christ for a church struggling with legalism and I Corinthians stresses obedience for a church that’s taking it’s freedom to immoral extremes.

**Prophecy:** writing in Old Testament and New Testament that show God’s acute awareness and insight into our lives in every dimension [past, present and future] and His foresight into this world in its coming destiny.

They are extremely difficult and complex because of linguistic and symbolic distance.

____% or 8,352 verses in the Bible were predictive material at the time they were first spoken or written.

Types of prophecy
- Forth-telling: ________________________________________________
- Foretelling: ________________________________________________
- Apocalyptic: focus is revealing of what has been hidden – usually in regard to the end times

Examples: Moses was a prophet from the OT and the Apostles were prophets in the NT

**Wisdom Literature:** “a family of literary genres common in the ancient Near East in which instructions for successful living are given for the perplexities of human existence are contemplated” (New Bible Dictionary pp. 1257-58)
Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon in the OT

Some characteristics:

• ________________________
• ________________________
• ________________________

Some examples: riddles, proverbs, fables, parables, allegories, poetry

_________________________: usually placed alongside something for the purpose of comparison; typically uses a common event of natural life to help clarify or emphasize a spiritual truth ____________________ can often cause a more lasting ______________ than just stating a ______________.

For example: Luke 18:1-8 the parable of the persistent widow; the point of the parable is to show that we need to be persistent in our prayers; using the parable like Jesus did will leave a more lasting impression than if Jesus were just to simply say, “Be persistent in your prayers.”

Interpretations of parables:

• Must consider the __________________ ____________________ or else it may not be what Jesus [or the author] had intended as its purpose.
• Placement of parables with the chronology of Jesus’ life add further meaning
• Cultural details and context clues are important.

For example: ____________________________

Proverb: ____________________________

__________________________________________________________________.

Walter C. Kaiser says about proverbs, “terse, brief, have a little ‘kick’ to them and a little bit of salt as well.” [Hermeneutics by Virkler]

Poetry: usually appears in the form of a song, sonnet or hymn and designed to image forth reality in its most concrete sense to move and inspire us.
The book of Psalms has the most poetry, but it’s throughout the Bible.
Songs were a significant part of Hebrew life and culture.
Exegetical Sample

The following is a sample exegetical paper written by a TUMI student from the Bible Interpretation TUMI Module. The paper is broken down into the following points, for your reference:

A - Ask God to open your eyes to truth through the ministry of the Spirit as you read His Word.
B - Identify the author of the book, the date it was written, the purpose, and the audience.
C - Read the context around the passage.
D - Observe the passage carefully.
E - Read the passage in another translation of Scripture.
F - Read any parallel accounts or passages from other parts of Scripture.
G - Study the words and the grammatical structures.
H - Identify the genre and consider any special rules that apply to it.
I - Look for literary structures that might influence the way the text is understood.
J - Identify the historical and cultural issues that might affect the people and ideas within.
K - Summarize what you believe the author was trying to say and why it was important to the original audience.

Part I - Understanding the Original Situation

A. Lord, help me complete this study with humility, hard work, and faithfulness. Bring new insight to me as I study this passage that has troubled and confused me in the past. Help aid my understanding of the roles of men and women in Your church and their relations and roles with each other. Give me discernment, guidance, understanding, and courage as I draw conclusions and attempt to apply principles for myself, even if those principles fly in the face of my own culture or make me uncomfortable. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

B. Paul the Apostle is generally considered to be the author of this book, although this is strongly disputed by some scholars (Bromiley 1986, 680). Assuming Pauline authorship, this book was written around 63-64 A.D. (Bromiley 1986, 685) to Timothy, who was left in Ephesus to pastor the Church there. Paul was an apostle, a Pharisee, a Roman citizen, and a church planter. Formerly known as Saul, and from Tarsus, Paul was the primary discipler of Timothy and alternately referred to him as a “brother”, a “fellow worker,” and his “true son in the faith.” Although Paul was speaking directly to Timothy, as this was addressed to him specifically and not to a church as some of the other Pauline Epistles, the audience was also for church leaders, for the church in Ephesus, and for all believers everywhere. Paul explicitly states his two purposes of writing in two places within the book, the first time in 1:3, where he refers to false teachers and how to deal with them. The second time in 3:14-15, where he cites instructions on how the people of God ought to treat each other in the context of meeting together. According to those same verses, these are given both as a reminder of the instructions he had just given Timothy in his most recent time with him and as a prelude to his next visit in case he is delayed.

Key Tools used: Bible Dictionary, a Bible Encyclopedia, an online Bible Dictionary, the Bible

Key idea: The purpose behind why the book was written is a key to understanding some of the more troublesome instructions within.

C. Paul starts the letter to Timothy with his normal greeting, then immediately delves into one of the two purposes of the letter, that of refuting and correcting the false teachers in the church. After a short testimony, Paul seemingly gives a short introduction to chapter two in the last three verses (18-20) of the first chapter. He ends verse 17 of the first chapter with an “amen,” then he launches into why he is about to give “this instruction.” By using the word “then” in the first verse of chapter two, we see the link. He also clearly shifts directions at the
beginning of chapter three with a new “trustworthy saying,” and a focus on the requirements of church leadership as opposed to the worship instructions focused on in chapter two. Understanding that the influence of the false teachers might become ubiquitous, we see Paul’s urgency here right away, and this comes into play when we discover his fatherly warnings for the women of the Ephesian Church. We also see in his testimony in the first chapter an incredible humility, which frames more accurately the often-misunderstood directives he gives in chapter two. The letter generally proceeds from the more general to the more specific, as in chapter two he is addressing the Ephesian Church, then he moves to the church leadership, and then he focuses very acutely on Timothy and his personal faith concerns.

**Key Tools used: the Bible**

**D.** Paul is doing the speaking here, and the audience is Timothy, the Ephesian Church, and all believers everywhere, as mentioned above. It is important to note that the entire thrust of chapter two is in verse four, where he writes, “[God our Savior] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” Knowing this, we see the first three verses as instructions for us to be praying so that all men might be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Indeed, this is the whole purpose of Paul’s life, as he gives us his mini-testimony again in verse seven. The rest of the chapter details more instructions to the believers on how best to be a witness and testimony to the world in their worship, again so that the purpose of salvation might be worked.

**Key Tools used: the Bible**

**E.** In reading other translations, two points are most helpful. The first is that while the NIV uses the word holiness in verse two, “that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness,” almost every other version I read uses “dignity” in place of holiness. This helps for two reasons. One, godliness and holiness are virtually synonymous in English, rendering the second word superfluous. Two, dignity gives us a better setup for what is to come in relation to Paul’s instructions to both the men and the women in their manners of worship. Secondly, in verse twelve in the NIV we have, after a semicolon, a rather abrupt and apparently rude command for the women, “she must be silent.” Reading the other translations, both paraphrased and formal equivalents, we get the more seasoned and enlightening phrases of either listening quietly or remaining quiet. This is the difference between someone saying, “Silence!” at us or stating, “Please be quiet.”

The curious verse at the end of the chapter has been rendered in many different ways in all of the translations. Some convey the meaning of a woman being saved in the “preserved” or “delivered” sense of the word, not in a theological way. Some of the modern translations indicate a reference to salvation for all because of the women bearing the Christ child.


**G.** There were many words which deemed themselves necessary for further study in this passage due to its sensitive nature. Some of the ones I initially thought more important did not turn out to be so, while some of the ones that seemed obvious in their meaning ended up being surprisingly complex. The seven words I focused my attention on were: silent, man, woman, submission, permit, authority, and saved. I have included a chart below for ease of use in seeing the breakdown.

I had no idea that the simple terms for man and woman in English were most likely referring to the husband and wife relationship, for one. Also, the term for silent in the NIV was translated from a Greek word that more indicated a general quietness of spirit instead of the harsher “absence of noise” or “not talking.” Finally, understanding the multiple ways “saved” is used gives richer, if not more complicated, meaning to the last verse dealing with women and childbearing, and clears up the possibly misunderstood theology of a woman somehow
obtaining salvation simply by having a child. It definitely also does not mean that women who “continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety” will always live through the process of labor, because we know too many examples of godly women who have died giving birth. The tenses and prepositions used in conjunction with the word childbearing seem to mean not an individual instance of childbirth, but the ongoing practice of bearing children (Moore 2003, “Chapter 3”).

Key Tools used: an online exegetical thesis, the Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament (NIV), and an online Greek Lexicon

J. Here is where the text really gets interesting. In Ephesus at the time, there were cropping up a great number of male false teachers. Apparently they were especially adept at persuading and deceiving the women of the church, for good reason. In those days the women were much less likely to be literate, and even less likely to have training in philosophy, rhetoric, or the Law (Keener 1993, 611). As a result, they had less to base their reasoning on when confronted with false teachers. Also, because these teachers were men, and the society was male dominated, rejecting the teaching of a man would have been especially difficult. We see a common thread in I Timothy 1:4-6, 5:13, and II Timothy 3:6-7, where the women were being led astray and they in turn were spreading this teaching around inappropriately. Ephesus was a city known by its great Temple of Diana, or Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (Smith 1901, “Entry for Ephesus”). Artemis, the goddess of Ephesus, was the goddess of fertility, and was represented by “a carved figure with many breasts (Barton, Veerman, and Wilson 1993, 48).” Women had prominent places in these temples as the priestesses (McGee 1977, 46) and with the rampant prostitution and orgies (Barton, Veerman, and Wilson 1993, 48). Given all of this it is easy to see the reasoning and mindset of Paul as he wrote these verses. Known for his egalitarian stance on the roles of women in ministry and society (see Romans 16:1-4, Philippians 4:2-3, Galatians 3:26-29), Paul here cautions the women not to teach publicly in this church—it’s his “short-range solution” (Keener 1993, 611). However, often overlooked is his mandated encouragement for the women to learn, because it is coupled with the words, “in quietness and full submission.” In our context we miss the point of the sentence, which was to learn, and we focus on the how of the learning, which is so seemingly countercultural. In those days, though, for Paul to advocate the learning of the law for women would have jumped off the page, and was certainly cutting edge and countercultural (Keener 1993, 611). This was his “long-range solution” (Keener 1993, 611). Lastly, going back to the highly charged sexual atmosphere in Ephesus due to the prominence of the Temple of Diana, it makes sense for Paul to warn the women to be especially modest in their appearance in public, particularly at a worship service. It would not do at all for the public to see seductively adorned women at a Christian meeting and to get it confused with the perverse religious ceremonies at the pagan temples (Barton, Veerman, and Wilson 1993, 48).

Key Tools used: Two Bible Commentaries, a Bible Background Commentary, the Bible

K. In summary, God wants all mankind to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. With this in mind, we must be praying towards that end, despite our circumstances. We must pray for everyone, including those in authority over us, even if those authorities are our enemies. In addition, we must be a witness to the watching world with our lives. When the men gather together for public prayer, they must do so with a consecrated and repentant heart, a clean conscience, and a reconciled and loving relationship with others. When the women gather together for public worship, they should be an example to the world of true beauty through their character, and not a cheapened version of beauty through the purely physical imitation of the pagan women around them. In addition, since the women of Ephesus had less formal education than the men, and had been particular targets of the false teachers, they should study and learn, but with an attitude of humility and quietness, not overly assertive or obtrusive in their attitude and actions.
Part II - Finding General Principles

A. The initial principles for the text that I found are:
   Pray for all mankind in all kinds of ways.
   We please God when we pray for others.
   God wants all mankind to be saved.
   God wants all mankind to know the truth.
   There is only one God.
   Jesus Christ, God and man, is the only mediator between God and man.
   Prayer should be offered to God with a repentant and reconciled heart.
   Godly women should be witnesses to the world through their holiness,
   humility and inner beauty.

In keeping with the central message of the text though, they may be simplified and reduced down to three. One, God wants all mankind to come to salvation. Two, we must pray toward that end [for the salvation of mankind]. Three, we must be godly witnesses of that salvation.

B. In checking these principles with other Scripture, the following passages were most helpful:

   Principles on Prayer - II Chronicles 6, Nehemiah 1, Psalm 17, Proverbs 15, Isaiah 1, 56, Romans 10, Ephesians 6, Philippians 4, II Thessalonians 3, James 5, I Peter 3

   Principles on God’s salvation - Joel 2, Luke 19, John 3, 12, Acts 2, 15, 16, Romans 10, I Corinthians 9, I Timothy 1, Hebrews 7, II Peter 3

   Principles on our own testimony - Isaiah 43, 44, 55, Matthew 5, 10, Mark 13, Luke 21, John 15, Acts 1, 4, 10, 22, I Corinthians 11, Philippians 2, 3, I Timothy 3, 4, II Timothy 1, Titus 2, I Peter 2, 3, I John 1, Revelation 1, 6, 11, 12, 17, 20

   These provide exhaustive support for being prayerful for others, for the will of God to save all humans, and on the importance of our own testimony about God.

   Key Tools used: online Bible Concordance, online Topical Index

C. Modified Principles:

   God wants all mankind to be saved.
   God wants us to pray for the salvation of mankind.
   We are to be witnesses of God’s salvation with our whole lives.

   The whole of the Bible is God’s pursuit to woo humans back to Himself for His glory, and mankind willingly coming to salvation is one of the highest forms of glory. Since it is His desire to see all humans saved then, we also must make that one of our top priorities as well. God desires that we make it a top priority in our lives by praying for others and by living our lives in such a way, including our worship, our prayer, our attitudes, our words, our actions, and even our appearance, that we testify to God’s salvation in us. Anything we do that detracts from our being effective witnesses for God should be removed or stopped.

Part III - Applying General Principles Today

   Our God is a missionary God. In other words, His desire is for all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth [Him]. He wants to win us back. He is wooing us. I need to keep this in my mind first and foremost as I interact with people. God loves them, each and every one. I need to have that same perspective.
I need to have that deep conviction so that I will pray for all those I know and know about to be saved. I need to ignore my personal feelings about them, our potential differences, or how they have hurt or offended me, and pray for them.

In addition, I must be ruthless in my examination of my own life testimony. How am I portraying the salvation of God? How am I representing Him? How am I depicting the effects of God in my life for others? Am I different? Do I speak differently, act differently, look different, and think differently? Have I set myself apart, or are people confused or, worse yet, put off by my witness? There is a song that talks about the idea that we may be the only Jesus anyone ever sees. What kind of a Jesus are they seeing? We are God’s hands and feet on this planet, and we must take that charge seriously. I am to be a contagious, infectious, attractive testimony of, for, and about God, and anything that detracts from that has got to go. Am I hanging on to cultural or personal baggage out of a desire for selfish comfort, out of neglect, or out of ignorance? I must critically look at the cultural mores, traditions, and assumptions about how I am to live my life in my current situation in life and examine how society would view that in light of their understanding of what God has done in me and who He is. In light of church planting, what aspects of our church polity and practice are we exercising in freedom that is confusing or off-putting to outside observers? We must not hang on to those things that obstruct a person’s path to Christ.
Exegetical Sample Works Cited


**Bible Interpretation Tools**

**Bible Translations**

Use a combination of Formal Equivalence Translations, Dynamic Equivalence Translations, and Paraphrases to get a fuller sense of the range of meanings for the passage. (see Appendix 17). Additionally, a parallel Bible (one which has multiple translations side by side on one page) is extremely helpful and convenient.

**Bible Encyclopedias**

Similar to a Bible Dictionary, this provides background on the history, culture, social customs, peoples, topography, and related matters of the biblical periods.

**Lexicons**

A lexicon gives the definitions of words, particularly of the original Hebrew and Greek words and meanings. This is helpful in determining shades of meaning, especially in words that had no good translation into English, or in cases where there are many different meanings for the same English word (e.g. love).

**Dictionaries**

A Bible Dictionary lists historical geographical, cultural, scientific, and theological information about people, places, animals, events, and physical objects found in the Bible.

**Bible Atlases**

A Bible atlas is a collection of maps of the places cited in the Bible, often including layouts of cities and key buildings (such as the Temple). This establishes the setting of Biblical narratives and events, and reveals background information about places and regions.

**Bible Handbooks**

A Bible handbook is useful for obtaining information about author, date, and circumstances in which a book was written.

**Concordances**

A concordance is a book which lists all the words of the Bible in alphabetical order and where they are found.

**Cross-References**

Cross-reference aids help us tap into the interconnections between texts of the Bible on the same or related themes by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

**Bible Commentaries**

Commentaries are aids to interpretation that give us the testimony, findings, and insights of a particular book of Scripture from the vantage point of a pastor, scholar, or biblical interpreter.
Types of commentaries:

Devotional – to provide daily help for one’s reading of Scripture and walk with God.

Doctrinal (Theological) – to provide interpretation on the major teachings of the books of Scripture, with a view toward a systematic treatment of theology.

Exegetical – designed to give helpful information on the language, history, culture, and grammar of the text for the purpose of good exegesis.

Homiletic (Pulpit) – to give the preacher or teacher resources to prepare and deliver sermons or lessons based on the texts of Scripture.
Exegetical Bible Study Worksheet

Passage:

Understanding the Original Situation

Author:

Audience:

Date:

Location:

Literature Type:

Words to look up:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>GREEK WORD</th>
<th>STRONG’S NUMBER</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Important Geographical Features:

Important Cultural Notes:

Important Historical Notes:

Translations you read from:

Notable translation differences:

References to other verses, people or places in Scripture:

Commentaries used:

Commentary Notes:

General summary in your own words of what the author was trying to say:
Finding General Principles

Initial Principles
1.
2.
3.
4.

Are these principles consistent with and supported by other passages in Scripture? [use a concordance or topical Bible]

Do you need to adjust your principles above in light of other Scripture?

Modified Principles
1.
2.
3.
4.

Do commentaries on this passage agree in general with the principles you have drawn out?

If not, do you need to make any more adjustments?

Applying General Principles Today

How is this passage “Good News” to others and me?

How should knowing the truth from this passage affect my relationship with God?

How should knowing the truth from this passage affect my relationship with others?

How should knowing the truth from this passage challenge beliefs, attitudes, and actions that my culture views as normal?

What am I to believe?

What am I to do?

Do I need to repent from old ways of thinking and acting?

How can I act on these truths so that I become a wise person?

How can I share what I have learned with others in a way that draws attention to Christ and builds them up?
Appendices
Verse 1:
The first task of the interpreter is called exegesis/[extra Jesus]/ naw I said exegesis man/ it’s a Latin word don’t be scared/ matter of fact I laughed when I first heard it too/ its spelled e-x-e-g-e-s-i-s/ guarantee you learn this process and you’ll be blessed/ exegesis is the careful systematic/ study of scripture for the Christian this should be a habit/ but to discover the original intended meaning/ of the author to his audience is exegeting/ but to do this man you need some tools/ so let me recommend a couple of things you should use/ aight cool/ first man you need this book/ it’s called a commentary and it helps you to further look/ into some essential things you need to check/ in order for you to properly interpret the text

Hook:
With this skill this should keep you from heresy/ and keep you from going through theological therapy/, the words of God will change your life/ if you Keep the text in its context/ with this skill/ this should keep you from heresy/ and keep you from going through theological therapy/ the words of God will change your life/ if you keep the text in its context

Verse 2:
You need some more books I know its gettin’ scary/ but you need some definitions get a bible dictionary/to go without these tools you can’t afford it/ that’s why you need this book called a concordance/ and every time you start to think this is too much to do/ I recommend you reflect on 2 Timothy 2/ and 15/ and you’ll see what I mean/ simply because the serpent is lurking to glean/ those who don’t read/ and those who don’t study/ to keep a lock on this treasure/ from unlocking the pleasure/ cause God’s word is lovely/ that’s why we hold it as precious as pearls/ to let our exegetical work reflect to the world/ in accuracy/ hoping that you happy to see/ the very words God breathe handle accurately/ yeah so many take text out of context/ and come up with mess and more nonsense

Hook

Verse 3:
What you don’t wanna do is called eisegesis/[I see Jesus]/ naw I said eisegesis man/ you a silly dude its Latin too/ and that’s just the act of when your adding to/ or the process of reading one’s own meaning/ into the text and that’s just eisegeting/ don’t fret I know these words are new/ and phrases to/ but it’s cool to go back to school/ its spell e-i-s-e-g-e-s-i-s/ guarantee you learn this process and God’ll be vexed/ a text can never mean what it never meant before/ to its original reader or author/ so if you run into a difficult passage and you know the Bible never contradicts itself/ then turn the pages to a parallel passage and just let the scriptures interpret itself

Hook

http://www.thascript.com/?lid=233
My Favorite Passage that’s Not in the Bible

Daniel B. Wallace, PhD

Executive Director, Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (www.csntm.org)

One hundred and forty years ago, conservative biblical scholar and Dean of Canterbury, Henry Alford, advocated a new translation to replace the King James Bible. One of his reasons was the inferior textual basis of the KJV. Alford argued that “a translator of Holy Scripture must be...ready to sacrifice the choicest text, and the plainest proof of doctrine, if the words are not those of what he is constrained in his conscience to receive as God's testimony.” He was speaking about the Trinitarian formula found in the KJV rendering of 1 John 5:7-8. Twenty years later, two Cambridge scholars came to the firm conclusion that John 7:53-8:11 also was not part of the original text of scripture. But Westcott and Hort’s view has not had nearly the impact that Alford’s did.

For a long time, biblical scholars have recognized the poor textual credentials of the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11). The evidence against its authenticity is overwhelming: The earliest manuscripts with substantial portions of John’s Gospel (P66 and P75) lack these verses. They skip from John 7:52 to 8:12. The oldest large codices of the Bible also lack these verses: codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both from the fourth century, are normally considered to be the most important biblical manuscripts of the NT extant today. Neither of them has these verses. Codex Alexandrinus, from the fifth century, lacks several leaves in the middle of John. But because of the consistency of the letter size, width of lines, and lines per page, the evidence is conclusive that this manuscript also lacked the pericope adulterae. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, also from the fifth century, apparently lacked these verses as well (it is similar to Alexandrinus in that some leaves are missing). The earliest extant manuscript to have these verses is codex Bezae, an eccentric text once in the possession of Theodore Beza. He gave this manuscript to the University of Cambridge in 1581 as a gift, telling the school that he was confident that the scholars there would be able to figure out its significance. He washed his hands of the document. Bezae is indeed the most eccentric NT manuscript extant today, yet it is the chief representative of the Western text-type (the text-form that became dominant in Rome and the Latin West).

When P66, P75, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus agree, their combined testimony is overwhelmingly strong that a particular reading is not authentic. But it is not only the early Greek manuscripts that lack this text. The great majority of Greek manuscripts through the first eight centuries lack this pericope. And except for Bezae (or codex D), virtually all of the most important Greek witnesses through the first eight centuries do not have the verses. Of the three most important early versions of the New Testament (Coptic, Latin, Syriac), two of them lack the story in their earliest and best witnesses. The Latin alone has the story in its best early witnesses.

Even patristic writers seemed to overlook this text. Bruce Metzger, arguably the greatest textual critic of the twentieth century, argued that “No Greek Church Father prior to Euthymius Zigabenus [twelfth century] comments on the passage, and Euthymius declares that the accurate copies of the Gospel do not contain it” (Textual Commentary, 2nd ed., loc. cit.).

It is an important point to note that although the story of the woman caught in adultery is found in most of our printed Bibles today, the evidence suggests that the majority of Bibles during the first eight centuries of the Christian faith did not contain the story. Externally, most scholars would say that the evidence for it not being an authentic part of John’s Gospel is rock solid.
But textual criticism is not based on external evidence alone; there is also the internal 
evidence to consider. This is comprised of two parts: intrinsic evidence has to do with what an 
author is likely to have written; transcriptional evidence has to do with how and why a scribe 
would have changed the text.

Intrinsically, the vocabulary, syntax, and style look far more like Luke than they do John. There 
is almost nothing in these twelve verses that has a Johannine flavor. And transcriptionally, 
scribes were almost always prone to add material rather than omit it—especially a big block of 
text such as this, rich in its description of Jesus' mercy. One of the remarkable things about 
this passage, in fact, is that it is found in multiple locations. Most manuscripts that have it 
place it in its now traditional location: between John 7:52 and 8:12. But an entire family of 
manuscripts has the passage at the end of Luke 21, while another family places it at the end 
of John's Gospel. Other manuscripts place it at the end of Luke or in various places in John 7.

The pericope adulterae has all the earmarks of a pericope that was looking for a home. It took 
up permanent residence, in the ninth century, in the middle of the fourth gospel.

If the question of its literary authenticity (i.e., whether it was penned by John) is settled, the 
question of its historical authenticity is not. It is indeed possible that these verses describe an 
actual incident in the life of Jesus and found their way into our Bibles because of having the 
ing of truth. On one level, if this is the case, then one might be forgiven for preaching the text 
on a Sunday morning. But to regard it as scripture if John did not write it is another matter. 
The problem is this: If John wrote his gospel as a tightly woven argument, with everything 
meeting a crescendo in the resurrection, would he be disturbed that some scribes started 
monkeying with his text? If we don't respect the human author, then we could discount this 
issue. But if the Bible is both the Word of God and the words of men, then we are playing fast 
and loose with the human author’s purpose by adding anything—especially something as long 
as this passage—that takes a detour from his intentions. What preacher would be happy with 
someone adding a couple hundred words in the middle of his printed sermon as though such 
were from him? On another level, there is evidence that this story is a conflation from two 
different stories, one circulating in the east and the other circulating in the west. In other 
words, even the historicity of this pericope is called into question.

Yet, remarkably, even though most translators would probably deny John 7:53–8:11 a place 
in the canon, virtually every translation of the Bible has this text in its traditional location. There 
is, of course, a marginal note in modern translations that says something like, “Most ancient 
authorities lack these verses.” But such a weak and ambiguous statement is generally ignored 
by readers of Holy Writ. (It’s ambiguous because many readers might assume that in spite of the 
‘ancient authorities’ that lack the passage, the translators felt it must be authentic.)

How, then, has this passage made it into modern translations? In a word, there has been a 
longstanding tradition of timidity among translators. One twentieth-century Bible relegated 
the passage to the footnotes, but when the sales were rather lackluster, it again found its place in 
John’s Gospel. Even the NET Bible [available at www.bible.org], for which I am the senior New 
Testament editor, has put the text in its traditional place. But the NET Bible also has a lengthy 
footnote, explaining the textual complications and doubts about its authenticity. And the font 
size is smaller than normal so that it will be harder to read from the pulpit! But we 
nevertheless made the same concession that other translators have about this text by leaving 
it in situ.

The climate has changed recently, however. In Bart Ehrman’s 2005 bestseller, Misquoting 
Jesus: The Story behind Who Changed the Bible and Why, the author discounts the 
authenticity of this pericope. What is remarkable is not that he does this, but that thousands 
of Bible-believing Christians have become disturbed by his assertions. Ehrman—a former 
evangelical and alum of Moody and Wheaton—is one of America’s leading textual critics. He 
has been on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, and on the Internet. He has
I lectured at universities from sea to shining sea. What he wrote in his blockbuster book sent shockwaves through the Christian public.

I wrote a critique of Ehrman’s book that was published in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. There I said, "keeping [John 7:53–8:11 and Mark 16:9–20] in our Bibles rather than relegating them to the footnotes seems to have been a bomb just waiting to explode. All Ehrman did was to light the fuse. One lesson we must learn from *Misquoting Jesus* is that those in ministry need to close the gap between the church and the academy. We have to educate believers. Instead of trying to isolate laypeople from critical scholarship, we need to insulate them. They need to be ready for the barrage, because it is coming. The intentional dumbing down of the church for the sake of filling more pews will ultimately lead to defection from Christ. Ehrman is to be thanked for giving us a wake-up call."

I believe it’s time for us to own up to our tradition of timidity and recognize that this has not helped the Church in the long haul. It’s time to close the gap. I am calling for translators to remove this text from the Gospel of John and relegate it to the footnotes. Although this will be painful and will cause initial confusion, it is far better that laypeople hear the truth about scripture from their friends than from their enemies. They need to know that Christ-honoring, Bible-believing scholars also do not think that this text is authentic, and that such a stance has not shaken their faith one iota. No cardinal truth is lost if these verses go bye-bye; no essential doctrine is disturbed if they are cut from the pages of the Word of God. [Of course, if it is objected that since scholars are not absolutely sure that this text is inauthentic they therefore need to retain it in the text, it need only be said that such a policy practiced across the board would wreak havoc on our printed Bibles and would mushroom their size beyond recognizable proportions. In Acts alone, one textual tradition has 8.5% more material than has been traditionally printed in our Bibles, yet very few object to such variants being denied a place in the canon. Thus, to insist on having the *pericope adulterae* in a footnote is a nod toward its longstanding tradition in Bibles from the second millennium AD on.]

Of course, King James Only advocates will see things differently. Their claim is that modern translations are butchering the Bible by cutting out major texts. Not only is that quite an overstatement (since only two lengthy passages in the KJV NT are considered spurious by modern scholars—John 7:53–8:11 and Mark 16:9–20), but it also assumes what it needs to prove. Is it not possible that the KJV, based on half a dozen late manuscripts, has added to the Word of God rather than that modern translations, based on far more and much earlier manuscripts, have cut out portions of scripture? It is demonstrable that over time, the New Testament text has grown. The latest manuscripts have approximately 2% more material than the earliest ones. The problem is not that we have 98% of the Word of God; the problem is that we have 102%! Modern scholars are trying to burn off the dross to get to the gold. And one text that must go, in spite of our emotional attachment to it, is John 7:53–8:11.

One of the practical implications of this is as follows: When Christians are asked whether this beloved story should be cut out of their Bibles, they overwhelmingly and emphatically say no. The reason given: It’s always been in the Bible and scholars have no right to tamper with the text. The problem with this view is manifold. First, it is historically naïve because it assumes that this passage has always been in the Bible. Second, it is anti-intellectual by assuming that scholars are involved in some sort of conspiracy and that they have no basis for excising verses that exist in the *printed* text of the Bible. Without the slightest shred of evidence, many laypeople [and not a few pastors!] have a knee-jerk reaction to scholars who believe that these twelve verses are not authentic. What they don’t realize is that every Bible translation has to be reconstructed from the extant Greek New Testament manuscripts. No one follows just a single manuscript, because all manuscripts are riddled with errors. The manuscripts need to be examined, weighed, sifted, and eventually translated. Every textual decision requires someone to think through which reading is authentic and which is not. In the best tradition of solid Christian scholarship, textual critics are actually producing a Bible for Christians to read. Without biblical scholars, we would have no Bibles in our own languages. When laymen claim
that scholars are tampering with the text, they are biting the hand that feeds them. Now, to be sure, there are biblical scholars who are attempting to destroy the Christian faith. And there are textual critics who are not Christians. But the great translations of our time have largely been done by honest scholars. Some of them are Christians, and some of them are not. But their integrity as scholars cannot be called into question when it comes to passages such as the *pericope adulterae*, since they are simply following in the train of Henry Alford by subjecting their conscience to the historical data.

The best of biblical scholarship pursues truth at all costs. And it bases its conclusions on real evidence, not on wishes, emotion, or blind faith. This is in line with the key tenets of historic Christianity. If God became man in time-space history, then we ought to link our faith to history. It must not be a leap of faith, but it should be a step of faith. The religion of the Bible is the only major religion in the world that subjects itself to historical inquiry. The Incarnation has forever put God’s stamp of approval on pursuing truth, wrestling with data, and changing our minds based on evidence. When we deny evidence its place and appeal to emotion instead, we are methodologically denying the significance of the Incarnation. Much is thus at stake when it comes to a text such as the story of the woman caught in adultery. What is at stake is not, as some might think, the mercy of God; rather, what is at stake is how we view the very Incarnation itself. Ironically, if we allow passages into the Gospels that do not have the best credentials, we are in fact tacitly questioning whether the Lord of the Gospels, Jesus Christ himself, became man, for we jettison historicity in favor of personal preference. By affirming a spurious passage about him we may be losing a whole lot more than we gain.

It is the duty of pastors for the sake of their faith to study the data, to know the evidence, to have firm convictions rooted in history. And we dare not serve up anything less than the same kind of meal for our congregations. We do not serve the church of Jesus Christ faithfully when we hide evidence from laypeople; we need to learn to insulate our congregations, but not isolate them. The Incarnation of Christ demands nothing less than this.
Steps in Studying the Word of God

1.) Ask God for guidance, wisdom, and discernment before you start.
2.) Read, read, and reread the passage.
3.) Check out the context of the passage [author, audience, date, place, etc.].
4.) Read the context around the passage.
5.) Look for other translations/versions of the same passage.
6.) Read other similar scriptures to this passage [concordance, cross-references].
7.) Outline the passage.
8.) Identify the type/genre of the passage and interpret it in light of that.
9.) Read about cultural/historical clues related to this passage.
10.) Ask, "What was the author telling the audience then?"
11.) Ask, "What are the general principles God is teaching?" [for all people, at all places, for all times]
12.) Ask, "What are the applications for my life?"

Key Principles:

Always compare Scripture to Scripture. It will not contradict itself.

Keep an attitude of humility.

Ultimately, the point of all Scripture study is to help us to live more like Christ and to know Him more.
**Helpful Books on Studying the Word of God**

*Applying the Bible* by Jack Kuhatschek.

*How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart.

*How to Study the Bible for Yourself* by Tim LaHaye.

*How to Study Your Bible* by Kay Arthur.

*New Joy of Discovery in Bible Study, The* by Oletta Wald.

*To Understand the Bible Look for Jesus* by Norman Geisler.

**Helpful Websites on Studying the Word of God**

Bible Gateway – www.biblegateway.com

Crosswalk – www.crosswalk.com

Study Light – www.studylight.org

The Unbound Bible - unbound.biola.edu

Blue Letter Bible - www.blueletterbible.org

Bible Toolbox - www.mybibletools.com
APPENDIX 21
Bible Study Tools Worksheet

Read through the following Scripture passage and then answer the questions that follow using a Strong's Concordance, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, and the New Bible Dictionary.

Romans 4 (ESV)

What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? [2] For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. [3] For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” [4] Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. [5] And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, [6] just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: [7] “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; [8] blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.” [9] Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. [10] How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. [11] He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, [12] and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. [13] For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

1. Use your concordance to identify the word that is translated “justified” in verse 2 and then write down the word and its Strong’s number in the space below:

   Greek word ______________________   Strong’s number ________________
2. Look up this word in your *Vine's Expository Dictionary* and read the entry for this word. What does this information add to your understanding of the word and the passage?

3. Use your concordance to identify the word that is translated "walk" in verse 12 and then write down the word and its Strong's number in the space below.

   Greek word ____________________ Strong's number ______________

4. Look up this word in *Vine's Expository Dictionary* and read the entry.

   Why do you think the Apostle Paul chose this word rather than one of the other Greek words for walking? What does knowing the definition of this word for "walk" add to your understanding of this passage?

5. Using the *New Bible Dictionary*, look up and read the article on "Abraham." In what way does this deepen your understanding of the Scripture passage?
## Appendix 17

### A Comparison of Translation Philosophies

#### Common English Versions of the Bible

* Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Literally Word-for-Word</th>
<th>Dynamic Equivalence</th>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New American Standard Bible (NASB)</td>
<td>New King James Version (NKJV)</td>
<td>New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)</td>
<td>English Standard Version (ESV)</td>
<td>Revised English Bible (REB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Version (NIV)</td>
<td>New Living Translation (NLT)</td>
<td>Today's English Version (TEV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Message</td>
<td>Cotton Patch Gospels</td>
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</table>
One of the most enlightening aspects of language is the study of figurative expressions. Milton Terry introduces us to this subject with keen insight:

The natural operations of the human mind prompt men to trace analogies and make comparisons. Pleasing emotions are excited and the imagination is gratified by the use of metaphors and similes. Were we to suppose a language sufficiently copious in words to express all possible conceptions, the human mind would still require us to compare and contrast our concepts, and such a procedure would soon necessitate a variety of figures of speech. So much of our knowledge is acquired through the senses, that all our abstract ideas and our spiritual language have a material base. “It is not too much to say,” observes Max Muller, “that the whole dictionary of ancient religion is made up of metaphors. With us these metaphors are all forgotten. We speak of spirit without thinking of breath, of heaven without thinking of sky, of pardon without thinking of a release, of revelation without thinking of a veil. But in ancient language every one of these words, nay, every word that does not refer to sensuous objects, is still in a chrysalis stage, half material and half spiritual, and rising and falling in its character according to the capacities of its speakers and hearers.”

What potent possibilities, then, lie in concepts conveyed by figurative language! So, moving to specifics, let’s explore the various figures of speech. I’ll list some of them, along with illustrations of their use on the following pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures of Speech</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIMILE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(similis = like)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A formal comparison using “as... so” or “like” to express resemblance. “Even so, husbands should love their own wives as their own bodies...” (Eph. 5.28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>METAPHOR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Meta+phero = a carrying over)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An implied comparison, a word applied to something it is not, to suggest a resemblance. “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf...” (Gen. 49.27).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figures of Speech (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>IRONY</strong></th>
<th>The speaker or writer says the very opposite of what he intends to convey. “... you are the people and wisdom will die with you” (Job 12.1).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(Eiron = a dissembling speaker)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>METONYMY</strong></td>
<td>One word is used in place of another to portray some actual relationship between the things signified. “Kill the passover...” (Exod. 12.21 KJV) where the paschal lamb is meant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Meta+onoma = a change of name)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HYPERBOLE</strong></td>
<td>Intentional exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis, or magnifying beyond reality. “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away...” (Matt. 5.29).</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Huper+bole = a throwing beyond)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PERSONIFICATION</strong></td>
<td>Inanimate objects are spoken of as persons, as if they had life. “The sea looked and fled...” (Ps. 114.3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(to make like a person)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>APOSTROPHE</strong></td>
<td>Turning from the immediate hearers to address an absent or imaginary person or thing. “Ah, sword of the Lord! How long till you are quiet?” (Jer. 47.6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(apo+strepho = to turn from)</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYNECDOCHE</strong></td>
<td>Where the whole is put for a part, or a part for the whole, an individual for a class and vice-versa. “And we were in all 276 souls...” in Acts 27.37, where soul is used for the whole person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(sun+ekdechomai = to receive from and associate with)</em></td>
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</table>

**Simile**

First, let’s compare simile and metaphor. Ephesians 5:22-27 is a simile, making a formal comparison between Christ and the church on the one hand, and husbands and wives on the other. The words “as... so” or “even so” make this very clear. And this figure heightens our interest and dignifies the marriage relationship, especially if we see it in outline form, like this:
## Figures of Speech (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AS with CHRIST AND THE CHURCH</strong></th>
<th><strong>SO with HUSBANDS AND WIVES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH and gave himself up for her</strong> (Eph. 5.25)</td>
<td><strong>HUSBANDS, LOVE your WIVES as CHRIST LOVED the CHURCH</strong> (Eph. 5.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;THAT he might sanctify her&quot;</strong> (Eph. 5.26) i.e. that we might be put to the intended use for which he created us:</td>
<td><strong>THAT the husband might sanctify his wife.</strong> i.e. that she might SHARE HIS LIFE, be his helper, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) as an expression of his own LIFE and CHARACTER</td>
<td>a) expressing her own personality and life in Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) to fulfill our calling, enjoy our God-given ministries</td>
<td>b) employing her gifts in a spiritual ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) and much more (you add the rest)</td>
<td>c) be the ruler of the home, in all that means to her husband and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;THAT he might present the church to himself in splendor&quot;</strong> (Eph. 5.27) i.e. that he might enjoy the benefits stemming from his unselfish love - in enjoying his Bride. And lead us on to the fulfillment of our manhood and womanhood by his love.</td>
<td><strong>THAT the husband might seek his wife's fulfillment, and enjoy her, i.e. that he may enjoy the beauty and glory of her fulfilled womanhood, as he undertakes the responsibility of his headship leading her with the leadership of love to ultimate fulfillment.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;THAT she might be holy and without blemish&quot;</strong> (Eph. 5.27). i.e. that his work in us may go on to completion, that we may be wholly his.</td>
<td><strong>THAT the husband be faithful, hanging in there, i.e. that his commitment may be steadfast and permanent, in spite of problems.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;Having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word&quot;</strong> (Eph. 5.26) Based on COMMUNICATION which his loving heart initiates - to keep us close, mutually enjoying our love relationship.</td>
<td><strong>Husbands are to keep communication channels open, remembering that LOVE finds a way to COMMUNICATE, and it's his initiative if he is going to love as CHRIST LOVED.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Metaphor

By contrast, a metaphor is not so straightforward. It communicates an impression more by implication. In the expressions, “You are the salt of the earth...” (Matt. 5:13) and “You are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14), our Lord Jesus is multiplying metaphors to communicate graphic truth about the determinative role Christians are to play in affecting the world. In those early days, salt was the major means of arresting corruption in meat or fish, so the figure is not lost on those who listened to Jesus. Light, in any age, enables us to function with any degree of confidence. It dispels darkness. When we can’t see, we’re in trouble! The words “salt” and “light” are used as implied comparison. These metaphors speak with penetrating force, even though they are implicit in nature.

Irony

The use of irony as a figure of speech, though it has a bite to it, often has its humorous side. Our Lord was using both effects when he said, “... how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye?” (Luke 6:42).

In 1 Corinthians 4:8 the apostle Paul uses irony with great force, “Already you are filled! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you.” As we read on, Paul proceeds to contrast the state of the apostles as being the last—not the first, as spectacles to the world, as fools. Then he uses irony again, “We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute” (1 Cor. 4:10). Can you imagine how the Corinthian Christians must have felt the shame of their misplaced value systems, how this pointed word of sarcasm must have punctured their swollen pride in men? Would that we should review our value systems, today, and discover the only ground of boasting—the Lord Jesus and his life in us.

Metonymy

Then there’s metonymy (a change of name). Speaking to the Pharisees concerning Herod, Christ says “Go and tell that fox...” (Luke 13:32) and with one word he
characterized that politically crafty king. And, “The way of the fool is right in his own eyes . . .” (Prov. 12:15) where eyes represents the way he sees things, or his mental perspective. And, “. . . the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Prov. 12:18) in which tongue stands for what the wise one says, his words of wisdom.

In the New Testament, “Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan . . .” (Matt. 3:5) in which it is obvious that people, not places, are meant in the mention of these various regions. Then, we look at “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:21). Here cup and table are used for what they contain and what they offer. Again, in Romans 3:30 the circumcision is used to represent the Jewish people, while uncircumcision refers to the Gentiles.

I’m sure from these examples you can see how commonly metonymy is used in the Bible. We use the same figure today when we call a person “a tiger” or “a kitten.”

**Hyperbole**

Painting a picture larger than life by intentional exaggeration beyond reality is a common feature of our own speech, so hyperbole (a throwing beyond) should be thoroughly familiar to us.

In the anguish of his torment Job indulges in this kind of language. More graphically than any other form of speech it expresses the awfulness of his feeling of affliction.

And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have taken hold of me.

The night racks my bones, and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest.

With violence it seizes my garment; it binds me about like the collar of my tunic.

God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.

I cry to thee and thou dost not answer me; I stand, and thou dost not heed me.
Figures of Speech (continued)

Thou hast turned cruel to me; with the might of thy hand thou dost persecute me.

Thou liftest me up on the wind, thou makest me ride on it, and thou tossest me about in the roar of the storm.

Yea, I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living

~ Job 30:16-23

Certainly we get the keen sense of his utter despair from this highly expressive, but extravagant, language.

The apostle John in the New Testament uses hyperbolic language in this statement: “But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25). If we considered Christ’s eternal existence, perhaps this statement could be taken literally, but if we limit it to the deeds of the Lord Jesus in his humanity (which I believe is what John has in mind) then it is clearly a use of hyperbole.

Personification

Referring to inanimate objects as if they possessed life and personality is especially evident in the language of imagination and feeling. In Numbers 16:32, "... the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up..." speaks of Korah and his men. Here the earth is personified as having a mouth to devour these men.

The Lord Jesus uses personification in, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Matt. 23:37). The city of Jerusalem is here personified. Our Lord’s concern was for its people, yet he addresses the city as if it were they.

Again, our Lord personifies tomorrow in these words: “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself” (Matt. 6:34). Here tomorrow is invested with characteristics of human personality, as being beset with anxious cares.
Apostrophe

This is a strange but graphic figure which sounds as if the speaker were talking to himself in a sort of externalized soliloquy. For instance, David says to his dead son, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” (2 Sam. 18:33). What a moving expression of David’s grief this is; no other mode of expression could be quite so expressive in this instance.

Then there is the use of this figure in which the kings of earth address a fallen city, “Alas! alas! thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! In one hour has thy judgment come!” (Rev. 18:10).

This figure of speech seems best adapted to the expression of deep emotion. As such, it readily grabs our attention and draws out our interest.

Synechdoche

Here’s one most of us never heard of, but which we frequently use in everyday speech. We say, “This is his hour” when we don’t really mean an hour just sixty minutes long. We mean this is his time of glory, or suffering, or whatever we associate with his current experience. We have substituted a part for the whole. In Scripture it occurs in such passages as this: in Judges 12:7 we are told Jephthah was buried “in the cities of Gilead” (Hebrew) though actually only one of those cities is meant; in Luke 2:1 “all the world” is used to mean the world of the Roman Empire; in Deuteronomy 32:41 “if I whet the lightning of my sword” the word lightning is used for the flashing edge of the gleaming blade.

Perhaps now we have seen enough of the prevalence and expressive value of figures of speech to help us appreciate the color and realism they lend to the language of the Bible. Also, interpretively, our review should take some of the mystery out of our encounters with these forms, in studying the Bible.
## APPENDIX 24
### Use of Reference Tools for Interpreting the Bible

**Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Cross-Reference Aids and Topical Concordances</th>
<th>Theological Workbooks, Dictionaries, and Studies</th>
<th>Bible Dictionaries, Bible Atlases, and Customs References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To associate different texts together on a given subject, theme, or issue</td>
<td>To provide an understanding of the meanings of a word or phrase in light of its theological significance</td>
<td>To provide background on the history, culture, social customs, and/or life of the biblical periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Where Most Beneficial</td>
<td>Finding Biblical Principles</td>
<td>Understanding the Original Situation and Finding Biblical Principles</td>
<td>Understanding the Original Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>1. Find the reference you want to check.</td>
<td>1. Attribute the verse or passage you are studying with a particular theme.</td>
<td>1. Select an item, theme, issue, or custom you need help in understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Look up the other texts associated with passage in the reference.</td>
<td>2. Find the word or concept you would like to research.</td>
<td>2. Check the item in the reference text provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Associate the verse with a particular theme.</td>
<td>3. Read on the background of the word in the reference or dictionary</td>
<td>3. Make note on the background of the issue, and factor the new information in your overall account of the passage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Check the theme against those citations given.</td>
<td>4. Associate your text with the theme, glean what is helpful and discarding what is not relevant for the purpose of your study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Find texts on same subject throughout the Bible</td>
<td>Thorough scholarship on the various theological usages and meanings of a particular Bible word, wording, or phrase</td>
<td>Wealth of information given on the various sociology, anthropology, historical accounts, customs, society, geography and data on the original situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outlines provided to help digest all Scriptures on a different subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Caution</td>
<td>Dig deeply into the text BEFORE you begin to look at other similar materials</td>
<td>Do not be confused by the VARIETY of usages and meanings of a theological idea</td>
<td>Stay focused on the meaning of the text and not merely its CONTEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Use of Reference Tools for Interpreting the Bible (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Bible Handbooks, Study Bible, and Commentaries</th>
<th>Topical Bibles, Textbooks, and Thematic Studies</th>
<th>Lexical Aids, Inter-linear Translations, and Word Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To give a scholarly opinion as to the background, context, and meaning of the text</td>
<td>To give a sophisticated outline of passages on a given theme</td>
<td>To provide insight into the meaning, usage, and grammar of the biblical words and language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Where Most Beneficial</td>
<td>Understanding the Original Situation and Finding Biblical Principles</td>
<td>Finding Biblical Principles</td>
<td>Understanding the Original Situation and Finding Biblical Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Select the words or phrases in the passage which serve as key words to define in order to understand the overall meaning of the passage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Using a concordance, lexicon, or other linguistic tool, look at the various meanings of the word in the context of the book, the author, the author’s contemporaries, the Bible, and finally the period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Allow the richness of the biblical meanings to nuance your study’s claims on what the passage meant to its original hearers and what it means today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Excellent scholarly opinions on both the background and meaning of the various texts of Scripture.</td>
<td>Rich, thorough presentations on various topics, themes, and theological concepts being dealt with in a passage</td>
<td>Abundant expert knowledge given on every phase of the design, use, and meaning of the biblical languages in their own historical and religious setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Caution</td>
<td>Do your own study and reflection before you RELY on the opinion of your favorite interpreter</td>
<td>Do not make a topical listing of texts the SUBSTITUTE for deep digging into individual texts and passages for truth</td>
<td>Do not pretend that a knowledge of the original meanings of the key words DISQUALIFIES a sound knowledge of the text in your own language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 26
How to Interpret a Narrative (Story)

Don L. Davis

All stories have a particular shape and possess a number of elements that make it possible to experience the truth of the story, whether historical or imaginative, in a way that is powerful, challenging, and entertaining.

The Elements of Narrative Study

I. Note with Special Care the SETTING of the Story.

A. Place: where geographically is the story taking place?

B. Physical surroundings: what are the details physically?

C. Temporal (time) setting: what are the time elements of the story?

D. Cultural-historical surroundings: what details of culture or history are present?

II. Identify the CHARACTERS of the Story.

A. Who are the prime characters in the story? The “hero” and “villain”?

B. Note the precise order and details of the actions, conversation, and events of the characters.
C. How are the characters shown to us?

1. Direct descriptions

2. Indirect characterization
   a. Appearance
   b. Words and conversation
   c. Thoughts and attitudes
   d. Influence and effects
   e. Actions and character

D. How are the characters tested, and what choices do they make?

E. How do the characters grow or decline (rise or fall) in the story?

III. Watch for the Author's POINT-OF-VIEW and VOICE.

A. Note the author's comments about the characters and events.

1. Attitude (positive, negative, or neutral)

2. Judgment (negative or affirmative)

3. Conclusion (summarizing, absent, closure?)
How to Interpret a Narrative (continued)

B. Consider what voice the story is being written in:

1. The Omniscient narrator (the Holy Spirit)

2. The First-person testimonial

3. The Third-person narrator

IV. Detect the PLOT DEVELOPMENT within the Story.

A. Note the exact order and details of the events and actions.

B. Note also how the story begins, develops, and ends.

C. Ask and answer questions about the actual plot.

1. Why did the events happen as they did?

2. Why did the characters respond as they did?

3. Could they have done things in a different manner?

D. Use John Legget's elements of story.

1. Doormat — the intro of the story
How to Interpret a Narrative (continued)

2. Complications — Conflicts, problems, issues, threats

3. Climax — Peak and turning point of the action

4. Denouement — How the story resolves itself

5. End — Finis!

V. Note the THEME of the Story

A. What key principles and truths can be drawn out of this story?

B. What is the “commentary on living” portrayed in this story?

1. What is the story’s view of “reality” (what is the world like, and what is our role in it?)

2. What is the story’s view of “morality” (i.e., what constitutes good and bad in the story?)

3. What is the story’s view of “value and meaning” (i.e., what is of ultimate concern and importance in the story?)

C. How do the truths of the story intersect with the challenges, opportunities, threats, and issues of our lives?
APPENDIX 28

Keys to Bible Interpretation

Some Keys to Interpreting the Scriptures Accurately

Terry G. Cortnett and Don L. Davis. Revised ed.

Key Principles

To gain an accurate understanding of a book or passage from the Bible, the interpreter must:

1. Believe that the Scriptures are inspired, infallible and the authoritative rule for life and doctrine.

2. Realize that it is not possible to fully understand and apply the Scriptures without:
   - having been “born from above” by faith in Christ
   - being filled with God’s Holy Spirit
   - being diligent to pursue its meaning through regular study
   - being willing to obey its message, once revealed

3. Allow the process of interpretation to engage the “whole person.” The study of Scripture should captivate your emotions and your will as well as your mind. “We aim to be objective but not disinterested readers.”

4. Understand that all Scripture is in some way a testimony to Christ. Christ is the Bible’s subject; all of its doctrine, teaching and ethics point to him.

5. Take into account both the divine and the human side of Scripture.
Keys to Bible Interpretation (continued)

6. Seek to “extract” or take out the meaning that is in the text (exegesis), not read into the text his or her own beliefs or ideas (eisegesis).

7. Seek to explain:
   - the “unclear” passages by the clearer statements
   - the symbolic portions by the stated teachings of Scripture
   - the Old Testament by the New Testament

8. Take into account the whole context of the book and the passage where any particular text is found.

9. Identify the human author and the intended audience. Start by attempting to discover what the author was trying to say to the original audience. “A passage cannot mean what it never meant.”

10. Use information about the manuscripts, languages, grammar, literary forms, history, and culture to help discover the author’s intended meaning.

11. Take seriously the genre and types of language used by the author, then interpret the Scriptures literally, meaning that we take the plain sense of the language as it is normally used in that genre.

12. Look for the ideas, values, and truths that a story, command, or prophecy is trying to communicate. Seek to state those principles in a way that is true and useful for all people, at all times, and in all situations.

13. Use Scripture to interpret Scripture. In order to understand any individual part of Scripture, compare that portion to the message of the whole Bible. Once this
understanding has been reached, one must also reinterpret his/her understanding of the whole of Scripture (theology and doctrine) in light of the new information gained from the passage (The Hermeneutical Circle).

14. Understand that reason, tradition, and experience are significant factors in the process of interpreting Scripture. Principles must be clear, logical and defensible; they must be compatible with the way Christians have interpreted the Scriptures throughout history; and they must help to make sense out of human experience.

15. Carefully move from what Scripture “meant” to its original audience to what it “means” for the current reader.

16. Apply the general truths to specific situations faced by people today.

- Remember that the Holy Spirit is the primary guide in the application of truth. Ask him for guidance about the meaning for today and then prayerfully meditate on the meaning of the passage.
- Seek the Spirit’s guidance by seeing how he has led other Christians (both inside and outside your own denominational tradition) to interpret the meaning and application of the passage for today.

17. Put the principles and the applications in language that makes sense to modern readers.

18. Keep the proper “end goals” in view. The intent of all Bible study is to mature the reader in the life and love of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God. Not knowledge alone, but life transformation is the goal of Bible interpretation.
Keys to Bible Interpretation (continued)

Key Perspective

Discovering the Word and Works of God in the Lives of the People of Scripture

- Physical Environment
- Religions
- Worldviews
- Their Ancient World
- Languages
- Beliefs
- Politics
- What it meant to them then
- History
- What it means to us now
- Peoples
- Cultures

The Eternal Truth of the Living God

Our Contemporary Situation

- World
- Job
- Family
- Character
- Neighborhood
- Relationships
- Church

Kuhatschek’s Categories:
- Understanding the Original Situation
- Finding General Principles
- Applying General Principles Today

Applying Principles of God’s Word to our Lives in the Church and in the World

Key Steps to Interpretation

The focus of this step is on understanding the world of the Bible, the author, and God’s message to a particular group of people at a particular time and place.

A. Ask God to open your eyes to truth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit as you read his Word.

Tell God that you want to be changed as well as informed by your reading of the Scriptures. Ask him to reveal specific actions and attitudes in your own life which need to be changed or disciplined. Ask God to use the Word to reveal Jesus and to make you more like his Son. Thank God for the gifts of his Spirit, his Son, and the Scriptures. Many believers began their study of God’s Word by simply praying the words of Psalms 119.18.

Heavenly Father, open my eyes to see wonderful things in your word. Amen.
B. Identify the author of the book, the approximate date it was written, why it was written, and to whom it was written.

Key Tools: Bible Dictionary, Bible Handbook, or Bible Commentary

C. Read the context around the passage.

Key Tool: A standard translation (not a paraphrase) of the Bible

- Look to see where natural “breaks” are in and around the passage and make sure that you are looking at the entire passage during the process of interpretation.

- Read the material around the passage. It is a good rule of thumb to read at least one chapter before and one chapter following the passage you are studying.

- The shorter the passage selected for interpretation, the greater the danger becomes in ignoring context. The old proverb is correct: “A text without a context is a pretext.”

D. Observe the passage carefully.

- Identify who is speaking and who is being spoken to.

- Observe the main ideas and the details.
  - Make a simple outline of the passage.
  - Identify the main ideas.
  - Look for repeated words or images.
  - Find “cause-and-effect” relationships.
  - Look for comparisons, contrasts, and connections.
E. Read the passage in another translation of Scripture.

Key Tool: A translation or paraphrase of the Scriptures that uses a different translation philosophy than the version of Scripture you regularly use

- Write down any questions that this new translation raises in your mind and stay alert for answers as you do further study.

F. Read any parallel accounts or passages from other parts of Scripture.

Key Tool: A concordance and/or a Bible which includes cross-references

- Note what details are added to the passage you are studying from the other accounts in Scripture.
- Why did the author choose to omit some details and emphasize others? What significance does this have for understanding the author’s intent.

G. Study the words and the grammatical structures.

Key Tools: Hebrew and Greek Lexicons and Expository Dictionaries help deepen our understanding of word meanings and usage. Exegetical Commentaries help explain grammatical constructions and how they affect the meaning of the text.

- Make a note of words that are being used in a unique way by the writer and of special grammatical forms like imperatives, verbs that show continuous action, etc.

H. Identify the genre (type of literature) and consider any special rules that apply to it.

Key Tool: Bible Dictionary and Bible Commentaries

- Each type of literature has to be taken seriously for what it is. We must not interpret poetry in the same way we interpret prophecy, or narratives in the way we interpret commands.
I. Look for literary structures that might influence the way the text is understood.

*Key Tool: Exegetical Commentaries*

- Literary structures include figures of speech, metaphors, typologies, symbols, poetic structures, chiasmic structures, etc.

J. Identify the historical events and the cultural issues which might affect the people or influence the ideas described in the passage.

*Key Tools: Bible Dictionaries and Bible Commentaries*

- Constantly ask, “What was happening in history and society that would affect the way the audience heard the message in this text?”

K. Summarize what you believe the author was trying to say and why it was important for the original audience.

- Your goal in this step is to write the key truths of the passage in such a way that the original author and the original listeners would agree with them if they heard them.

The focus of this step is identifying the central message, commands, and principles in a portion of Scripture which teach God’s purposes for all people.

A. List in sentence form what you believe are the general principles in the passage which apply to all people, at all times, in all cultures.

B. Check these statements against other parts of Scripture for clarity and accuracy.

*Key Tools: Concordance, Topical Bible*

Ask yourself:

- Are the principles I listed supported by other passages in the Bible?
Keys to Bible Interpretation (continued)

- Which of these principles might be difficult or impossible to explain when compared with other passages of Scripture?
- Must any of these principles be ruled out in light of other passages of Scripture?
- What new information about God and his will does this passage add to my overall knowledge of Scripture and doctrine?

C. Adjust or modify your statements of God’s principles in light of the discoveries you made above.

- Rewrite your key principles to reflect the insight gained from other portions of Scripture.

D. Read commentaries to discover some of the key principles and doctrines that others in the Church have drawn from this passage.

- Compare and contrast the information from the commentaries with your own reading. Be willing to abandon, change, or defend your views as necessary as you come across new information.

E. Again adjust or modify your statements of God’s principles in light of the discoveries you made above.

The focus of this step is on moving from what Scripture “meant” to what it “means.” What does obedience to God’s commands and purposes look like today in our culture, with our families and friends, and with the problems and opportunities that we face in our lives?

A. Ask God to speak to you and reveal the meaning of this passage for your life.
• Meditate on the passage and the things you have learned from your study so far while asking the Holy Spirit to point out the specific applications of the truths discovered for yourself and those around you.

B. How is this passage “Good News” to me and others?
• How does it reveal more about Jesus and his coming Kingdom?
• How does it relate to God’s overall plan of salvation?

C. How should knowing the truth from this passage:

Affect my relationship with God?
• Try to determine how the principles and examples from these Scriptures might help you to love and obey God more perfectly.

Affect my relationships with others?
• This includes my church family, my physical family, my co-workers, my friends, my neighbors, my enemies, strangers, and the poor or oppressed.

Challenge beliefs, attitudes, and actions that my culture views as normal?
• How must my thinking and acting be different from those in the world around me?

D. Attempt to answer the questions “What am I to believe?” and “What am I to do?” now that I have studied this passage.
• Do I need to repent from old ways of thinking and acting?
• How can I act on this truth so that I become a wise person?

E. How can I share what I have learned with others in a way that draws attention to Christ and builds them up?
Student Course Evaluation Form

Please take a moment to complete the evaluation of this course. Your feedback is important in helping make this course better for others in the future.

1. On a scale of 1-10, your overall rating of this course would be:

   Very Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Superior

2. What is one thing you are taking away from this course?

3. The homework load for this class was: (circle the best answer)
   a. Too easy
   b. What I expected
   c. Way more than I expected
   d. Too much for me to handle

   Comments:

4. Did you find the books used in this course to be helpful? Why or why not?

5. What did you like most about the classroom sessions?
6. What would you suggest we change about the classroom sessions?

7. Was there anything about this class (from an organizational standpoint) that was frustrating to you or could have been made more clear?

8. Is there any topic that you wish we would have spent more time covering in class?

9. Did your instructor do a good job facilitating class discussion? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

10. General comments about this course: