

HERMENEUTICS 101

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BIBLE

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PREREQUISITES FOR FULLY UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE:

- ❖ BELIEVER
- ❖ PRAYERFUL
- ❖ REPENTANT
- ❖ DILIGENT
- ❖ DESIRING
- ❖ SPIRIT-LED

NECESSARY COMPONENTS TO APPROACHING THE BIBLE

- ❖ **3 Components involved:**
 - **Giver of message**
 - **The message itself**
 - **The receiver of the message**

NECESSARY COMPONENTS TO APPROACHING THE BIBLE

❖ The current controversy: Who determines meaning?

➤ Option 1: The receiver of the message

- Ex. Someone admiring art
- Ex. Inkblot test
- “This is what it means to me”
- Problem: Everyone is right, no one is wrong, no ability to judge an interpretation

➤ Option 2: The giver of the message

- Ex. Math
- Ex. “I will love you in tennis”
- This suggests objective truth, where the meaning is in God as the author, and our endeavor is to understand what He has communicated to us

DEFINITIONS:

❖ LANGUAGE

- WORDS- A SINGLE DISTINCT MEANINGFUL ELEMENT (OR UNIT) OF SPEECH OR WRITING, A SYMBOL THAT CORRESPONDS TO REFERENT OF MEANING, AND THEREFORE MORPHS AS THE MEANING SHIFTS THAT IS ATTACHED TO THE SYMBOL (WORD), WHICH BECOMES A WORD'S SEMANTIC RANGE.
- SENTENCES- A COMBINATION OF WORDS USUALLY USED TO EXPRESS A STATEMENT (INDICATIVE), QUESTION (INTERROGATIVE), OR COMMAND (IMPERATIVE).
- PARAGRAPHS- A COLLECTION OF 3 OR MORE INDEPENDENT SENTENCES GROUPED AROUND THE SAME THOUGHT.
- DISCOURSES- A UNIT OF CONNECTED TEXTS WHICH ARE LONGER THAN PARAGRAPHS.

DEFINITIONS:

❖ TOOLS

- **LEXICON-** A DICTIONARY OF WORDS FROM THE ORIGINAL BIBLICAL LANGUAGES.
- **CONCORDANCE-** AN INDEX OF WHERE BIBLICAL WORDS APPEAR IN THE BIBLE, GIVING THE REFERENCES FOR ALL OCCURRENCES OF A GIVEN WORD.
- **COMMENTARY-** A SCHOLARLY OR PASTORAL EXPLANATION OF THE WHOLE BIBLE OR A PARTICULAR BOOK OF THE BIBLE.
 - **TECHNICAL-** MORE ACADEMIC, TREATING BIBLICAL LANGUAGES AND DETAILED ANALYSIS OF TEXTS.
 - **DEVOTIONAL-** MORE ACCESSIBLE, GIVING MORE GENERAL INSIGHTS INTO THE TEXT AND REFLECTIVE CONSIDERATIONS.

THE 3-STEP PROCESS

1. **Observation- What does the text say?**
2. **Interpretation- What does the text mean?**
3. **Application- How does the meaning of the text affect my life?**

OBSERVATION

- ❖ 1 TIMOTHY 4:13, “UNTIL I COME, DEVOTE YOURSELVES TO THE PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE, TO EXHORTATION, TO TEACHING.”
- ❖ OBSERVING WHAT IS IN THE TEXT
- ❖ ANSWERING THE QUESTION, “WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY”
- ❖ ACCOMPLISHED BY ASKING TONS AND TONS OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TEXT
- ❖ TAKES NOTE OF (WITHIN THE TEXT):
 - WHO
 - WHAT
 - WHEN
 - WHERE
 - WHY
 - HOW

OBSERVATION CONT'D



LOOKS FOR:

- PROMISES OF GOD
- COMMANDS OF GOD
- SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE
- SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
- SIGNIFICANT THEMES (IN THE CHAPTER, IN THE BOOK, IN THE TESTAMENT, AND IN THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE)
- QUESTIONS, AND IF PRESENT, THEIR ANSWERS
- KEYWORDS
 - SUCH AS REPEATED WORDS
 - THEOLOGICAL WORDS
 - SMALL BUT IMPORTANT WORDS/PHRASES (“BUT”, “IF/THEN”, “THEREFORE”, “BECAUSE OF”, “IN ORDER THAT”, ETC.)
- FOLLOWS PLOT LINES
- CONSIDERS IMAGERY

CASE STUDY: PSALM 133

Behold, how good and pleasant it is

when brothers dwell in unity!

It is like the precious oil on the head,

running down on the beard,

on the beard of Aaron,

running down on the collar of his robes!

It is like the dew of Hermon,

which falls on the mountains of Zion!

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,

life forevermore.

MEMORIZING THE BIBLE

- The Bible implies that we are to memorize it
 - 'set your mind on' - Col. 3:2
 - 'dwell in you richly' - Col. 3:16
 - 'meditate day and night' - Josh. 1:8; Psalm 1
 - 'Talk...when you sit...when you walk...when you lie down' Deut. 6
 - 'bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes' Deut.6

Common objections

- I have a bad memory
- No time/too busy
- Don't need to (I have Google for that)
- Don't know how

How to Start

- Choose a verse/passage
- Read it 10 times out loud
- Try reciting it
- Rinse and repeat
- Get creative
- Once memorized, move on to the next one (but don't stop reciting!)
- Consider larger sections of Scripture instead of a hundred different verses
- Pursue this as a delight, not a duty

“Memorizing Scripture enables me to hit the devil in the face with a force he cannot resist, to protect myself and my family from his assaults. What are you hitting him with? He is a million times stronger than you. And he hates you and your family and your marriage and your church and your God. How anybody walks through this devil-ruled world without a sword in hand is beyond me.” - John Piper, *Ask Pastor John*

DEFINING THE INTERPRETIVE PROCESS

- ❖ **INTERPRETATION IS THE PROCESS IN WHICH WE SEEK TO UNCOVER THE MEANING OF A PASSAGE AS IT WAS INTENDED TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR.**
- ❖ **INTERPRETATION IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE THE SCRIPTURES ARE OVER TWO MILLENNIA OLD, WERE WRITTEN HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD, WERE WRITTEN IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, AND WERE CONTRIVED IN A FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT CULTURE THAN OURS.**
- ❖ **TO ENGAGE IN THE INTERPRETIVE PROCESS, WE MUST GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTEXT, THEN TRANSLATE THE TRUTHS OF AN ANCIENT WORLD, INTO UNIVERSAL TRUTHS, THEN THEY MUST LAND IN OUR PRESENT CONTEXT TO HAVE ANY RELEVANCE FOR OUR LIVES.**

ANSWERING A DIFFERENT SET OF QUESTIONS

INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE SEEKS TO ANSWER:

- ❖ WHY WAS THIS WRITTEN?
- ❖ WHY IS THIS A PART OF GOD'S WORD?
- ❖ WHAT ARE THE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS/TIMELESS TRUTHS OF THIS PASSAGE?
- ❖ WHAT IS THE MEANING THE AUTHOR WANTS TO COMMUNICATE?
- ❖ HOW DID GOD'S PEOPLE IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO THIS PASSAGE?

CONSIDERING CONTEXT



CONTEXT AS A “MEANING LIMITER”

- BY CONSIDERING A PASSAGE IN ITS CONTEXT, THE MEANING OF THE PASSAGE IS LOCKED INTO PLACE BY ITS HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC, TIMING, AND COVENANTAL PARAMETERS.
- BECAUSE CONTEXT CREATES THE MEANING, THE LARGER CONTEXT OF THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SITUATION WILL LIMIT AND DEFINE MUCH OF WHAT THE AUTHOR IS COMMUNICATING TO HIS AUDIENCE.
- IF OUR INTERPRETATION OF A PASSAGE CONFLICTS WITH THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF THE PASSAGE, THEN THE INTERPRETATION IS NOT VALID.

CONSIDERING CONTEXT



CONTEXT INCLUDES:

- AUTHOR OF THE TEXT
- DATE OF WRITING
 - HISTORICAL ACTIVITY (EX. BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY C. 586 B.C. OR FALL OF TEMPLE IN 70 A.D.)
 - SITUATION IN PROGRESSIVE REVELATION (PRE-MOSAIC LAW, POST-RESURRECTION, ETC.)
 - CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS
- GENRE OF THE PASSAGE
- VOCABULARY- *THIS IS WHY A LITERAL TRANSLATION IS RECOMMENDED IN GENERAL AND REQUIRED FOR THE BIBLE STUDY PROJECT*
- THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINES OR THEMES
- CROSS-REFERENCES
- RELATIONSHIP WITH ALTERNATE TESTAMENT (HOW DOES OLD POINT TO NEW? HOW DOES NEW FULFILL OLD?)

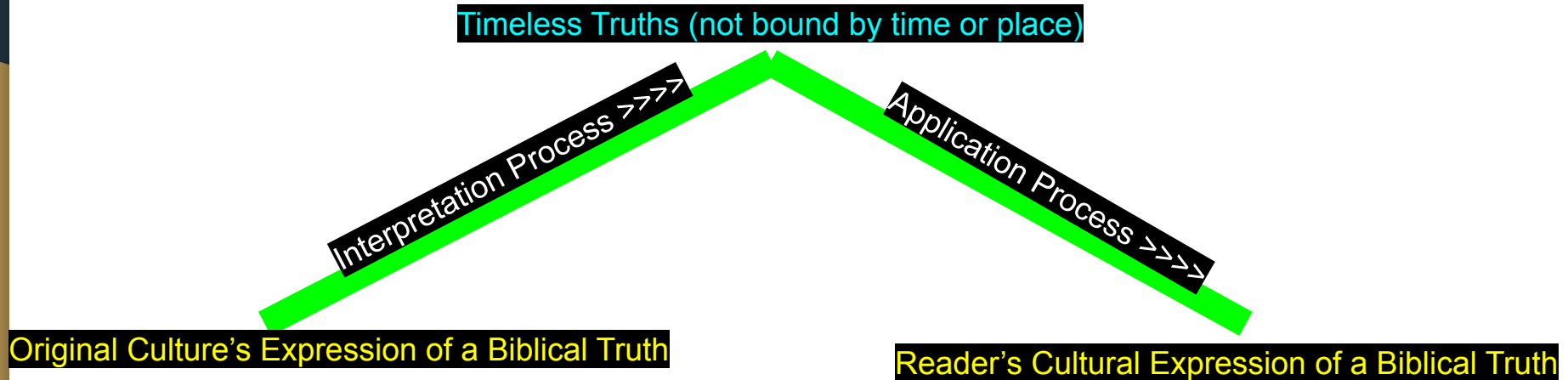
CONSIDERING CONTEXT

❖ MINDING THE GAPS

- THE TIME GAP
- THE CULTURE GAP
- THE GEOGRAPHICAL GAP
- THE LANGUAGE GAP
- THE COVENANT GAP
- THE SITUATION GAP

DISCERNING TIMELESS TRUTHS

- ONCE YOU HAVE OBSERVED WHAT IS WRITTEN IN A PASSAGE, THEN GONE THROUGH THE INTERPRETIVE PROCESS TO DETERMINE THE MEANING INTENDED BY THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR, YOU ARE THEN READY TO RIGHTLY APPLY THE SCRIPTURES TO YOUR OWN LIFE.
- THE IMAGE BELOW WILL HELP ILLUSTRATE THIS PROCESS.



HELPFUL RESOURCES


- ❖ BIBLE SOFTWARE (LOGOS)

- ❖ FREE ONLINE WORD STUDIES AND COMMENTARIES


- [BIBLEGATEWAY.COM](https://www.biblegateway.com) -> STUDY TOOLS -> RESOURCES -> COMMENTARIES

- [STUDYLIGHT.ORG](https://www.studylight.org)

- [BIBLESTUDYTOOLS.COM/COMMENTARIES/](https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/)



NEVER FORGET, JESUS SAID:
“YOU SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES
THINKING THAT IN THEM YOU
HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND IT IS
THEY THAT BEAR WITNESS
ABOUT ME.”



APPLICATION

- ❖ APPLICATION IS THE WAY IN WHICH A CHRISTIAN IS “CONFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST” (ROM. 8:29), THROUGH THE DIRECTION OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.
- ❖ PROPER APPLICATION IS NOT:
 - A TO-DO LIST
 - LEGALISM
 - BURDENSOME
 - IMPOSSIBLE
 - BORING
 - UNENJOYABLE

APPLICATION CONT'D



PROPER APPLICATION IS:

- **GOOD- IT IS RIGHT AND PLEASING TO GOD**
- **JOYFUL- IT IS THE BEST WAY TO LIVE LIFE**
- **EXHILARATING- IT WILL TAKE YOU ON AN ADVENTURE THAT YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE ANTICIPATED**
- **POSSIBLE- GOD, THROUGH HIS SPIRIT, HAS GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BE OBEDIENT**
- **LIBERATING- IT FREES US TO LIVE APART FROM THE BONDAGE AND SLAVERY OF SIN**
- **WISE- IT WILL LEAD YOU TO LIVE LIFE SUCCESSFULLY**
- **REDEMPTIVE- IT RESTORES US TO OUR ORIGINAL DESIGN, THE IMAGE OF GOD**
- **INTELLIGENT- IT GIVES KNOWLEDGE AND MAKES SENSE OF THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE**
- **WORTH IT**

APPLICATION CONT'D

Proper application is holistic in nature in that it encompasses the entirety of the person— it is much more than something we do with our hands. This is because proper application is not first concerned with what we do, but rather with who we are. The Bible has plenty of warnings against those who do the “right things” while their hearts are far from God. God desires our love and when love is our motivation, then the things we do and say will be aligned with God’s desire for our lifestyle.

APPLICATION CONT'D

THE WAYS IN WHICH SCRIPTURE APPLIES TO US:

1. IT CHANGES WHO WE ARE- *HOW AM I MORE THE PERSON GOD INTENDS ME TO BE BECAUSE OF THIS? EX. I HAVE BOLDNESS BECAUSE OF MY HOPE OF SALVATION.*
2. IT CHANGES WHAT I THINK- *WHAT THOUGHTS DID I USE TO HAVE THAT I KNOW ARE NOT TRUE? EX. I USED TO THINK PEOPLE ARE GOOD, NOW I KNOW ALL ARE SINFUL.*
3. IT CHANGES WHAT I DO- *HOW CAN I ACT OR SPEAK IN WAYS OF LOVE? EX. I TEND TO CRITICIZE PEOPLE, BUT NOW I AM GRACIOUS AND ENCOURAGING WITH MY WORDS.*
4. IT CHANGES HOW I REACH OUT- *HOW DOES THIS LEAD ME TO REACH THE LOST? EX. THE JOY OF LIVING IN CHRIST ENCOURAGES ME TO SHARE THE OFFER OF JOY TO OTHERS.*
5. IT CHANGES HOW I BUILD UP- *HOW DOES THIS SCRIPTURE CALL ME TO STRENGTHEN OTHER BELIEVERS? EX. I REMIND A TEMPTED BELIEVER THAT SIN NEVER DELIVERS AND JOY IS FOUND IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

APPLICATION CONT'D



GOOD APPLICATION OF A TIMELESS TRUTH IS:

- SPECIFIC, NOT VAGUE
- NAMES PEOPLE
- DETERMINES TIMES
- LOCATES PLACES
- STRATEGIZES CONCRETE ACTIONS
- CONSIDERS ACTUAL PHRASING AND WORDS



EXAMPLES:

- BAD APPLICATION- "I NEED TO TRUST GOD MORE."
- GOOD APPLICATION- "I WILL CHOOSE TO TRUST GOD WITH MY COLLEGE CHOICE BY PRAYING DAILY FOR ONE MONTH, TALKING WITH MY PARENTS AND MY YOUTH PASTOR, USING THE MIND GOD HAS GIVEN ME, AND THEN MAKING A DECISION. ONCE I MAKE MY DECISION, I WILL DISPLAY MY TRUST IN GOD BY NOT DWELLING ON IF I MADE THE WRONG DECISION OR "WHAT IF'S?"

APPLICATION CONT'D



EXAMPLE 1:

- BAD APPLICATION- "I NEED TO TRUST GOD MORE."
- GOOD APPLICATION- "I WILL CHOOSE TO TRUST GOD WITH MY COLLEGE CHOICE BY PRAYING DAILY FOR ONE MONTH, TALKING WITH MY PARENTS AND MY YOUTH PASTOR, USING THE MIND GOD HAS GIVEN ME, AND THEN MAKING A DECISION. ONCE I MAKE MY DECISION, I WILL DISPLAY MY TRUST IN GOD BY NOT DWELLING ON IF I MADE THE WRONG DECISION OR OTHER "WHAT IF'S?"



EXAMPLE 2:

- BAD APPLICATION- "I WILL STOP SINNING."
- GOOD APPLICATION- "I WILL FIGHT MY SIN BY NOT TAKING ANY TECHNOLOGY INTO MY ROOM. I WILL WORK ON SCHOOL WORK IN MY LIVING ROOM. I WILL CHARGE MY PHONE IN MY PARENTS' ROOM. I WILL CONFESS MY SIN TO *NAME OF CLOSE BELIEVING FRIEND*, AND ASK THEM TO PRAY FOR ME, ENCOURAGE ME, AND CHECK HOW I AM DOING. ALSO, I WILL MEMORIZE A VERSE OF SCRIPTURE EACH DAY THAT WILL RENEW MY MIND ON THE THINGS OF GOD. I WILL END EACH DAY IN PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE TO GUARD MYSELF DURING MY MOST TEMPTING TIMES.

EDIFICATION



IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING IN COMMUNITY

- TO EXAMINE ACCURACY OF WHAT IS BEING LEARNED (ACTS 17:11)
- TO GAIN FULLER UNDERSTANDING THROUGH SHARED LEARNING/APPLICATION
- TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TRANSFERRING OF KNOWLEDGE TO OTHERS



IMPORTANCE OF SHARING WHAT YOU'RE LEARNING:

- TO STIR ONE ANOTHER TO LOVE AND GOOD DEEDS (HEBREWS 10:24)
- TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER TO GUARD AGAINST THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN (HEBREWS 3:13)
- TO ADMONISH THE IDLE, ENCOURAGE THE FAINTHEARTED, AND HELP THE WEAK (1 THESSALONIANS 5:14)
- TO FAITHFULLY TRANSFER THE FAITH (2 TIMOTHY 2:2)

EDIFICATION



HOW TO SHARE WHAT YOU'RE LEARNING

- IN HOME GROUPS
- IN 1-ON-1 MEETINGS
- THROUGH ABFS
- AS FACEBOOK "JOURNALLING"
 - BE MINDFUL OF THE AUDIENCE
 - BE ENCOURAGING AND GOSPEL-FOCUSED OVER DIVISIVE AND POLITICAL

*“Why, the Book has wrestled with me;
the Book has smitten me;
the Book has comforted me, the Book has smiled on
me; the Book has frowned on me;
the Book has clasped my hand;
the Book has warmed my heart.
The Book weeps with me, and sings with me;
it whispers to me, and it preaches to me;
it maps my way, and holds up my goings;
it is the young man’s best companion, and is still my
morning and evening Chaplain.”*

~Charles Haddon Spurgeon

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