

Lesson 7: Clarity and Illumination, Interpretation and Application

1. Clarity of Scripture (perspicuity, intelligibility)

The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it.

The Bible affirms its own clarity

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 *And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*

Psalms 1:1-2 *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

Psalms 119:130 *The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.*

2 Timothy 3:14-17 *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

Why do people not understand the Scriptures?

Because of Satan has blinded them

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Hardness of heart of the unbeliever because of sin

Ephesians 4:17-18 *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.*

Lack of understanding with our heart

Luke 24:25 *And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"*

2. Illumination of Scripture

Illumination describes the work of the Holy Spirit in helping the believer to understand God's Word.

Three Key Terms: Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination

The Spirit's role in understanding

He reveals the spiritual truths of God's Word to our head and heart

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 *But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

Eye, ear, heart: Spiritual wisdom is not perceived from the five senses.

The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God: The Spirit “examines” or is throughout the physical realm and the spiritual realm. While human wisdom is limited to the physical realm.

Who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person: The person's spirit or thoughts are only known to that person. They are not known by others unless they disclose them.

No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God: Therefore only the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit) can understand the things of God or the mind of Christ.

Not taught by human wisdom: Paul is giving them heavenly wisdom through the Holy Spirit not earthly wisdom from himself or others.

Interpreting spiritual truths: The Holy Spirit taught and will teach the Corinthians the truth.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God: The unsaved person does not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. They cannot understand the spiritual level of the Bible, only the surface level.

Vs. 15 restated: The saved person understands all things, but is not understood by the unsaved person.

3 types of people: Natural Person, – Unsaved, Immature Person, Spiritual Person

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 *But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?*

3. Interpretation of Scripture

The process of a reader seeking to understand the meaning of a scripture passage.

Discover the Writer's Intent

Interpret Literally

Observe the Context

Understand the Historical/Cultural Setting

Consider the Literary Genre

Compare Scripture with Scripture

Study Word Meanings and Grammar

4. Application of Scripture

The process of a reader putting into practice the truths and principles he/she has learned in the Bible.

Historical meaning: what happened?

Doctrinal meaning: what it teaches?

Applicational meaning: what I should do in response to this teaching?

1 Corinthians 12

Historical meaning: The Corinthian church was divided and not serving together.

Doctrinal meaning: The church functions properly when members are serving one another and putting one another first.

Application: Am I only concerned about myself or others? Am I using my gifting to serve? Am I a part of a church?

John 4:7-15

Historical meaning: Jesus speaks to a Samaritan woman who will receive Him as the Messiah and go and tell others.

Doctrinal meaning: Just as water is necessary for life, Jesus is necessary for eternal life.

Application: Do I look to Jesus to fulfill my spiritual thirst? Am I willing to talk to others about Jesus? Do I look for opportunities to tell others about Jesus? Am I willing to cross cultural boundaries to tell others about Jesus?

Do I ask and expect the Holy Spirit to speak to my heart when reading God's Word and when listening to preaching? Do I respond to the preaching and Scripture reading by applying the teaching?