



# INTERPRETATION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



**KEY PRINCIPLES TO INTERPRET**  
**THE BIBLE**



**A**



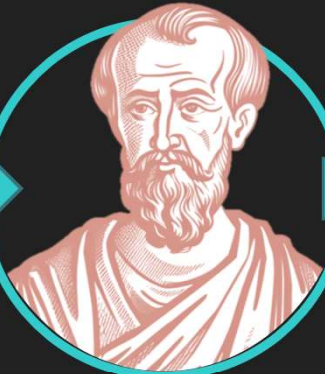
**A TEXT CANNOT  
MEAN WHAT IT  
NEVER MEANT**

**Each passage [of the  
Bible] was God's  
Word to other people  
before it became  
God's Word to us**

# TIMELESS SHARED TRUTH

GOD

THROUGH



BIBLE  
AUTHOR

TO



ORIGINAL  
AUDIENCE

FOR



FUTURE  
AUDIENCE

**A GAP OF DIFFERENCE**

**CULTURE - LANGUAGE - TIME - SITUATION**

“[The] only proper control for **hermeneutics** is to be found in the **original intent** of the biblical text...[otherwise] biblical texts can be made to mean whatever they might mean to any given reader....”

- **Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart**

*How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, pg. 33-34

“A text cannot mean what it could never have meant for its original readers/hearers. Or to put it in a positive way, the true meaning of the biblical text for us is what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken or written. This is the starting point.”

- Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

*How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, pg. 33-34

# GORDON FEE

Professor Emeritus of New Testament  
Studies at Regent College in Vancouver

“[The] first task of [study] is the historical one [of determining] the biblical author’s intended meaning.... [But the] ultimate task... is the Spiritual one, to hear the text in such a way that it leads [us] into the worship of God and into conformity to God and His ways....



1934-2022



# GORDON FEE

Professor Emeritus of New Testament  
Studies at Regent College in Vancouver

“[D]etermining the Spiritual  
intent of the text...belongs  
legitimately – indeed,  
necessarily – to the  
historical task itself....”

“True exegesis attempts to  
engage in the authors  
Spirituality, not just in his or  
her words.”



1934-2022



**B**



**MEANING COMES  
FROM THE  
TOP DOWN**

# WALT RUSSELL

Professor of Bible exposition at Talbot School of Theology, missionary, and minister

“[We] tend to interpret verses or biblical stories primarily as free-standing units of truth.... rather than as parts of the broader whole of a specific biblical book. This ignoring of both genre and context greatly hampers the transforming work of God’s Word in our souls!”



1948-2022

# WALT RUSSELL

Professor of Bible exposition at Talbot School of Theology, missionary, and minister

“[M]eaning comes from the top down, not from the bottom up, from the larger units of Scripture to the smaller units.... Grasping this basic principle should be life-changing for our reading of God’s Word....”



1948-2022

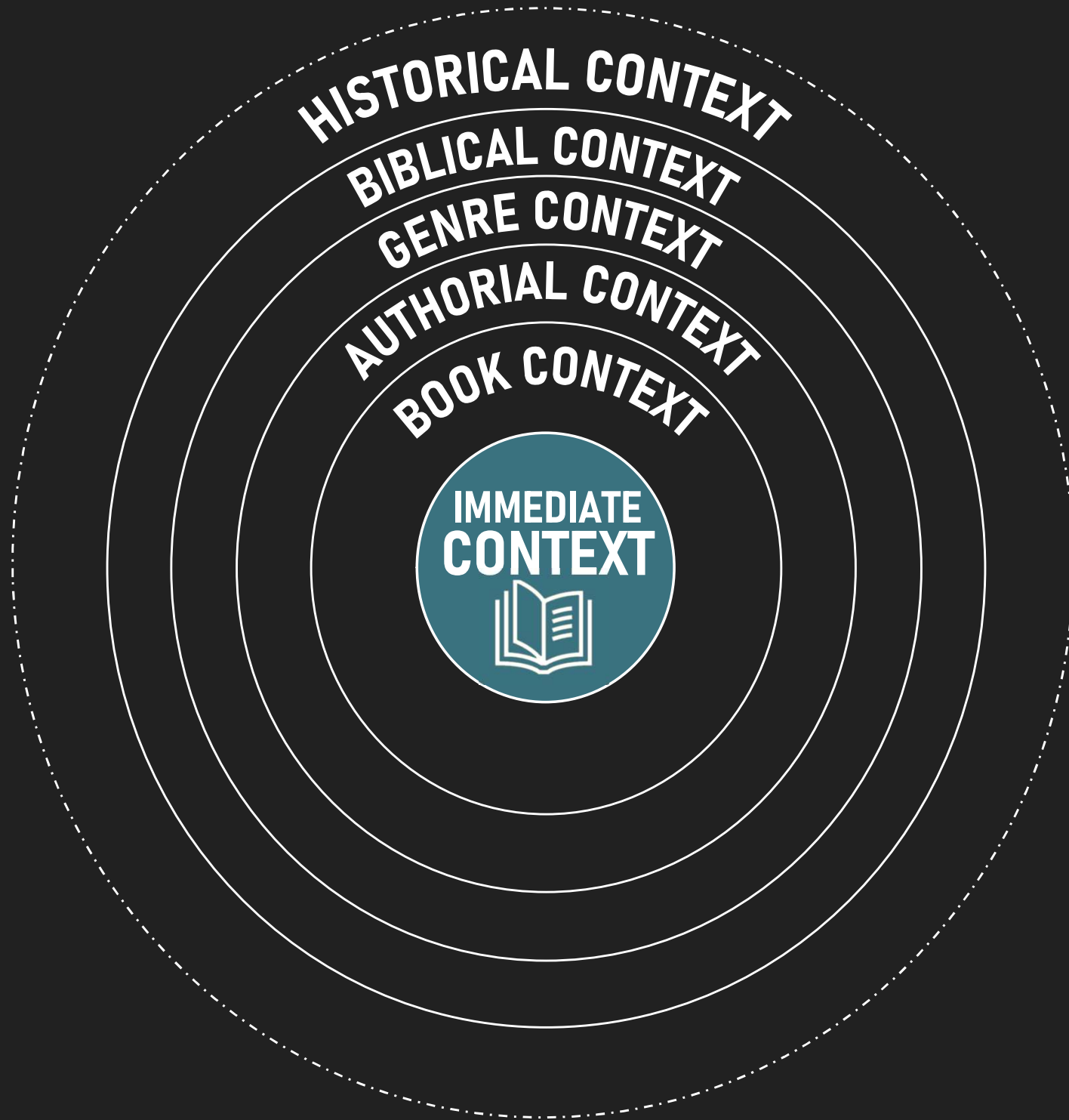
# WALT RUSSELL

Professor of Bible exposition at Talbot School of Theology, missionary, and minister

“If the goal is reading the Bible more meaningfully for spiritual formation, then seeing how the broader context profoundly affects our souls should also encourage us to embrace better reading practices.”



1948-2022



**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

**BIBLICAL CONTEXT**

**GENRE CONTEXT**

**AUTHORIAL CONTEXT**

**BOOK CONTEXT**

**IMMEDIATE  
CONTEXT**



