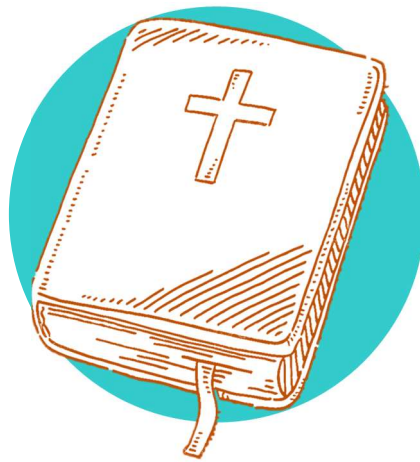


UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD



OVERVIEW HANDOUTS

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 -



■ INTRODUCTION – THE WHAT & WHY OF BIBLE STUDY



PURPOSE: WHY DO WE NEED TO STUDY THE BIBLE?

- **BIBLE ILLITERACY:** We are living in a post-Christian post-Biblical age. Large portions of even Christians don't regularly read much less study the Word of God. We must reverse this!
- **A CALLING & COMMAND:** We are called to be stewards and defenders of the Truth. We are also commanded to study and grow in our knowledge and understanding of the Word of God.
 - **SCRIPTURAL DATA** – Joshua 1:8, Jeremiah 23:28-29, Psalm 119:9-11, Acts 17:11, 2 Timothy 2:14-16, Hebrews 4:12, 1 Peter 3:15, Jude 1:3-4 (This is not an exhaustive list of scripture)



UNDERSTANDING: WHY DO WE OFTEN NOT UNDERSTAND OR STUDY THE BIBLE?

- **FAMILIARITY:** We think we already know it because we have already heard it so many times.
- **NARCISSISM:** We always read it with a self-centered focus and presuppositions.
- **INDIFFERENCE:** We just don't care to. We have no passion nor desire to.
- **IGNORANCE:** We would like to, but we don't know how or where to start.



TOOLS: WHAT TOOLS AND SKILLS DO WE NEED FOR THE JOURNEY INTO BIBLE STUDY?

- **THE RIGHT SPIRIT:** You must come to the Word with the right mind and heart.
 - **REVERENTLY** – Come to the text with the understanding that the words you are reading are the inspired, inerrant, sufficient Word's of God.
 - **PRAYERFULLY** – Come to the text sacramentally. Ask God to illuminate His Word as you begin to dig into it. Desire not to just know the Word of God but to know the God of the Word.
 - **INTENTIONALLY** – Purposely take time and energy to be in the Word. Be attentive to developing thinking skills and study skills that will uncover the Truth of the Word.
- **GOOD TRANSLATION:** To study the Bible requires having a good translation.
 - **ONE THAT IS UNDERSTANDABLE** – Get a Bible you can actually understand. There are many translations because of the complexity of language transmission, the differing manuscript traditions, and the varying translation theories and goals of Bible Committees.
 - **ONE THAT IS GROUNDED IN THE BEST MANUSCRIPTS** – Get a Bible that is based on the most reliable and extensive Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.
 - **ONE THAT IS MADE BY A COMMITTEE** – Get a Bible that is made by large translation teams and steer clear of or use with great caution those that are crafted by a single individual. There is wisdom in council!
- **WRITING MATERIALS:** To study the Bible requires having tools to mark and write all the observations, interpretations, and applications you are making. Studying isn't just reading, it is analyzing & writing.
- **GOAL SETTING:** To study the Bible requires setting out goals for yourself. This requires time, energy, and focus. You have to ask yourself: What do I want to achieve? What do I want to grow in my knowledge and understanding of? How long will I spend on this section of text or book?

THE PROCESS OF GETTING YOUR BIBLE



MANUSCRIPTS

- c. 2,800 GREEK NT MANUSCRIPTS
- c. 25,000 MANUSCRIPTS FROM OTHER LANGUAGES
- NOTABLE MANUSCRIPTS:
 - ❖ **OLD TESTAMENT**
 - DEAD SEA SCROLLS (c. 100-300 B.C.)
 - ALEPPO CODEX (c. 930 A.D.)
 - CODEX LENINGRADENSIS (c. 1000 A.D.)
 - ❖ **NEW TESTAMENT**
 - JOHN RYLAND PAPYRUS (c. 125 A.D.)
 - CHESTER BEATTY PAPYRUS (c. 200-250 A.D.)
 - CODEX VATICANUS (c. 300s A.D.)
 - CODEX SINAITICUS (c. 300s A.D.)

ARE DATED, ANALYZED & ORGANIZED TO CREATE A...



GREEK & HEBREW TEXT

80-90% OF MANUSCRIPTS FROM 300s-1500s

TO GET THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE YOU SEE WHAT THE **MAJORITY** OF MANUSCRIPTS SAY AND THEN CREATE A SINGULAR ORIGINAL LANGUAGE TEXT BASED UPON THAT.

THIS IS SOMETIMES CALLED THE BYZANTINE TEXTUAL TRADITION OF MANUSCRIPTS

MAJORITY TEXT



THIS IS AN ACTUAL ORIGINAL LANGUAGES TEXT THAT IS CREATED FROM THE MAJORITY OF THE MANUSCRIPTS IN EXISTENCE

BIBLIA HEBRAICA STUTTGARTENSIA
DEAD SEA SCROLLS, SEPTUAGINT, MASORETIC TEXT
ROBINSON & PIERPONT GREEK NEW TESTAMENT
HODGES & FARSTAD GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

10-15% OF MANUSCRIPTS FROM 100s-300s

TO GET THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE YOU SEE WHAT THE **OLDEST** OF MANUSCRIPTS SAY AND THEN CREATE A SINGULAR ORIGINAL LANGUAGE TEXT BASED UPON THAT.

THIS IS SOMETIMES CALLED THE ALEXANDRIAN TEXTUAL TRADITION OF MANUSCRIPTS

CRITICAL TEXT



THIS IS AN ACTUAL ORIGINAL LANGUAGES TEXT THAT IS CREATED FROM THE OLDEST OF THE MANUSCRIPTS IN EXISTENCE

BIBLIA HEBRAICA STUTTGARTENSIA
DEAD SEA SCROLLS, SEPTUAGINT, MASORETIC TEXT
NESTLE & ALAND GREEK NEW TESTAMENT
UNITED BIBLE SOCIETY GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

IS USED AS THE BASIS FOR TRANSLATING & CREATING...

WORD FOR WORD

PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSLATION THAT SAYS THE **FORM** OF THE ORIGINAL BIBLICAL TEXT NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED AND PASSED DOWN INTO ENGLISH BIBLES.

ALSO CALLED "FORMAL" OR "LITERAL" VIEW

Focuses on preserving the grammar, syntax, words, & structure of the original language text



THOUGHT FOR THOUGHT

PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSLATION THAT SAYS THE **MEANING** OF THE ORIGINAL BIBLICAL TEXT NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED AND PASSED DOWN INTO ENGLISH BIBLES.

ALSO CALLED "FUNCTIONAL" OR "DYNAMIC" VIEW

Focuses on preserving the flow, ideas, idioms, & common meaning of the original language text



ENGLISH BIBLE



NASB
1964, 1995, 2020



AMP
1965



ESV
2001



KJV
1611, 1769



NKJV
1982



HCSB
2004



CSB
2017



RSV
1952



NRSV
1989



NET
1996



NIV
1978, 1984, 2011



NLT
1996, 2004



NirV
1992



CEV
1995



TLB
1982



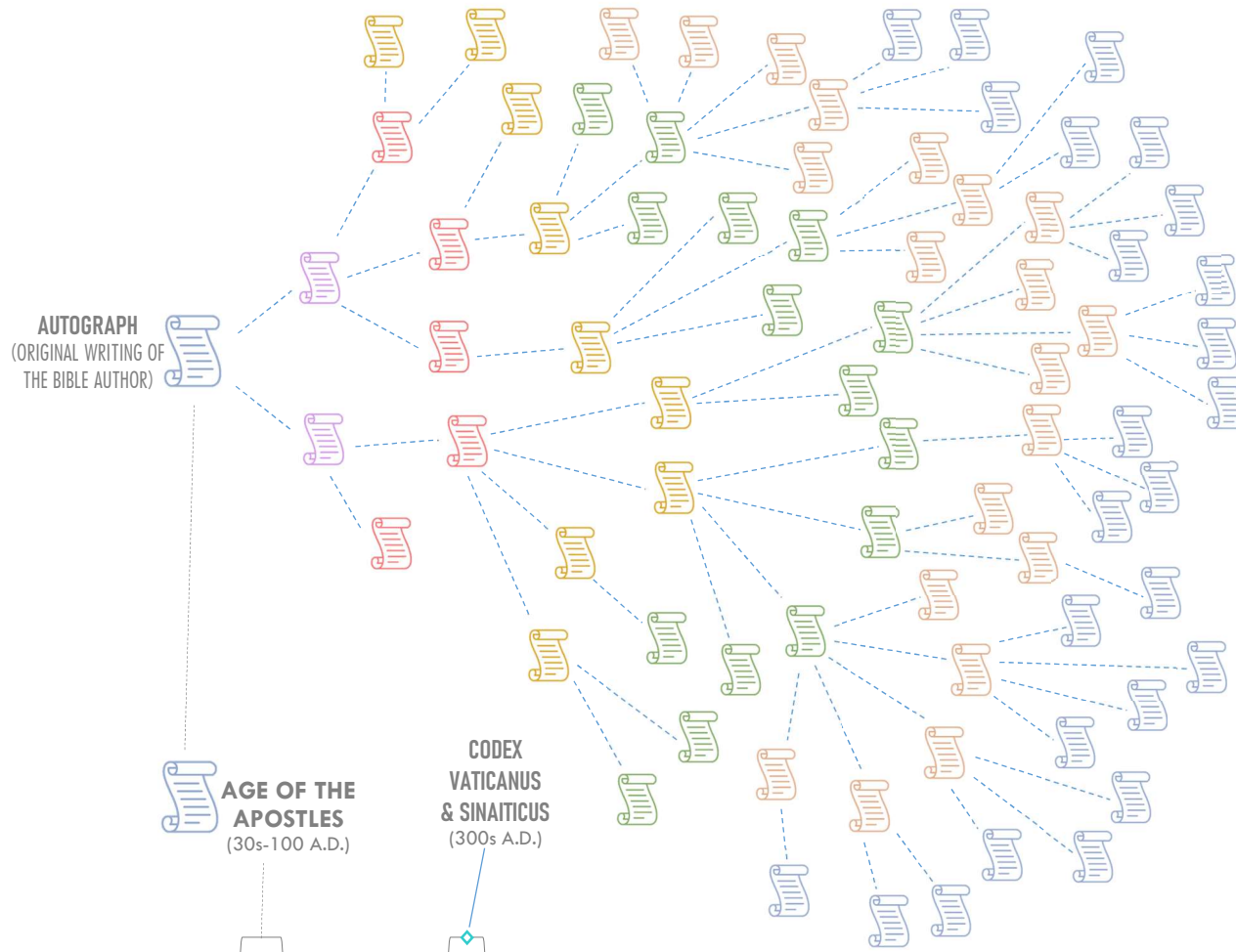
TPT
2017



TM
2002

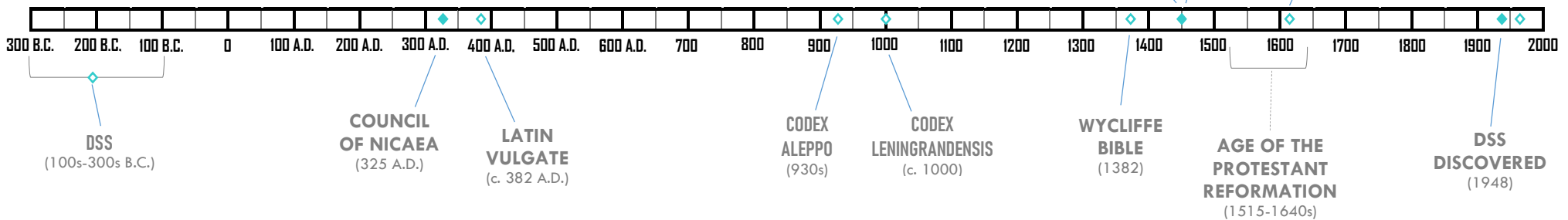
PARAPHRASES
NOT
TRANSLATIONS

THE PROCESS OF TRANSMISSION ACROSS TIME



A FEW POINTERS ABOUT TRANSMISSION

- **ANCIENT WRITING & COPYING**
 - WE DO NOT HAVE THE AUTOGRAPHS OF THE ORIGINAL BIBLICAL BOOKS. WE HAVE COPIES (MANUSCRIPTS)
 - ANCIENT WRITING WAS ON STONE, PAPYRUS, AND ANIMAL SKIN (PARCHMENT)
 - JEWISH & CHRISTIAN SCRIBES HAD STRICT RULES FOR TRANSMITTING TEXTS
 - JEWS USED SCROLLS; CHRISTIANS INTRODUCED CODEXES (BOOKS)
- **OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS**
 - C. 3,000 HEBREW, 8,000 LATIN MANUSCRIPTS
 - MAIN OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS ARE CODEX LENINGRADENSIS (1008 A.D.), CODEX ALEPPO (930 A.D.), & THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS (250 B.C.-135 A.D.)
- **NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS**
 - C. 5,700 GREEK, C. 20,000 OTHER MANUSCRIPTS
 - MAIN NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS ARE CODEX VATICANUS (c. 300s A.D.) AND CODEX SINAITICUS (c. 300s A.D.)





■ **OBSERVATION** – WHAT DOES IT SAY?



READING WELL: THE PRECURSOR TO STUDYING WELL IS READING WELL

- **READ PRAYERFULLY:** Do not make prayer an add on but a mode of heart and mind.
- **READ REPEATEDLY:** You must keep reading over and over the text to getting an understanding.
- **READ DYNAMICALLY:** Saturate yourself with the Word by reading aloud, with other translations, and even listening to what you are reading so that your mind and heart is flooded with the text.
- **READ CONTEXTUALLY:** Respect how God gave us the Bible! Stop reading in chunks and pulling “nuggets of wisdom” from the Bible. Read in context and respect the structure of each book.
- **READ INQUISITIVELY:** As you are reading you need to ask questions of the text. Don’t read mind-numbingly and without purpose but intentionally engage your mind with the text through asking questions and marking them down as you go (Ask who, what, when, where, why, & how questions)



MACRO-OBSERVATIONS: LOOK FOR THINGS ON THE LARGE SCALE IN THE TEXT

- **READ:** Read repetitively through the text to begin seeking patterns and big ideas emerging. Read and read and keep reading! Look and look and keep looking!
- **ASK:** Ask some fundamental questions of the text as a whole:
 - **WHO?** – Who wrote this? Who is the audience? Who are the people mentioned?
 - **WHAT?** – What are the main ideas coming out to you in the text? What literary genre is the text?
 - **WHEN?** – When was the text written? When does this take place within the story of salvation/Bible?
 - **WHERE?** – Where was this written? Where are the events mentioned taking place?
 - **WHY?** – Why was this written? Why do you think this is mentioned and/or written this way?
 - **HOW?** – How is it written (tone and style)?



MICRO-OBSERVATIONS: LOOK FOR THINGS ON THE SMALL SCALE IN THE TEXT

- **READ:** Read repetitively through the text to begin seeing patterns and big ideas emerging. Keep reading and pouring over the text so you can pick up some of the details, nuances, & main ideas. Read, read, and read again!
- **LOOK:** Look intentionally and with focus. Slow down. Think. Don’t just read, observe details!
 - **REPEATING WORDS** – Look for and mark words that keep repeating. These may be main ideas and themes.
 - **LINKING WORDS** – Look for and mark words that connect sentences and paragraphs together.
 - Some key examples: and, but, therefore, because, so that
 - **LISTS OF WORDS** – Look for and mark words that come in lists. Note the ordering of those concepts & ideas.
 - **TIME BASED WORDS** – Look for and mark words that deal with time (past, present, and future tenses).
 - **BOUNDARY MARKER WORDS** – Look for and mark words that help to begin and end various trains of thought.
 - Some key examples for narratives: words that change or end the setting, time, or place (i.e. in the spring, there was a man, then they came to...)
 - Some key examples for discourses: Words that change or end the flow of thought (i.e. dear children, therefore, brethren, now concerning, then they/it shall...)



■ INTERPRETATION – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



WHY INTERPRET? THE PRECURSOR TO INTERPRETING WELL IS REALIZING YOU ALREADY DO

- **WE ALL HAVE BLINDERS:** It isn't a matter of if we interpret, it is a matter of if we will interpret well! Interpreting well begins by recognizing we have blinders, such as CULTURE, TRADITION, & PERSON.
- **THERE ARE LIMITS TO OBSERVATION:** We can't understand everything about a passage by just observing the text. Some things are difficult to understand and require thoughtfulness & investigation.
- **WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT WE BELIEVE:** Not interpreting rightly can lead to us being deceived by a myriad of false teachings or being self-deceived by our own unreflective assumptions and opinions.
- **TRUTH IS WHAT REALLY BRINGS CHANGE:** If we want true change in our lives then it requires we be changed by the Truth. This cannot happen unless we *know* the Truth which necessitates interpreting it.



PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION: TWO GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ALL INTERPRETATION

I A TEXT CANNOT MEAN WHAT IT NEVER MEANT

- Remember that each passage of the Bible was God's Word to other people before it was God's Word to us.
- *How God communicated* His divine will is just as important as the fact *that* He communicated His will!
- The true meaning of a text is fundamentally tied to the *original intention of the author* of that text!

II MEANING COMES FROM THE TOP DOWN

- Remember that words are shaped & understood by their *immediate and surrounding contexts*.
- The true meaning of words or ideas in the Bible can only be uncovered when those words are considered within the *grammatical, historical, literary, and theological contexts* they are used.

THESE TWO PRINCIPLES GROUND ALL INTERPRETATIVE SKILLS



SKILLS OF INTERPRETATION: SOME KEY SKILLS TO UNLOCK THE MEANING OF THE TEXT

- 1. INTERPRET WITHIN CONTEXT:** Context is key to interpret something, including the Bible! A text without a context is a pretext. There are three types of contexts to consider:

A GRAMMATICAL

- Consider the word ordering.
- Consider word tenses.
- Consider how words link.
- Consider word meanings.

B HISTORICAL

- Consider geographic setting.
- Consider the author.
- Consider the recipient.
- Consider socio-cultural info.

C LITERARY

- Consider not just what is written but how it's written. This means considering "literary genres."



NARRATIVE

- Type of writing that communicates Truth through story using characters, plot, & settings
- How to better interpret it?
 - Observe setting, character, & plot
 - Pay attention to beginning & end.
 - Notice repetition & textual space.
 - Observe the role of God.
 - Resist overly moralizing.
 - Grasp the whole central theme.



POETRY

- Type of writing that communicates Truth through dense imaginative language, imagery, & symbolism.
- How to better interpret it?
 - Link your experience & thinking.
 - Read slowly & soak in it.
 - Think out the logic of the images.
 - Try & grasp structure & mood.
 - Consider historical background.



DISCOURSE

- Type of writing that communicates Truth through logical & linear thought & straightforward language.
- How to better interpret it?
 - Read as a whole.
 - Think in paragraphs.
 - Find logical connectors.
 - Consider situational context.

2. **INTERPRET THE NATURAL SENSE OF THE TEXT:** When we read the Bible, we should read it by remembering three things:
 - **The Bible is a Normal Book:** The Bible is the ‘Word of God,’ but those words use the regular conventions of human language. Nouns are nouns, verbs are verbs, prepositions are prepositions. This means reading the literature of the Bible in the natural senses of that literature.
 - **The Bible isn’t A Collection of Esoteric Nuggets:** There isn’t secret knowledge behind the words of the Bible. The meaning of words and the teachings of the Bible do not require secret spirituality to unlock. They require a clear and open mind, thinking, & study.
 - **The Bible has Figurative & Literal Language:** When we read the bible, we need to be sensitive to when the passage we are studying is using figurative or literal language. Consider:
 - Take a text literally unless there is good textual reason not to.
 - Take a text literally unless the literal sense would involve an impossibility.
 - Take a text literally unless the literal sense results in an absurdity.
 - Take a text literally unless the literal sense contradicts other scripture.
 - Take a text literally unless the literal sense demands immoral action.
3. **INTERPRET THE OBSCURE IN LIGHT OF THE CLEAR:** If you find yourself face to face with a difficult and/or confusing portion of text, you need to be sure to interpret it in light of the clearer passages that speak on the topic in question.
4. **INTERPRET SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE:** Any teaching, idea, concept, or truth from Scripture can only be valid if it can be seen within the larger body of biblical truths found elsewhere. You should always ask yourself, *“Does this understanding align with the greater council of God’s Word?”*
5. **INTERPRET THE OLD IN LIGHT OF THE NEW:** Biblical revelation is progressive in nature. This means that God reveals Truth incrementally. This means that when it comes to understanding what biblical truths apply to our lives we need to be asking how the truth we are considering is understood in light of successive revelation. This also means that the Old Testament must be interpreted through the New.
7. **INTERPRET WITH GOD-CENTERED FOCUS:** Fundamentally, when you are interpreting the meaning of a biblical text (narrative, poetry, or discourse) you need to be asking first and foremost, “What does this tell me about God?” *Is your interpretation God-focused or Self-focused?* Is your interpretation helping you to understand Who God is, what He is like, and what His will is, or is it all about how this helps me for the day or makes me feel good?
6. **INTERPRET WITH A SPIRIT OF HUMILITY:** A heart and mind that is humble is vital when you are trying to interpret the Bible. There are several subpoints to the spirit of humility:
 - **SPIRIT-CENTERED STUDY:** Are you submitting your heart and mind to the Holy Spirit when you are studying? If not, you are doing it in your own human capacity and will ultimately fail. You need the Holy Spirit to guide and illuminate your spirit as you study!
 - **INQUISITIVE STUDY:** Are you asking questions as you study or with the teachings, sermons, or opinions you hear? The most important question you should be asking of any teaching or sermon or purported claim is, *“Where is that in Scripture?”*
 - **REFLECTIVE STUDY:** Is it possible you are wrong? Is it possible your family is wrong? Is it possible your traditions are wrong? Is it possible your denomination is wrong? Have you ever even thought out why you believe what you believe about the Bible? These are tough but vital questions to ask of yourself if you ever hope to be an affective student of the Word of God!



■ APPLICATION – WHY DOES IT MATTER?



WHY APPLYING IS IMPORTANT? THE PRECURSOR GOOD APPLICATION IS GOOD STUDY!

- **STUDYING DONE WITHOUT A HEART FOCUSED ON GOD IS WORTHLESS:** Consider this quote:

“To read the Bible as God’s word one must read it with his heart in his mouth, on tip-toe, with eager expectancy, in conversation with God. To read the Bible thoughtlessly or carelessly or academically or professionally is not to read the Bible as God’s Word. As one reads it as a love letter is read, then one reads it as the Word of God.”

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

- **STUDY IS WORSHIP & WE NEED TO STOP THINKING IT ISNT:** Consider this quote:

“Reading the Bible should be a form of prayer. The Bible should be read in God’s presence and as the unfolding of His mind. It is not just a book, but God’s love letter to you. It is God’s revelation, God’s mind, operating through your mind and your reading, so your reading is your response to His mind and will. Reading it is aligning your mind and will with God’s; therefore it is a fulfillment of the prayer ‘Thy will be done’, which is the most basic and essential key to achieving our whole purpose on earth: holiness and happiness.... Both prayer and Bible reading are ways of listening to God. They should blend: our prayer should be biblical and our Bible reading prayerful.”

Peter Kreeft (1937-Present)

- **AUTHENTIC SPIRITUAL CHANGE COMES FROM RIGHT STUDY:** Consider this quote:

“We should...[read the Bible] to understand the intention of the biblical author within the biblical book we are reading [as] a means to the end of being spiritually formed according to the meaning of the biblical passage. *There can be no true spiritual transformation apart from the true meaning of the biblical text.*”

Walt Russell, (1948-2022)



THE PITFALLS IN APPLICATION? WAYS WE CAN APPLY THE BIBLE BADLY

- **MUSEUM ARTIFACT PITFALL:** The Bible is a dated quaint historical text, useful to get a nugget here or there, but not really relevant to modern life.
- **WHAT-ABOUT-ME PITFALL:** The Bible is a list of golden-nugget truths focused on my individual problems and concerns & everything in the Bible revolves around me.
- **MYSTICAL CODEBOOK PITFALL:** The Bible is a mystical spiritual book that has special truth locked within it that can only be revealed to those who are skilled at “seeing” that truth.
- **BIBLE BUFFET PITFALL:** The Bible is a smorgasbord of prooftexts I can have to confirm all of my preconceived perceptions and beliefs.
- **ATTACK OF THE CLONES PITFALL:** The Bible is to be taken in a wooden literal sense and applied verbatim to our modern contexts – if the Bible says it then we are to do it just like it says!

THE PROBLEM WITH ALL THESE PITFALLS

THEY ARE ARBITRARY!

THEY ARE SUBJECTIVE!

THEY DON’T CONSIDER CONTEXT!

QUESTION FOR YOU TO ASK YOURSELF:

How do you determine what to believe & apply from the Bible?

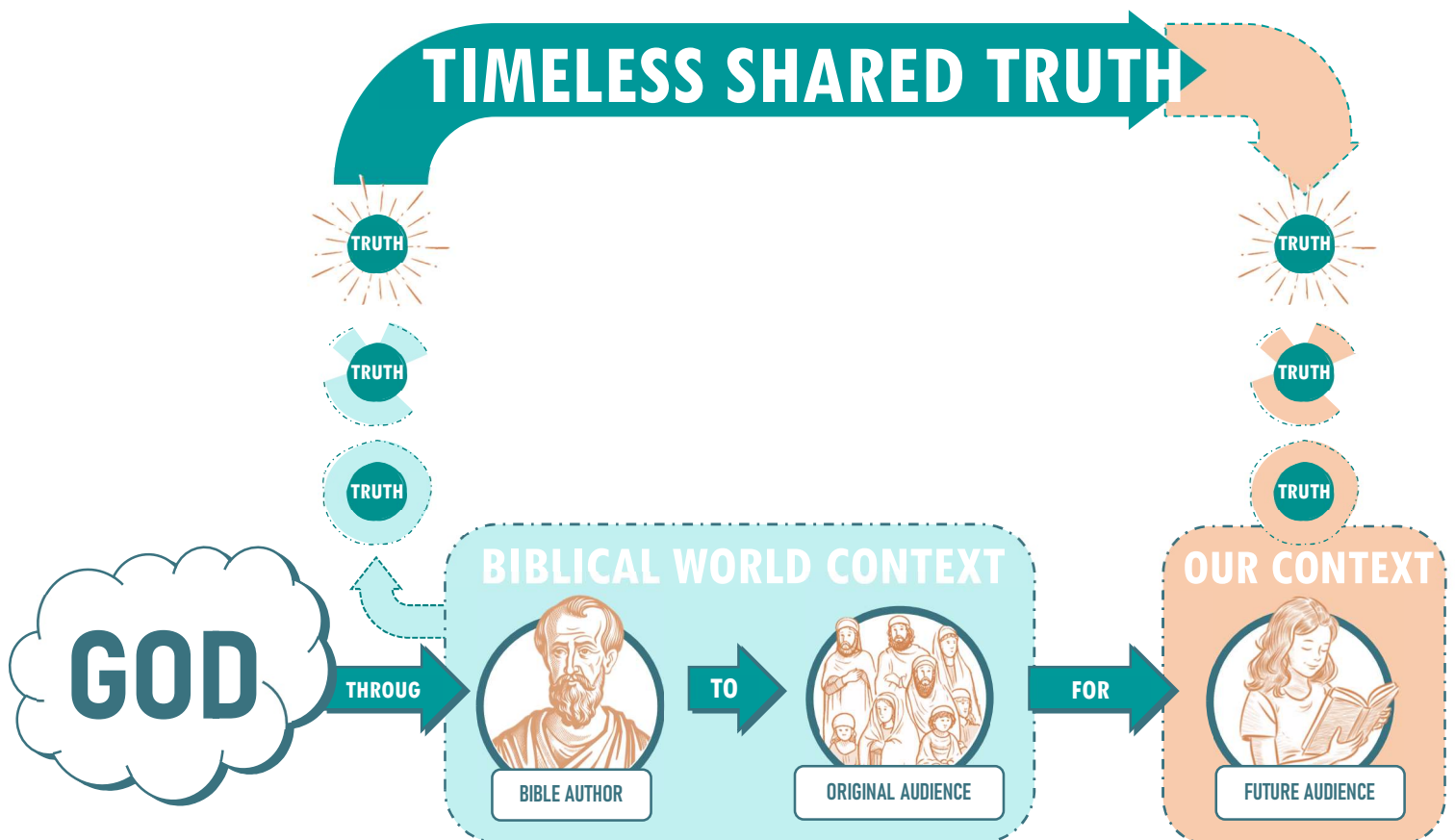
Do you “wing it”? Do you “do what feels right”? Do you say, “That’s what I feel”?

Do you have a non-arbitrary, non-subjective, context centered approach to applying the Bible???



STEPS FOR FAITHFUL APPLICATION? A WAY TO APPLY THE BIBLE FAITHFULLY:

- **CONSIDER THE SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BIBLE WORLD & OUR WORLD:** To faithfully apply the Bible means first considering the fact that each passage of the Bible was written to the original audience before it was written to us! We need to ask, “What did this mean to them?” before we ask “What does this mean for me?”
- **CONSIDER HOW TRUTH IS BEING COMMUNICATED:** Truth is communicated through form. How a message is given is as important as the message! You need to ask what type of writing are you looking at when you study any given text of Scripture.
- **CONSIDER THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH BEING COMMUNICATED:** The Bible is timeless Truth given in a timely manner. We need to look for the timeless principle within the text of Scripture that applies to all people in all places at all times! To do this we need to shuck off the historical contexts around the Scriptures to get to the “heart” of what God is saying! *But to do this requires knowing the historical context that needs to be shucked!*
- **CONSIDER HOW THAT FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH FITS WITHIN THE WHOLE BIBLE:** To the point: Scripture interprets Scripture! When you are looking for a fundamental Truth to apply to your life you need to ask: Where else in the Bible is this idea, concept, or practice being taught?
- **CONSIDER HOW THAT FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH IS TO BE LIVED OUT IN YOUR WORLD:** Once you have done abovementioned steps you then need to start asking what you are being called to do from the text. Are you called to follow, obey, avoid, claim, correct, challenge, or what?
- **CONSIDER CHRISTIAN CHARITY & HUMILITY THROUGHOUT:** It is possible you can be mistaken or incorrect on some point of application or doctrine. Are you charitable and humble enough to recognize this? Do you recognize your own lenses that keep you from seeing Truth?





■ PRACTICAL BIBLE STUDY PROCESS – HOW DO I ACTUALLY STUDY?

TOOLS FOR BIBLE STUDY

THE RIGHT SPIRIT: REVERANT, PRAYERFUL, THOUGHTFUL & HUMBLE FROM BEGINNING TO END

A GOOD TRANSLATION: UNDERSTANDABLE, BASED ON ORIGINAL LANGUAGES, & DONE BY COMMITTEE

WRITING SUPPLIES: EITHER TRADITIONAL WRITING SUPPLIES OR DIGITAL

A SET GOAL: CHOOSE A BOOK TO STUDY & DETERMINE THE TIME ALLOTTED TO STUDYING IT

READING & STUDYING CYCLES

I **FIRST READING CYCLE: READ THROUGH & GET A GENERAL SENSE OF THE BOOK'S MESSAGE**

WRITE ABOUT YOUR READING: Write out your initial thoughts on what this book is about. What themes does it have?
Write out what type of writing this book is. Narrative, Poetry, Discourse?
Write out basic information about the author, recipients, and main characters in this book.
Write out where this book is within the Bible & biblical history.

II **SECOND READING CYCLE: READ THROUGH & IDENTIFY KEY WORDS & IDEAS IN THE BOOK**

WRITE ABOUT YOUR READING: Mark key words and ideas in the text. These are words that repeat & are essential to the passage.
Mark transitional & linkage words. These are words that connect units of thought.
Mark each time God (Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit) is mentioned & any titles used.
Mark words that speak about God's nature, character, will, and/or purposes.

III **THIRD READING CYCLE: READ THROUGH & IDENTIFY THE FLOW OF THOUGHT IN THE BOOK**

WRITE ABOUT YOUR READING: Be sure to note and/or mark the key transitional & linkage words once again.
Be sure to note and/or mark the tenses of words & when those tenses change in paragraphs.
For each paragraph give a sentence summarizing what it is centrally about.
For each section of same topic paragraphs outline them into themes with a sentence or bullet summary.

IV **FOURTH READING CYCLE: READ THROUGH & GAIN CLARITY ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK**

WRITE ABOUT YOUR READING: Consult *encyclopedias*, *bible backgrounds*, or *dictionaries* for insight into historical context.
Consult *concordances* on key words and terms that are unusual, difficult, or essential to the text.
Consult *commentaries* to check your ideas, thematic outlines, & conclusions.
Consult *cross references* to see where else in scripture the topics of the book are discussed & taught.
Make note of unusual, difficult, or seemingly problematic ideas, terms, or sentences to study further.

APPLICATION

RESPONDING TO THE READING: Ask how the original audience understood and applies the message of the book.
Ask what the purpose of this book is for faith and practice in the life of The Church & your own life.
Ask what you are called to do in the text. Is it to claim a promise, avoid a sin, correct a belief or behavior?
Ask again what the main message/theme of the book is. Summarize it & choose one verse that