

# Introduction

We would like to suggest that the most important thing you can do for your spiritual development is to learn to study the Bible. This studybook is developed to help you do that. First we will give you some general information about the authority of the Bible. Then we try to help you study it. The contents are specifically listed below, but we'd like to be a bit redundant and summarize what we're giving you as a study technique. Simply, it's:

**Synthesis—The Big Idea:**

- 10 Readings
- Sketch the Book
- State the Theme

**Analysis—The Specific Details:**

- Observation—10 Readings
- Interpretation—10 Principles
- Application—10 Principles

As we go, we will give you some review questions and study questions with our answers in the back (Appendices A and B). It's our hope and prayer that God will use this material to help you ... *long for the pure milk of the Word so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation* (1 Peter 2:12)

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# Section 1—The Authenticity of the Bible

By Jerry Collins

## The Evidence for the Bible

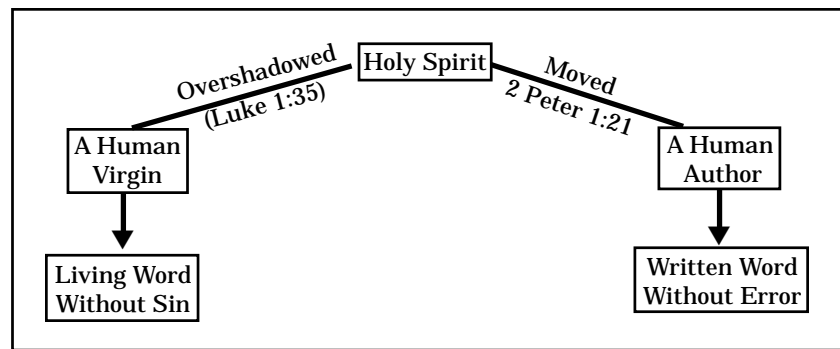
The Bible claims to be the Word of God. In this section, we will consider two basic questions: (1) What evidence exists to prove that this claim is true? (2) How can we know for sure that the Bible is a reliable testimony of the very words of God?

### 1. The Character of the Bible

The Bible tells us it was God's choice to disclose Himself and His view of the world. That disclosure is called **revelation**. He did this through His creation (Romans 1:18-20), our conscience (Romans 2:14-15), through the person of Jesus (John 1:14), and through His written Word, the Bible. In Galatians 1:11-12, Paul described revelation by saying, *the gospel which was preached by me ... I neither received it from man, nor was taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ*. Revelation began at the very beginning of God's dealings with man. God talked with Adam in the garden. Noah was given instructions to build the ark. Abraham was told to go to Canaan. Jacob saw a ladder leading to heaven. God spoke to Joseph in a dream. Moses was commissioned by God to lead Israel out of Egypt. God explained to Joshua how he should fight against the city of Jericho. All that was revelation.

God's revelation began to be written down by Moses around 1500 B.C. (unless Job was written earlier), until the end of the first century A.D. The inerrant writing down of revelation is known as **inspiration**. Inspiration is God's superintending of human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs [Ryrie Study Bible, p. 2079]. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we read, *All Scripture is inspired by God...* While revelation concerns material which is made known, inspiration concerns the ultimate product containing that revelation—the Bible. The written Word of God came about as the Holy Spirit guided the human authors to write it down (2 Peter 1:20-21). In much the same way that the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary so Jesus Christ was born without sin, the Spirit also moved human authors so what they wrote was without error.

As a result, the Bible is **inerrant**, which means it is without error as it was originally written. In other words, the original words are an exact record of the mind of God (Luke 24:27, 44). Therefore, nothing should be added or taken away from it (Revelation 22:18-19). So the Bible is the inerrant, verbally inspired revelation of God.



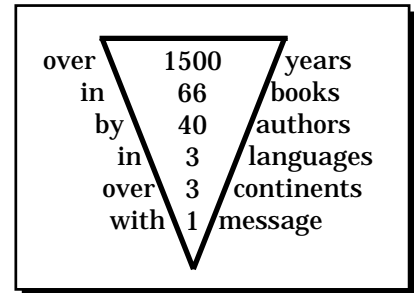
### 2. The Claims of the Bible

Throughout Scripture, the authors claimed to be under the direction of the Holy Spirit. David said, *The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; His word was on my tongue* (2 Samuel 23:2). In Matthew 15:4, Jesus quoted what Moses wrote and called it what God said. In Acts 28:25, Paul said *The Holy Spirit ... spoke through Isaiah the prophet ...*, then he quoted Isaiah 6:9. The author of Hebrews attributed the Old Testament to the work of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 3:7; 10:15-16). The disciples were promised the aid of the Holy Spirit in bringing to their minds the things which Christ had taught them (John 14:26). Jesus broadened this promise to also include the things revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit after He came on the day of Pentecost (John 16:14-15).

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians to correct some problem in that church, he declared, *If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment* (1 Corinthians 14:37). Peter also confirmed this when he equated Paul's letters with *the rest of Scripture* (2 Peter 3:15-16). Jesus Christ and the apostles Peter and Paul confirmed that the apostles would and did write inspired Scripture. The Old Testament writers claimed over 2,600 times to be writing the Word of God (Jeremiah 2:1; Genesis 1:3; and Ezekiel 30:1). There are approximately 320 quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament. The clear teaching of the prophets and the apostles is that both the Old Testament and the New Testament are inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

### 3. The Uniqueness (Unity) of the Bible

The Bible is a unique library of 66 books (39 in the Old Testament—27 in the New Testament), written over a 1,500 year period by 40 authors, in three languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic), and on three continents (Europe, Asia, and North Africa).



The authors had a variety of occupations and experiences. Moses was a leader, trained in the land of Egypt. Peter was a fisherman. Amos was a herdsman. Joshua was a military general. Nehemiah was a king's cupbearer. Daniel was a prime minister. Luke was a doctor. Solomon was a king. Matthew was a tax collector. Paul was a rabbi. David was a shepherd. They wrote in a variety of places such as a wilderness, a dungeon, and a palace. Their books include history, poetry, romance, prose, and prophecy; with a cast of 2,930 characters, depicted in 1,551 places. They wrote on a number of controversial subjects with perfect harmony and continuity. This harmony is unlikely without it being a work of God. The fact is, people just do not agree that easily, even in subjects like physics, chemistry, or medicine. Often you will get a different diagnosis from two doctors in the same specialty. The Bible has also been translated into nearly 1,700 languages and has stood the test of time as the most valuable book in the world. The unity of Scripture is a convincing evidence that it is not a natural book but a supernatural one, which God Himself directed and produced through human authors.

### 4. Fulfilled Prophecy in the Bible

Prophecy is one of God's ways of confirming that what He said is true. He offers it to us as proof that His Word can be trusted and He is to be taken seriously, precisely, and literally. Over a quarter of the Bible is prophecy, and if you put together all the prophetic passages of the Bible in one book, you would have a volume larger than the New Testament. The prophecies of the Bible deal with a variety of different subjects, people, and events. (1) In the Old Testament, it was predicted that Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome would rise and fall, exactly as it happened (Daniel 2:31-45). (2) The city of Tyre was destroyed just as Ezekiel predicted (Ezekiel 26). (3) Abraham's descendants still exist, just as predicted in Genesis 12:1-3; 15:5; 17:7. (4) Today there is no trace of the Canaanites or Edomites who were cursed by God (Genesis 9:25; Obadiah 1-21). (5) Prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44), including the place of His birth (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23), His betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15), the piercing of His hands and feet (Psalm 22:16; Matthew 27:35; John 20:25); His burial (Isaiah 53:9; John 19:38-42); and that He would be called God (Isaiah 9:6; John 4:25-26).

***Fulfilled prophecy has consistently demonstrated that the Bible is not a book of myth or fantasy but a book of truth, facts, and reality***

## 5. Archaeology and the Bible

Archaeology brings strong confirmation to the historicity of both the Old and New Testaments. Examples of some archaeological data validating the *Old Testament* include:

- (1) The Dibon Stone, dated around 800 B.C., which records the name of King Omri of Israel (1 Kings 16:15-28), a number of biblical places, as well as the name of the God of Israel.
- (2) The Ebla Tablets (2400-2250 B.C.) discovered in Syria are a library of 17,000 clay tablets which not only reveal that writing existed nearly 1,000 years before Moses but that laws, customs, and events were recorded in writing at the time.
- (3) The Black Obelisk of the Assyrian King Shalmanaser adds to our knowledge of biblical figures by showing Jehu or his emissary bowing down to the king of Assyria.
- (4) The Dead Sea Scrolls are also significant. We shall discuss them in the next section.

*New Testament* archaeology demonstrates the historical accuracy of Luke and Acts. Luke's writings are filled with literal dates, times, people, places, and events. Yet not one of these has ever been found to be even the slightest bit inaccurate. In his books, Luke named 32 countries, 54 cities, and nine islands without an error. After cataloging the numerous archaeological and historical confirmations of Luke's writings, it is clear that Luke is historically accurate. Of the thousands of archaeological finds which have been discovered, it is significant that not one of these has ever contradicted the Bible.

### Let's Review

*Choose the best answer. The author's answers are in Appendix A, page 37.*

- 1.** Read 2 Samuel 23:1-3. This passage describes
  - A. Revelation
  - B. Inspiration
  - C. Illumination
  
- 2.** 2 Timothy 3:16 describes the inspiration of
  - A. The Old Testament
  - B. The New Testament
  - C. Both the Old and New Testaments
  
- 3.** Which is the best statement?
  - A. The Bible is an inspired book from God.
  - B. The Bible is the inspired book from God.
  - C. The Bible is 66 inspired books from God.
  
- 4.** The primary reason we should study prophecy is because
  - A. It predicts the future.
  - B. It confirms the past.
  - C. It validates the Gospel.
  
- 5.** Which statement is best?
  - A. Archaeology proves the Bible.
  - B. Archaeology confirms the Bible.
  - C. Archaeology explains the Bible.

# The Development of the Old Testament

## When was the Old Testament written?

The books of the Old Testament were written between 1500-400 B.C. [One possible exception is the book of Job, which may date back closer to 2000 B.C.] They were recorded on stone and clay tablets and leather scrolls. During this period, Old Testament events were written down in Hebrew (with portions in Aramaic). In Exodus 17:14, approximately 1500 B.C., the Lord told Moses to *write this in a book*, and in Exodus 24:7 the covenant God made with Israel was in a book. This was the beginning of the Old Testament. Ezra, a priest and scribe, ordered the priesthood *according to the book of Moses* around 450 B.C. Ezra read this same book to the people, *translating to give the sense so they understood the reading* (Nehemiah 8:8). This was the end of the Old Testament. Inbetween, we have several statements indicating God's directions to write down His words. For example, David said God inspired him to write the Psalms (2 Samuel 23:1-3). God also told Jeremiah to *write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book* (Jeremiah 30:2).

Around A.D. 33, Jesus authenticated the compilation of the books of the Old Testament when He stated, *all things which are written about Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled* (Luke 24:44).

A Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was done in 250 B.C. by Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. It is called the *Septuagint* (LXX), meaning 70, referring to the tradition that 70 men translated it. This was the translation of the Bible used by Jesus and the apostles. Even though it was written in Greek, the Septuagint was a literal translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

## How was the Old Testament text copied?

Over the centuries, the Old Testament books were carefully copied by hand. These books were copied very accurately and, in most cases, by special scribes who developed intricate methods of counting words and letters to ensure accuracy. Although the Old Testament manuscripts were transcribed with great care, it was inevitable that certain scribal errors would find their way into the texts over the hundreds of years of transmission into thousands of manuscripts. These errors are called *textual variants*. Most of these relate only to spelling errors and can be easily corrected by comparing the manuscripts. Even liberal critics agree that none of them affect any major doctrinal teachings.

## How do the Dead Sea Scrolls relate to the Old Testament?

Between 1947 and 1962, biblical scrolls were discovered in caves along the shore of the Dead Sea. The scrolls were written during a period from 250-100 B.C. by a group of Jews belonging to the Essene sect, who lived in a place called Qumran. They were a communal society who spent much of their time studying and copying Scriptures. Of the 900 documents discovered, 200 of them are Old Testament manuscripts. Before this discovery, the earliest copies we had of the Old Testament were around A.D. 900. When these copies were compared to the Dead Sea Scrolls, they were remarkably accurate. This discovery gave us Hebrew manuscripts 1000 years earlier than we had before. By comparing these copies of the Old Testament, it is clear that the Old Testament we have today is what was originally recorded.

# The Development of the New Testament

## When was the New Testament written?

The books of the New Testament were written between 50 and 100 A.D. They were written by apostles and those closely associated with them. The New Testament autographs (original writings) were completed in

approximately A.D. 100 and were then copied by hand (manuscripts) until the invention of the printing press in A.D. 1456. There are currently more than 5,600 existing Greek manuscripts that have been discovered which contain all or part of the New Testament, there are 18,000 non-Greek manuscripts, and there are also 36,000 Latin quotations.

***The New Testament is by far the best attested ancient document in history, whether sacred or secular***

## **How was the New Testament put together?**

The process of discovering which books should be included in our Bible is called **canonization**. The word *canon* means *rule or measuring rod*. The 27 books of the New Testament were recognized by Athanasius in 367 A.D. and officially canonized by the church at the Synod of Carthage in A.D. 397.

What determined the canonicity of the New Testament?

- (1) Each book had to be written by an apostle or backed by an apostle. Of the 27 New Testament books, only Mark, Luke, Acts, James, Jude, and possibly Hebrews were not penned by apostles. However, Mark was a known associate of Peter (Acts 12:12), Luke was a companion of Paul (2 Timothy 4:11), and James was called a pillar of the church (Galatians 2:9). James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus. James saw the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:7) and was a leader of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13). The author of the book of Hebrews does not give us his name, but Hebrews 1:1; 2:3-4; and 13:22 seem to authenticate the book.
- (2) The 27 books had to claim divine authority.
- (3) The theology they taught had to be internally consistent.
- (4) They had to be used and accepted by believers. Throughout history, the New Testament books have overwhelmingly been accepted by the church. This last criteria is more powerful than it first seems. For example, suppose you went to a local bookstore and cataloged all their books. How many would be there 50 years from now? 100 years? 200 years? 300 years? Three-hundred years after the New Testament was written, it was clear which books the Holy Spirit was using in the lives of the believers in a special way, as the inspired Word of God.

## **How was the New Testament text copied?**

As Christianity spread, there was a need to reproduce and disseminate copies of the New Testament books. In the early days of the church, individual believers would copy the text for their local bodies. After Christianity became legal in A.D. 313, under Constantine, it was common for book manufacturers, or *scriptoria*, to produce copies of the New Testament. In the workroom of a scriptorium, several trained scribes would each write a copy of the text as it was read by a lector (reader). In this way, several copies could be made at once. Manuscripts were then reviewed by a corrector, who was trained to rectify mistakes.

## **What is the Apocrypha?**

The most debated writing outside of the canon of Scripture is the *Apocrypha* (meaning “hidden or doubtful writings”). These books were written near the end of the Old Testament time and inbetween the Old and New Testaments. There are several reasons why these books should not be included in the canon:

- (1) They were not written by a prophet or an apostle, so there was no inherent authority behind these writings.
- (2) They never claim inspiration, so they do not claim to be a record of God’s revelation to us.
- (3) Jesus and the New Testament writers never quoted from the Apocrypha as Scripture, even though they were aware of these writings. Yet hundreds of quotations in the New Testament cite the Old Testament canon.

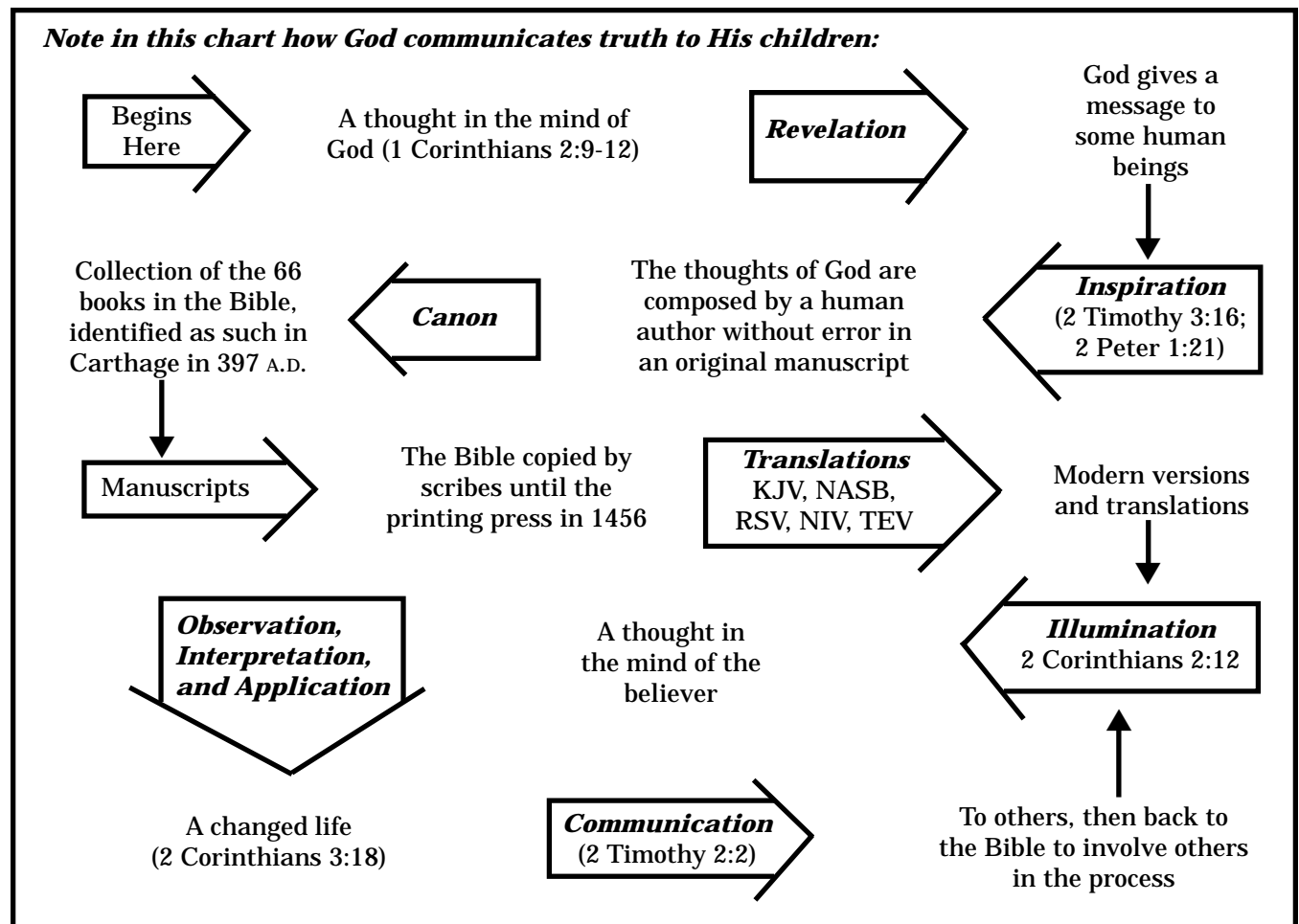
Although the Eastern Orthodox Church includes the Apocrypha as a lesser Scripture, the Roman Catholic church did not proclaim the Apocrypha to be authoritative until 1546.

## Let's Review

Choose the best answer. The author's answers are in Appendix A, page 37.

- 6.** What is the significance of the Septuagint (LXX)?
- A. It shows the existence of the whole Old Testament 250 years before Christ.
  - B. It shows that the Greek translation used by Jesus and the apostles was inerrant.
  - C. It shows that the Old Testament existed at the time of Ezra.
- 7.** What is the most significant difference between my Bible translation into my language and the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament?
- A. My Bible is a translation and, therefore, not inspired of God, whereas the Greek manuscripts are.
  - B. I cannot fully understand what God meant using just my Bible without consulting the Greek manuscripts.
  - C. The Greek manuscripts are better because they are in the same language as the original.

**Note in this chart how God communicates truth to His children:**



# Section 2—Bible Study Methods

By David A. DeWitt

## Introduction

It's all about application. As James wrote, *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves* (James 1:22). So write down the following verses:

- John 1:12—Application—I must \_\_\_\_\_
- Deuteronomy 6:5—Application—I must \_\_\_\_\_

Simple, huh? Now make an application “I must” statement for these verses:

- 1 Corinthians 16:20—Application—I must \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Timothy 5:23—Application—I must \_\_\_\_\_
- Leviticus 19:19—Application—I must \_\_\_\_\_

My guess is you had more trouble with the last three. Many people have just one application principle. It goes something like, “I must do what the Bible says.” Then when they come to verses like the last three above, they either change principles or add the corollary, “but some passages don't apply.” The problem is, 2 Timothy 3:16 says, *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness* and Hebrews 4:12 says, *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* Passages like these sound like **all** Scripture is applicable.

So it's all about application. But application is not always easy. Besides, it requires observing and then interpreting before applying. That is the purpose of this study.

## Here's How I Get Started

The first thing I do when studying a book of the Bible is to make a copy of it. I set the copy machine on something like 135%. Then I put my *New American Standard Ryrie Study Bible* on it and copy every page of the book I am going to study. That does two things for me. One, it gives me larger print and larger spaces between the print. Two, it gives me a copy I feel free to mark on. Then I write all over this copied page. I draw lines, circle key words, make my own paragraph divisions, number lists of principles the author is making, put question marks next to things I don't understand, make charts of what he is saying, and write notes all over it. I write in the margins, on the top and on the bottom and between the lines. I write out word studies, cross references, and all sorts of thoughts that come to mind. In other words, I write out any observations, interpretations, and applications in and among the text of the Scripture on this study-copy. This has the result of my taking ownership of the text. The *New American Standard Ryrie Study Bible* is, in my opinion, the best book in the world. And sometimes I use Ryrie's outlines, notes, and cross references as is. Sometimes I white them out, or tape pieces of paper over them if I'm running out of room to make my own notes. This way my original Bible is free of my defilements, and I have personalized my study around the text. I like that better than using a separate sheet of paper because this way the author's words are always staring me in the face.

Possibly you would just like to buy one of those Bibles in notebook form or one with wide margins. I did that for a while, but this copy thing works best for me. But try whatever you like. Try several things until you find what works for you. Some people reading this studybook live in places where a copy machine is not readily available. In that case, I'd suggest you copy the Scripture you intend to study by hand. That alone is a great lesson in observation. All the kings of Israel were to personally copy the whole Law (Deuteronomy



17:18-19). Not a bad idea for all of us. Anyway, the point here is to do some writing in and around and about the Scripture in order to take personal ownership of it.

One other thing—It’s essential to pray that God’s Holy Spirit will enlighten you to understand what He meant to say through His human authors. This is **illumination**, and this book is not about illumination, nonetheless, we need to pray for it every time we open God’s Word (1 Corinthians 2:12).

## Three General Things to Learn

### 1. The Kinds of Literature in the Bible

<i>Old Testament</i>			<i>New Testament</i>			
<b>History</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Gospels</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Epistles</b>	<b>Apocalypse</b>
From <i>Genesis</i> through <i>Nehemiah</i> , first Moses and then others recorded events which actually took place. This material is not a myth or an allegory but claims to be the real history of the beginning of: the world, mankind, and the nation Israel. These writings are unique among ancient works in that they do not glorify their heroes.	<i>Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon</i> , and some say <i>Esther*</i> , are known as wisdom literature. The focus here is not on historical events but what we can learn about living wisely and worshiping rightly. Although these are in the Old Testament, where blessings are earthly rewards, the wisdom from these books is timeless.	About 28.6% of the Old Testament and 21.6% of the New Testament is predictive literature. Unlike other ancient predictions, these are: (1) specific announcements (2) of future events, (3) consistent with other biblical prophecies, (4) many of which are already literally fulfilled.	These are four accounts (literally the “good news”) about the life of Christ. They were written in the A.D. 50s ( <i>Matthew</i> and <i>Mark</i> ), the 60s ( <i>Luke</i> ), and the 70s ( <i>John</i> ). These are not strictly biographies of the life of Christ. They are selective, historically true events. The authors show Jesus: (1) revealing God to the world, (2) preparing the apostles to start the church, and (3) paying for the sins of the world by His death on the cross.	This is actually Volume 2 of Luke’s work. Volume 1 is his Gospel. The “Acts of the Apostles” is Luke’s history of the early church from the ascension of Christ through Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome. Chapters 1-12 focus on Peter. Chapters 13-28 focus on Paul.	Some of these letters are written to individual believers—like <i>1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon</i> , and <i>2 and 3 John</i> . Some of them were meant to be circulated throughout different city churches—like <i>Ephesians, James, Hebrews</i> and <i>1 John</i> . Others were written to believers in specific cities—like <i>Philippians, 1 and 2 Corinthians</i> , and <i>Colossians</i> . These letters show the deep concern of the apostles and other leaders for the welfare, education, and lifestyles of the early believers.	The first chapters of <i>Revelation</i> address the churches of 7 cities in Asia Minor. Chapters 4–22 contain prophetic information about future events, specifically the book outlines details of the future Tribulation (chapters 4–18), the Second Coming of Christ (19), the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth (20:1-10), the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15), and the eternal state (chapters 21–22). The word “apocalyptic” literally means “a sudden and violent end of the world.”
	*Some list <i>Esther</i> as a history book, some as wisdom.	[Statistics from J. Barton Payne, <i>Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy</i> , pp. 631-682]				

Some styles are prominent in certain types of literature. For example, history is mostly narrative, wisdom has a lot of poetry, and the epistles are basically prose. However, nearly all books of the Bible contain all styles of literature.

## 2. Some Styles of Literature to Recognize in the Bible

From the first time we begin reading, we notice that the author is using a certain style to present his message. You don't have to be a literary expert to figure this out. It's obvious—like everything else in Bible study—from examining a passage in its context. Most readers can easily see whether the author is using poetry, parables, narrative, prose, etc. even if he or she doesn't know the correct label for it. Nonetheless, it's helpful to learn some basic styles of literature, just to be aware of the different ways people write.

**1. Prose.** This is an ordinary, straightforward explanation in nonfiction literature. It is the logical discourse used widely in places like the New Testament epistles, the lectures of Jesus, and the exhortations of the Mosaic Law. Prose states things directly with an “A” therefore “B” therefore “C” logical progression.

**2. Narratives.** These are stories. They may be biographies, autobiographies, national histories or other historical events. Unlike prose, which present things directly, narratives present the author's point.

**3. Poetry.** This is figurative literature. Here the author expresses “experiences, ideas, or emotions in a style more concentrated, imaginative, and powerful than ordinary speech” (*Webster's New World Dictionary*, p. 1999). Poetry uses words with a higher intensity than the dictionary definition would allow. For example, Proverbs 27:6 says, ... *faithful are the wounds of a friend*. If you look up “wounds” in a dictionary, you would probably not discover the author's intended meaning of the word. But when we read it, we get a feel for the intensity of what a faithful friend does.

Two common poetic expressions we should be familiar with are similes and metaphors. A **simile** is easy to recognize. It's a formal comparison between two things, expressed with the words “as” or “like.” For example, Isaiah 55:10-11 reads, *As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth ... so is My word that goes out from My mouth*. A **metaphor** is more common and more difficult to recognize. Here the comparison is unexpressed or merely implied. For example, Jesus metaphorically referred to Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep (John 10:11), the Vine of the branches (John 15:1), and the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

**4. Parables.** These are short stories about familiar things from which a moral or religious lesson may be drawn. There is only one main point to a parable. There may be secondary ideas, but they will always be connected to the main one. For example, the parable of the 10 virgins is not about marriage, and the parable of the talents is not about money. Both are about being ready for Christ at His Second Coming (Matthew 25:1-23). Parables make comparisons. When a simile (“as” or “like”) is extended into a story, it is called a parable. Parables always announce themselves in some way. When we read something like, “He spoke to them in parables, saying ...” we know that what follows this expression is not a historical event but a story created for the purpose of conveying some moral or religious point. Christ's kingdom parables in Matthew 13 are a classic example.

**5. Allegories.** These are stories which have a hidden or symbolic meaning used for teaching some moral or religious principle. Like parables, they are also stories which express comparisons, except they are unannounced. So an allegory is a metaphor which has been extended into a story. In Proverbs 5:15-23, the author makes the statement, *Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well* (verse 15). Three verses later we learn he is talking about *the wife of your youth* (verse 18). The metaphorical nature of this poem is clear after we read it, but it sort of sneaks up on us without announcing itself. (See also Isaiah 5:1-7; 2 Samuel 12:1-4; and Ezekiel 23.)

Parables and allegories are like paintings, sculptures, and other works of art. They are not a photograph of reality but a picture which expresses and emphasizes the point the author is making. For example, the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 is hardly a description of reality. It's unlikely that a groom is planning to marry ten virgins at the same time. The point is to tell us to be ready for the return of Christ. [We must note here that an allegory is a valid description of a certain literature style. But an *allegorical* method of interpretation is a very different thing. Allegorical interpretation is not valid. We will deal with that when we talk about interpretation, but I want to mention it here so you can note there are two different ways to use the word *allegory*.]

**6. Hyperboles.** These are a deliberate exaggeration. They're a type of overstatement made to increase the effect of what is being said. For example, in Psalm 6:6 the Psalmist wrote, *all night long I flood my bed with weeping*. This is obviously a hyperbolic exaggeration meant to call our attention to the seriousness of his situation. Jesus said, *if your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away* (Matthew 5:29). This is a hyperbolic expression about the importance of eliminating things that cause us to sin (see also 1 Corinthians 1:25). [The above material is taken from *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* by Kaiser and Silva, p. 87-95.]

**7. Euphemisms.** These are a substitution of a more gentle, pleasant, or modest expression for a more disagreeable or harsh reality. In a sense, they're the opposite of a hyperbole. For example, an Old Testament expression for using the toilet was *covering his feet* (Judges 3:24, 1 Samuel 24:3). In the New Testament, it is common to see the word "death" replaced with the word *sleep* (John 11:11, 1 Corinthians 15:51). These are euphemisms used to soften an expression.

### 3. The Need to Ask Questions

#### Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?

These six basic questions can be very helpful as we go through the process of observation. You might think of others, and not all of these will be appropriate in every instance, but I think you will find them a good door opener when doing observation.

***For those of you studying this in English, I remember  
them by thinking "W" five "H," written W<sub>5</sub>H***

**Who?** asks about the people involved. Who wrote the book? Sometimes we know, sometimes we don't, but either way, it's good to ask. Who did he write to? Who did he write about? Who should solve the problem or bring the news the author is writing about?

**What?** asks the question of content. What is he talking about? What are his main points and what are his other points? What event is going on?

**Where?** is a geography question. Where is this located? Where is the author? Where are his readers? Is it mountainous, flat, a desert, a city, or a wilderness?

**When?** is a question of time. Do we know the date B.C. or A.D. of this event? [By the way, if you can find one, get an old Scofield Reference Bible. It's the only one which puts a date on every page. However, most study Bibles will give a date for the writing of each book.] Also, do we know if it is spring, summer, fall, or winter?

**Why?** is a question of purpose. Does the author state his purpose for writing? Be careful here not to make up a purpose if the author does not state one in the book.

**How?** is a question of method. It narrows down the specifics. How does the author expect his motivation to be carried out?

# Let's Review

The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 38.

Name the 7 kinds of books in the Bible with a brief description of each:

Old Testament			New Testament			

Name 7 styles of literature used in the Bible	Briefly describe that style of literature	Where can we find an example of this style in the Bible
<b>1</b>		
<b>2</b>		
<b>3</b>		
<b>4</b>		
<b>5</b>		
<b>6</b>		
<b>7</b>		

# The Two Basic Bible Study Methods

## Synthesis and Analysis

### Synthesis—The Telescopic View

#### Looking for the Theme of a Book

Bible study is both analysis and synthesis. Analysis is microscopic. It has to do with taking a text apart and looking for every detail. Synthesis is telescopic. It's about putting it all together and looking at the big picture. This is a continuous cycle. Bible study naturally begins with synthesis. As we read, we begin to get the big picture or theme of the author. We learn what is bothering him, or exciting him, or why he decided to write in the first place. [I shall here use "he" and "him" instead of "he or she" and "him or her" just for the sake of convenience, since most biblical authors were men.] When we determine the author's theme, that theme then helps us define the words he is using. As we begin to understand the author, his words increasingly become terms of significance, taking on a particular emphasis. Each word has been gathered together in sentences, paragraphs, and then longer sections, and chapters with main divisions. He may also go on sidetracks or have parentheses to his main idea. But those, too, will become evident as we go, if we keep reading the book.

#### Reading a Book

I'd like to invite you to read a book of the Bible with me—**10 times**. First, let me tell you what we will be looking for in each of the 10 readings.

##### Reading #1 What is this book about generally?

What type of literature is this? What are some of the styles of writing used in this book? In general, what's going on here? For example, if we read the book of Genesis, we would conclude this is a history book. It contains some poetry, predictions, similes, and metaphors, but basically, it's a book of narrative. If we read 1 Corinthians, we would see many figures of speech, hyperboles, and metaphors, but basically it's prose, it's an epistle, a letter of instruction from the Apostle Paul.

##### Reading #2 What is emphasized?

In this reading, we primarily want to list what is repeated, related, or unrelated. For example, in Deuteronomy, Moses continually repeats the words "remember" or "don't forget." The book of Hebrews repeatedly says "Jesus was better than" the angels, Moses, the Levitical priesthood, etc.

##### Reading #3 What is motivating the author to write?

What is the author excited about or bothered by? What's the burr under his saddle? Why did he bother to take pen in hand and write? For example, the book of Nehemiah begins with a report which comes to Nehemiah about Jerusalem. We read, *And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire." Now it came about when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven* (Nehemiah 1:3-4). Here Nehemiah gave us his motivation which drove his every word and every act throughout the book.

##### Reading #4 What basic solution or direction does the author give?

What does he say, suggest, or command for his reader(s) to do because of what is motivating or bothering him? For example, in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul listed one of the many immoralities of the church of Corinth. This was about adultery. Then he said, *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened* (1 Corinthians 5:6-7a). So Paul not only stated the problem, he also said what he expected them to do about it. In this reading, we want to make a general statement of what the author wants done.

##### Reading #5 What specific commands or principles does the author give?

How does the author believe his general solution or direction should be carried out? Are there any lists of principles, rules, or commands to keep? For example, God gave the Law to Israel through Moses to set

them apart from the nations around them (that would be Reading #4). But He gave this Law not just in general terms but in 613 specific commands. Jesus taught His disciples to *love your enemies* (Luke 6:27), but He followed that with a specific list of (at least) 12 commands which describe it. Namely, (1) *do good to those who hate you*, (2) *bless those who curse you*, (3) *pray for those who mistreat you*, etc. (Luke 6:27-38). This reading looks for commands or principles.

#### **Reading #6 What is the key verse or the key passage?**

As you read a book, look for a key verse and place a \* mark by it. In a Psalm or a small book, it may only occur once. In larger books, it may be repeated. For example, in Deuteronomy, Moses repeated the idea of “remember” or “don’t forget” what God has done in the past and what He has said in the Law.

#### **Reading #7 What are the paragraph divisions of the book?**

A paragraph is the most basic unit of thought. With sentences, we put our words together into a logical statement. These sentences have a subject (the thing we are talking about), a verb (the action we want to communicate), and an object for that action. But these statements are only rarely sufficient to get across our point. We usually need several sentences which explain, illustrate, and clarify our idea before we feel we have actually made our case. If someone begins to interrupt us after a few sentences, we will often say something like, “Wait! Let me finish!” What we want to finish (if it were written) is our paragraph. Paragraphs were not set off in any physical way in the original text. So paragraphs must be determined by reading the author’s content. During this reading, we want to begin to make a chart which labels each paragraph. Study Bibles can be helpful here. Remember, however, the Bible is inspired but not the divisions of a Study Bible.

#### **Reading #8 What are the major sections of the book?**

The current divisions of our Bibles—like many classic pieces of literature—are divided into chapters and verses. But these are not part of the original inspired text. As Grant Osborne put it, “We must remember that verse and chapter divisions were never inspired. In fact, the Bible was never versified until 1551, when a Parisian publisher, Stephanus, divided the whole Bible into verses over a six-month period as publicized in his last Greek version” [*The Hermeneutical Spiral*, p. 25]. So we can be thankful for them, but they are not inspired, so they do not necessarily indicate the author’s intended divisions of his thoughts. Study Bibles can be of assistance here, too. For example, my *Ryrie Study Bible* gives me paragraphs and major sections outlined in it. That’s really helpful, but Ryrie’s divisions are not inspired either. The author, however, definitely made some divisions in his thought patterns as he wrote. During this reading, we want to review our paragraph divisions and group them into major sections.

#### **Reading #9 What is the one major division or pivot point of the book?**

Generally speaking, there will be one (and, in a few rare instances, more than one) major division in a book. For example, in most of Paul’s epistles he first presents a theological argument. Then he suddenly changes to an appeal for application. In chapters 1 through 3 of Ephesians, Paul makes a theological case for our calling, and through it, our salvation and position in Christ. Then in 4:1 he says, *Therefore ... walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called*. The remainder of the epistle is about living consistent with our calling. Usually, the main division is near the middle of the book, but not always. In Romans, it’s between chapters 11 and 12. After 11 chapters of theology, in 12:1 Paul said, *Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice*. Chapters 12 through 16 are an application of the first 11 chapters. Romans 12:1 (like Ephesians 4:1) is a **pivot point** which launches the rest of the book. The 50 chapters of Genesis are divided at 12:1. In the first 11 chapters Moses wrote about the origin of all mankind. Starting with chapter 12 (actually 11:27), he wrote about the origin of the Hebrew people. During this reading, we want to group our section divisions together and try to determine one (or in rare cases, more than one) major division of the book.

#### **Reading #10 What is the theme of the book?**

During this reading, we will look for the author’s big idea. We will ask the question, “What is his main point and can we state that in a concise way?” The assumption is that the author had something to say. He may have had several things to say, and he may go in another direction for awhile (that is, he may include some parenthesis to his main point). Nevertheless, there is some main reason why he wrote this. So now, after reading the book 9 times, we want to read it a tenth time to see if we can zero in on that theme.



## Relating the Paragraphs, Sections, and Divisions of a Book

The major divisions, sections, and paragraphs of a book are not just disjointed thoughts. They are tied together by a theme that relates them to one another in certain ways. Here are 7 ways these sections may be related.

### 1. Additions

Some paragraphs, sections, and divisions of a book simply add to the previous or following ones. The last part of the book of Genesis is an example of an addition of one large section of material to another. Genesis 11:27—25:18 deals with the history of Abraham and his family. The next section, Genesis 25:19—36:43, adds the history of Isaac and his family. The next section, Genesis 37:1—50:26, adds the history of Joseph and his family.

In the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 12—14 is a section of Scripture which has paragraphs related by addition. The variety of gifts is talked about in 12:1-11. Paul adds 12:12-31 on the purpose of gifts. Next in 13:1-13 he adds a paragraph on the supremacy of love over the other gifts. Then in 14:1-25 he adds the superiority of prophecy over tongues, and finally in 14:26-40 he adds a paragraph on regulations in the use of the gifts.

### 2. Developments

Some paragraphs, sections, and divisions of a book develop the ones before or after it. It's very common for the writers of the Bible to state a certain set of facts and then re-state them again in a different way which develops some aspect of those facts. In Genesis 1, Moses gave the facts of creation. Then in Genesis 2, he developed the creation account with respect to man.

In John 3:1-15, we have a paragraph of historical narrative, where Jesus was talking with Nicodemus and told him that he must be born again. Then in verses 16-21, we have a paragraph of discourse where Jesus logically developed the born-again idea of the preceding discussion.

### 3. Causes and Effects

Some paragraphs, sections, and divisions of a book are the cause or effect of the ones before it or after it. In this case, a point is made in one part of the book and then usually followed by a word like “therefore” or “so” or “then” in the first sentence of the next part of the book. When that happens, we are often reading about a cause which has the effect described in the second part. The reverse can also be true. The effect could be presented first and then the cause. Either way, we can observe that the parts are related by cause and effect.

Two of the most obvious ones in the New Testament are the ones we already considered in the books of Romans and Ephesians. In both cases, there is a major division which separates a more theological first part from a more applicational second part. The first part is a cause of the second part, as mentioned above. In Romans, that division is between chapters 11 and 12. In Ephesians, it's between chapters 3 and 4.

### 4. Pivots

Some paragraphs, sections, and divisions of a book have a pivot point, or turning point between the previous and following ones. These chapters or verses of the book are ones which change the direction of what went on up to that point to what goes on after that point. For example, in the book of 2 Samuel, chapter 11 serves as a pivot for that book. This book is a narrative or history of the life of David. Chapter 11 describes his sins of adultery and murder. But when we read on, we find that these sins were a pivot point in his life.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we have another significant pivot chapter. In chapters 1–11, we see Christ presenting Himself to Israel as their Messiah and the personification of righteousness. Then in chapter 12 the Pharisees reject Him, saying He's of the devil. From then on, Christ ministers in light of that rejection, no longer presenting Himself to Israel as their Messiah. Chapter 12 then relates to the sections before and after it as a pivot point between the presentation of righteousness and the rejection of righteousness.

### 5. Contrasts

Some paragraphs, sections, and divisions of a book stand in contrast to the one(s) before it or after it. A contrast is an association of opposites. Quite often it's used when an author is saying “this is true, but not that.” Also, it's used when an author makes his point by presenting a problem, then contrasting it with the solution.



In Psalm 73, Asaph uses contrast to express a personal crisis in his thoughts about God. In the first half (verses 1-16), he presents his agony over how the wicked could be so prosperous. Then in the second half (verses 17-28), he contrasts this with the solution he found when he concentrated on God. Verse 17 is a pivot between the two major divisions of the Psalm.

Another contrast can be seen in Romans 3. Verses 9-20 present the hopelessness of man under the Law. Then the next paragraph (verses 21-30) contrasts this with the deliverance of God apart from the Law.

## 6. Comparisons ↺ ↻

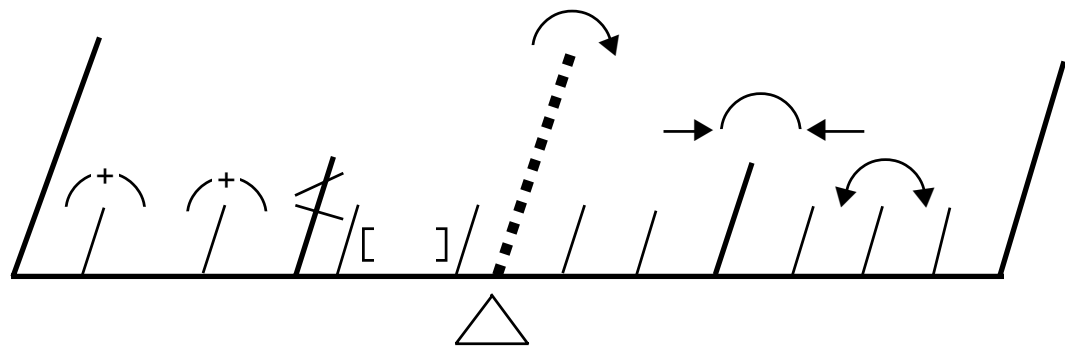
Some paragraphs, sections, and divisions of a book are given as a comparison of the ones before or after it. A comparison is an association of like things. In some cases, authors will compare one thing to another to make their point. In this case, the author presents two or more things that have many similarities in order to make or emphasize a particular point.

In the Old Testament book of Hosea, there is a comparison of Hosea's wife with Israel. In chapters 1-3, we learn that Hosea has an unfaithful wife. In chapters 4-14, we learn that God has an unfaithful people. The physical harlotry of Hosea's wife is compared to the spiritual harlotry of Israel.

## 7. Parenthesis [ ]

Some paragraph sections and divisions of a book are parentheses. These are passages where an author interrupts himself and goes off on a tangent. The tangent is relevant, even crucial, information which he wants us to know, but it is not necessarily part of his theme or the basic flow of the book. It's an interruption in that flow. For example, in the book of Revelation, John described the tribulation period with 3 types of plagues: seals, trumpets, and bowls. But four times he interrupted that flow with a parenthesis which gives us information crucial to that period but not part of the chronology. Paul often does this when he mentions Jesus. He frequently leaves his main subject and talks about Christ. This is where we get some of our best theology about Christ, but it's a parenthesis to his main point, as in Philippians 2:5-11.

So now our picture of a book might look something like the following sketch. At this point, we may also want to review our theme statement.



**THEME** \_\_\_\_\_

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, pages 39-40.*

Now, using the format on the next page, practice the whole analysis process on the New Testament book of 2 John. Since it is only 13 verses long, it will allow you to see the whole process quickly. Do the ten readings, chart the book, and include any relative symbols on your chart. Then write the theme under your chart in the form of a subject and a predicate (that is, a complete sentence). Next, practice this analysis process with the book of Titus. This will allow you to see it operate in a three-chapter book.

# Synthesizing a Book of the Bible

*\* Make copies of this sheet to use when studying any book*

Fill in the following statements after each of 10 readings:

**Reading #1** Generally, this book is about \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading #2** The subjects **repeated** in this book are \_\_\_\_\_

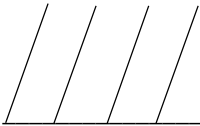
**Reading #3** The author's basic reason or **motive** for writing this book is \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading #4** The author's **basic solution** is \_\_\_\_\_

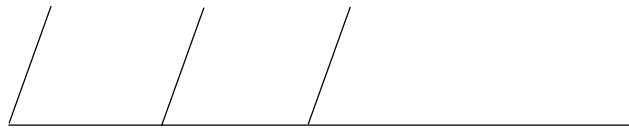
**Reading #5** Some **specific commands** the author gives include: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading #6** The **key verse** or passage of the book is \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading #7** The paragraph divisions are



**Reading #8** The main sections are



**Reading #9** The main division of the book is



**Reading #10** The theme of the book is

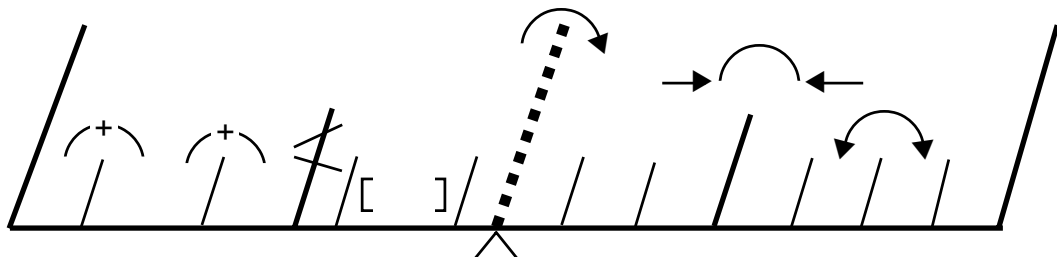
\_\_\_\_\_

Subject (what he is talking about)

\_\_\_\_\_

Predicate (what he is saying about what he is talking about)

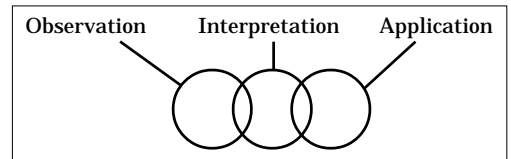
**Now sketch  
the book**



# Analysis—The Microscopic View

## The Need to Observe, Interpret, and Apply

These three steps are not just some method of Bible study some scholar thought up. This is the way we understand everything in life. We observe it and interpret it before we can apply it. Also, these three must occur in that order. We must observe before we can interpret, and we must interpret before we can apply. For sure, there is a sense in which they are interwoven. We find ourselves doing some interpretation as we observe and some applying as we interpret.



Nevertheless, these three distinct processes are essential if we are to do meaningful Bible study. We've all heard speakers who never really look at a passage or they give us one bounce off the text and into oblivion. On the other hand, there are those who interpret the text forever and never deal with its implications for life as we live it. And that's okay if you are writing a commentary but not if you are going to become a mature godly man or woman.

## Observation

Observing is like a detective looking for clues. Some are like Sherlock Holmes, surveying all the details at one time and coming to a conclusion. Some observe like the CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) people who examine each piece of evidence until the truth is known. Personally, I'm more like Columbo, going over and over the same material until it all comes together. But however you do it, observation has to do with noticing. So a definition of observation would be,

***Observation is noticing what that author has written***

Now let's take our definition of observation and look closely at the author's text. We shall focus in on observing one verse of the Bible. (Remember, the verse divisions were added in A.D. 1551, so they are not inspired. Nonetheless, they are helpful little mechanical division points.) Specifically, we are answering the question, What did the author say? Here are ten suggestions which may help you observe a passage:

- (1) Identify the **kind of literature** this passage is part of (history, poetry, prophecy, gospels, Acts, epistles or the Apocalypse).
- (2) Identify the **style of literature** being used here. Is it prose, narrative, poetry, a parable or allegory? Is he using a simile, a metaphor, a hyperbole, or an euphemism?
- (3) Write down the **theme** of the book and ask yourself, "How does this verse express that theme?" or "Does this verse express the theme at all?"
- (4) Read the immediate **context**, especially the paragraph it's in and how it's used in that paragraph.
- (5) Ask the **W<sub>5</sub>H** basic questions—Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
- (6) Figure out if this verse is an addition, development, cause, effect, pivot, contrast, comparison, or a parenthesis, with respect to its context.
- (7) Notice the significance of each word as the author is using it from the context of its paragraph and in tune with the theme of the book.
- (8) Identify any key or central word which governs the meaning of the verse.
- (9) Consider each word as it relates to the word before it and after it.
- (10) Ask yourself if this word is part of a phrase which shapes its meaning.

## Let's Review

The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 41.

Try to observe 25 things the author said in Titus 2:12. It reads,

*instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age*

## Interpretation

### Interpretation Is Understanding

It's impossible to interpret the Word of God if we don't observe it. And it's impossible to apply the Word of God if we don't understand it (Matthew 13:23). So this step of Bible study is the vital link between observing and applying.

**Observation** is noticing what it says

**Interpretation** is understanding what it meant

**Application** is using what it means

It's all about doing what God says. But understanding must precede doing or we won't understand what we are doing. As the psalmist wrote, *Give me understanding, that I may observe Thy law, and keep it with all my heart* (Psalm 119:34).

Interpretation all comes down to this one basic principle—

***Interpretation is understanding the author's intended meaning through the context***

In Acts 8:30-35, we read about the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. He was reading Isaiah 53 when Philip approached him and asked the basic interpretation question, *Do you **understand** what you are reading?* (Acts 8:30, emphasis mine). Philip knew that **understanding** the Word of God was the path to salvation. The eunuch's specific question to Philip was, *Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?* (verse 34). The eunuch did not understand who the author was talking about, but he did understand the most basic principle of interpretation—that the correct meaning was whatever the author intended. Philip then showed him that Isaiah was talking about the Messiah, the Christ, and Jesus was that Christ. Specifically, it says, *... and beginning from **this Scripture** he preached Jesus to him* (verse 35, emphasis mine). So interpretation is understanding the intention in the mind of the author through *this Scripture* which is the passage in its own context.

### Interpretation Is Both an Art and a Science

Interpretation is a science in that it supplies us with basic principles which are true for all literature. The only thing unique about interpreting the Bible is that it has two authors—the human author and God. But since the divine authorship is revealed through human authors, the principles of interpretation are unchanged. Interpretation is also an art. Just because we know the basic principles of interpretation does not mean we are accomplished at using them. Accurate use takes practice, an increasing understanding of each human author, and ultimately an understanding of God.

But interpretation is not a supernatural act of God imposed upon the reader which causes understanding. That's illumination. Paul said, *Now we have received ... the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God* (1 Corinthians 2:12). These things are *spiritually appraised* (verse 14). Illumination means that godly things are *spiritually appraised* by the believer through the work of the Holy Spirit. So it's the Spirit of God who causes us to understand the Word of God. The problem is, we can harden our hearts (Hebrews 3:7-11), quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30). That's why we need the art and science of interpretation. Interpretation is not illumination, but it's an essential part of Bible study.

***When our interpretation is correct, it will perfectly align with our illumination, and when we have not perverted God's illumination, it will perfectly align with our interpretation***

So interpretation principles serve as a check on false claims for illumination and our own personal prejudices which quench the Spirit.

## **Ten Principles of Interpretation**

The correct interpretation of anything written by anybody at any time can be determined by the author's intended meaning through the context. We shall now develop this with ten principles.

### **1. The correct interpretation is found in the words of the author**

Whatever meaning, intentions, motives, or feelings an author has, the only access to them is through his words. And in the Bible, those words also give us access to the mind of God because every word is inspired by God.

Jesus said, *For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished* (Matthew 5:18; see also Matthew 5:17; 24:35; and Luke 16:16-17). Jesus here tells us that every word of the Old Testament authors will be fulfilled. Actually, Jesus said that even a piece of a letter is significant. That's because pieces of a letter change the letter, which changes the word. For example, consider the English words FUN, PUN, RUN, and BUN. In each case, only a stroke or piece of the first letter changes the word. So, Jesus takes the inspiration of the author of Scripture down to every piece of every letter.

When speaking to the Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection from the dead), Jesus said, *But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I AM the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living'* (Matthew 22:31-32). Here Jesus proved that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive, after they physically died, by the fact that God used the word "am" instead of "was." That is, the tense of the word determined the meaning of the passage. So every word the author uses must be considered if we are to understand what he wrote.

### **2. What the author meant is the only correct interpretation**

There is only one right interpretation, and it's exclusively that of the author. There are many possible right applications of a passage, but there is only one right interpretation. The Bible is not abstract art where everyone comes away with their own meaning. The meaning is that of the author. So don't say, "This is what it means to me." We can only ask what it means to the author. That meaning is in words, but those words do not carry meaning by themselves. I might say, "I'm going to *run* down to the store and get some *cokes*." Actually, I *drive* to the store and buy *Sprite, Orange, and Dr. Pepper*. You might say I lied, but actually, that's what I meant by "*run* to the store and get some *cokes*." In America, we have idioms like: "I heard that!" which has to do with agreeing, not hearing, and the slang expression "Get out of here!" which has nothing to do with asking someone to leave. It basically means, "Wow, that's amazing, I didn't realize that." So the only correct interpretation of any word must come from the author.

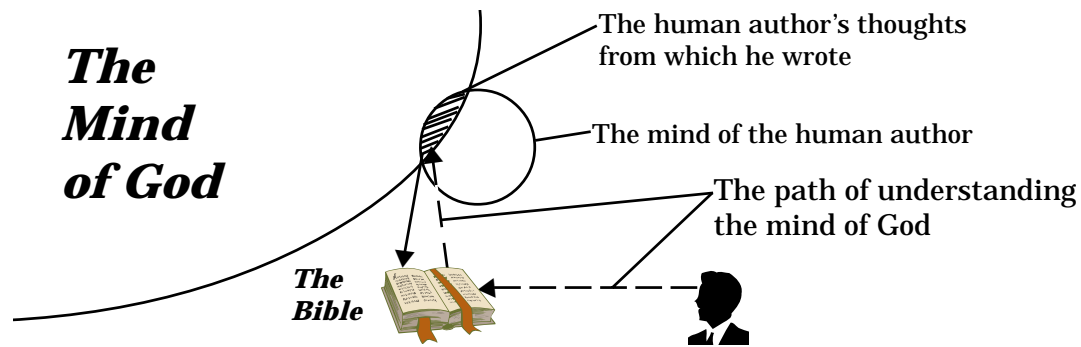
Consider the Greek word *peirasmos* in James 1:2 and 12-13. A lexicon will tell you it means "temptation, trial, or testing." In James 1, most English versions of the Bible correctly translate it "trials," something which can lead to maturity (verses 3-4). This idea continues on through verse 12. But in verse 13, James begins a new thought using the same word *peirasmos*, which most English versions correctly translate "temptations" because this *peirasmos* does not come from God, instead it leads us to lust, sin, and death.

So the meaning of words comes from how the author uses them, not just from dictionaries and lexicons.

### **3. Understanding is in the mind of the author**

The goal of interpretation is to understand the mind of the author. That includes not just his statements but his intentions. The uniqueness of the Bible is that we have a dual authorship—God and the human author. Our goal in Bible study is to know the mind of God—His thoughts, His feelings, His heart, His intentions. Not just His laws, but His expectations and desires. But our only access to His mind is through the mind of the human authors. It's not that everything the human author thought was true, but everything he thought

about what he wrote in the Scripture was true. So to understand the mind of the human author is to understand a small piece of the mind of God. The text is a small window into the heart of God. As Peter said, ... *men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God* (2 Peter 1:21).



The dual authorship of the Scripture (God and the human author) creates a few unique interpretive challenges. One is that God may be saying something through the human author which that author is unaware of (see John 11:50-52). In other words, the text may have a double meaning—one the human author is aware of and one he is not aware of. The question, then, is, how would we know the meaning of which the human author is unaware? The answer is, we **cannot** know it **unless** it is revealed to us by some other biblical human author. For example, Isaiah 7:14 says, *Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel*. This is a message from God to King Ahaz through Isaiah. Most likely, Isaiah saw this as being fulfilled in his day, or in the immediate future (see Isaiah 8:3). Some 700 years later, Matthew records this verse as a prediction of Jesus as the Messiah (Matthew 1:23). So clearly God meant more by the Isaiah 7:14 statement than Isaiah did. But how would we know that? The only way we know is because God revealed it to Matthew 700 years later. We should never guess about a second meaning of an Old Testament text. We can only know God's intended meaning through some inspired human authors of the Scripture—either the one who originally wrote it or one who later referred to it. Could there be other second or hidden meanings in Old Testament passages? Probably (see Luke 24:27 and John 11:50). But the only way we can know them is when they are revealed to us by another human biblical author—at least until Christ's return.

"Types" are like that. We know, for example, that Elijah is a type (which means, example) of John the Baptist (Luke 1:17). We know that Jonah was a type of Christ (Matthew 12:40). But we should not take the liberty to call Old Testament people or events types if they are not mentioned as such by some New Testament author. It's okay to speculate about that, but be sure anyone you teach knows it's merely a speculation. Actual meaning must be stated by a biblical author.

#### **4. The author intended his readers to understand him in a plain, ordinary, normal way—literally not allegorically**

Unfortunately, there are two ways we use the word "literal." One is synonymous with a logical prose style of writing. We say, "literally speaking" or "he literally did this or that." In this sense, of course, the author is not always speaking literally. He may be speaking figuratively, poetically, metaphorically, etc.

The second way we use the word is in the sense of a plain ordinary normal way of understanding things. It means understanding the author the way he meant to be understood. In this sense, authors should always be taken literally.

This leads to another confusion which needs clarification. There are also two ways to use the word "allegory." First, an allegory is a certain style of literature. It's a metaphor extended into a story and used as an illustration. For example, Paul speaks of Abraham's two wives "allegorically" in Galatians 4:24f. But it is never legitimate to **interpret** a text **allegorically**. Not even an allegory should be interpreted allegorically. It should be interpreted literally as an allegory. Allegory, as a method of interpretation, was proposed by Origen in the A.D. 200s and developed by Roman Catholicism. *It means abandoning the plain ordinary understanding of the author's intended meaning for some presupposed spiritual meaning unavailable to the reader.* Therefore, the reader needs the clergy to tell him or her what it means. But the truth is,

***If we cannot get the meaning from the authors of the Bible, then we are no longer studying the Bible but somebody's ideas imposed on the Bible***

So should we always take the Bible literally? Well, if that means the dictionary definition of each word—no. If that means a plain, ordinary, regular (non-allegorical) way to understand whatever the author meant—yes. Is allegory legitimate? If that means an extended metaphor—yes. If that means a method of interpretation—no.

**5. The right interpretation is the author's meaning and the purpose does not determine the meaning**

**Meaning** is the answer to the question **what** did the author say, whereas **purpose** is an attempt to figure out **why** it was said. There are several reasons the purpose (the why) should not be used to determine the meaning (the what) of a text.

**a. The purpose is not necessary to determine the meaning.** For example, **why** did the Law command the Israelites to *not breed together two kinds of cattle* (Leviticus 19:19), or not shave their beards (Leviticus 19:27)? Many guesses have been suggested—the pagans were doing it, health reasons, it was part of some idolatrous practice. The reality is, Leviticus 19:27 never says **why** God commanded these things. So I suggest we don't know **why**. But it doesn't matter in order to understand **what** the author's intended meaning was. **Why** did Paul say an overseer was to be *a husband* (1 Timothy 3:2)? **Why** not a wife or a single person? I suggest we don't know **why**, but it doesn't matter because we know **what** Paul commanded.

**b. The purpose cannot always be known.**

For example, what is the purpose of the Gospel of Matthew? I have read it was to teach the standards of the future Millennial Kingdom, to equip the Apostles to start the church, to declare a lordship salvation, and to present the Messiah to Israel. I suggest we don't know the purpose of Matthew. Matthew may have had several of these purposes in mind or some other ones. But it doesn't matter because it does not affect the meaning of what he (or Jesus) said. Even when we know an author's purpose (as in John 20:31), we don't know that it is his only purpose or the one he has in mind when he wrote some particular passage.

**Since meaning can be known without purpose, purpose does not determine meaning**

**c. Using purpose to determine meaning affects application.** For example, some homosexuals claim the purpose of Moses in Leviticus 18 is to forbid idolatrous practices. So the homosexuality forbidden in Leviticus 18:22 is idolatrous homosexuality. Their application is, therefore, that non-idolatrous homosexuality is permitted. So they ignore the clear meaning of the passage by imposing on it a supposed purpose. Some claim Paul's purpose in forbidding women to teach men (1 Timothy 2:12) was to combat a cultural situation of dominating women. Their application is "women who are not dominating may teach men." So we see that when purpose is used to determine meaning, one could end up concluding something very different from the text or even the opposite of the text.

**6. Understanding must begin with what is known from the Scripture and proceed to what is unknown in the Scripture**

To understand something, we must begin with what we know, then use that to make sense of what we do not yet understand.

**We move from what is biblically clear to the biblically obscure, and as we do, we take the clear along with us as a tool to understand the obscure**

To start with the unclear would be to operate without a foundation. That's what the cults do with the Bible. They tend to take unclear passages, then impose their theology on them. For example, John 10:34-36 says, *Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"* The Mormons use this passage to say Jesus was God only in the sense that we all can become Gods (capital "G" intended). That's consistent with Mormon theology but totally inconsistent with the rest of the Bible. Instead of taking what we know from the Bible (and the Gospel of John in particular) to help understand this unclear passage, the Mormons begin with the unclear. That takes away the foundation of the clear teaching of the Bible on the nature of man and God. Having robbed us of the biblical foundation, they now supply their own.

On the other hand, if we begin with the clear teaching of the Bible, we know we are gods like Christ in that (1) we are sons of God the Father and (2) we represent God to the world. But we differ from Christ in that (1) He was of the same essence as the Father (John 10:30 and 14:9) and (2) He was Himself special revelation of the character of God (John 14:9).

So when you come across an unclear passage, just put a question mark next to it and press on. Before you settle on an interpretation for it, surround the passage with information you know—first from the Bible in general, then the book which contains it, then close in on it from the broader and immediate context. That way the clear can be a light to examine the unclear.

**7. The meaning must be determined by “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV)**

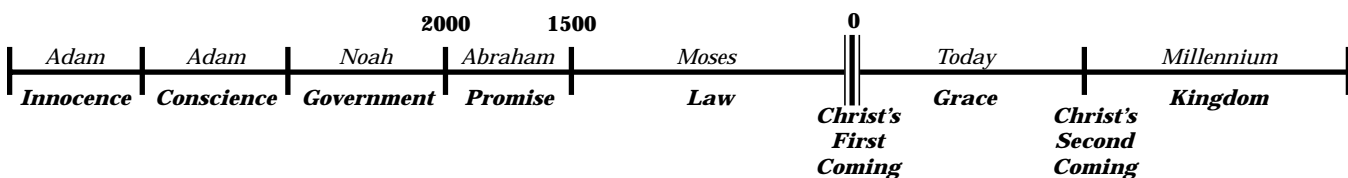
This requires our sensitivity in two areas. One is *progressive revelation*. God did not reveal Himself all at once but a little at a time. Beginning with Moses and ending with the Apostle John, God progressively told us more about Himself, His character, His holiness, His attributes, and His expectations of us. He did this over 1600 years, from about 1500 B.C. to about A.D. 100.

The second area requires a bit more thought. God has given His people a somewhat different stewardship for different ages (Romans 11:25; Ephesians 1:9-10). In other words, there are different covenants or different administrations for different times. These ages are not gradual, cultural changes. Neither are they applications needed to make the Bible more palatable in our day. These are ages defined in the Bible by its authors.

It’s something like raising children. I did not give the same commands to my children when they were 3 years old that I gave them at 13 years old or 23 years old. For example, I might have told my 3-year-old daughter to not cross the street without her mother. I don’t want my daughters at 13 or 23 to keep that command. But some of my commands would be the same for all ages—for example, “Don’t use blasphemy, don’t act selfishly, or steal from your neighbor.” But all my commands could be applied because they all reflect my nature. For example, the 23 year old could apply my “don’t cross the street without your mother” command because, even though it’s for a different age, it reflects my desire for safety precautions. It might, for example, be applied by looking both ways before walking or driving across the street. But we shall talk about application later.

Here we need to recognize that the Bible describes certain ages where God’s specific code of laws changed. These are *not* different ways of salvation (which is always by grace through faith) but different commands for living.

- (1) Innocence— In the garden of Eden (Genesis 1 and 2)
- (2) Conscience— From the garden of Eden until the Flood (Genesis 3–8)
- (3) Government— From the Flood until Abraham (Genesis 9–11)
- (4) Promise— From Abraham to the Mosaic Law (Genesis 12—Exodus 19)
- (5) Law— From Mt. Sinai to the cross of Christ (Exodus 20—the Gospels)
- (6) Grace— From the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost until the Rapture of the church (Acts 2—Revelation 3)
- (7) Kingdom— The future 1000-year reign of Christ promised to Israel (Revelation 20, see also Isaiah 11, Ezekiel 40–48, Jeremiah 31:31-34, and others)



For example, God forbid Adam and Eve to eat meat, but that changed with Noah in Genesis 9. God did not promise Noah any specific land as He did Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). Abraham did not have the Law God gave Moses (for example, there is no evidence Abraham kept a Sabbath day). We live in the age of grace, where the body of believers is the church is made up of many races instead of prioritizing the Jews (Galatians 3:28). The specific commands for our age are not the 613 laws given to Israel at Mt. Sinai, but the commands given by Christ in the gospels and by the apostles in the epistles (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3 and 4; Ephesians 3:3-9). Although many of the commands for different ages are the same, they are a different law code. For example, the laws of Canada are different from the laws of the U.S.A., but they are very similar. So the laws of the different ages have many similarities, yet they are different stewardships (1 Corinthians 9:17).



### **8. The historical culture provides a relevant context if it is revealed by the author**

Cultural information is a valuable aid to understanding the Bible if, and only if, it is revealed in the Bible. And the Bible is full of cultural information. For example, Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman took on special significance when John told us *Jews have no dealings with Samaritans* (John 4:9). Cultural information given in the Bible is valuable because: (1) it's inspired by God, so we know it's accurate, and (2) we can be sure it is information the Holy Spirit wanted us to know.

Outside cultural information can be helpful for filling in the details and illustrating the passage, but it should never be used to determine the meaning, or worse, change the meaning, of a text. For example, if you have an opportunity to travel to Israel, it will make your Bible three-dimensional. The geography and topography of the land will greatly aid your visualization of the Scripture. But travel to Israel will not change the meaning of the Bible. If your guide tells you something not found in the Bible, don't use it to interpret the Bible.

If a teacher says Jesus was a stone mason because most builders were stone masons or that the eye of a needle is a small door in the city gate or other extra biblical information from Jewish or Greek culture, don't use that to determine the meaning of a biblical passage. That creates a supposed historical cultural context by which the text is to be understood. But notice what this does. It says the Holy Spirit left out some vital information needed to understand the passage. This denies the sufficiency of the Scripture, since you cannot understand it the way it was written.

### **9. Scripture interprets Scripture**

Once again, we come back to the way the Bible is different from all other literature, namely, that it has two authors—one human, one divine. The Bible is, in one sense, a library of 66 books. Each book has a message found by determining the meaning of the human author. But God is the One who supernaturally inspired each of those 66 books, so they also all have the same author—God. Therefore, the meaning of one of its human authors cannot contradict that of another one. This allows us to compare one Scripture with another.

But we must be careful not to use one passage to **determine** the meaning of another. As we shall see in the next point, the immediate context is the final arbitrator used to determine the meaning. What other passages do is put boundaries on the meaning. I recall speaking to a Jehovah's Witness who read me a verse to claim Jesus was not God. I read the verses before and after the one he used, showing his interpretation to be inconsistent with the context. He then said, "Yes, but Scripture interprets Scripture" and read me a second verse from a different book of the Bible. I also read him the context around that verse, proving his interpretation was once again not the meaning of the author. He then said, "Yes, but Scripture interprets Scripture," and read me a third verse. After doing this five times, he came back to his first verse. This is a common misuse of the "Scripture interprets Scripture" principle. This person never dealt with any passage in its own context to determine the meaning intended by the author. He just kept going to another verse, which he also used out of context.

Scripture interprets Scripture only means one passage gives direction to and puts boundaries on another. For example, how should we understand this verse? *If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book* (Revelation 22:19). However we understand it, we must not come up with an interpretation which contradicts what Jesus said in John 6:37, *All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.*

However we understand the Trinity described in John 16:13-15, it cannot contradict what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 6:4, *Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!* However we understand the predestination of Romans 8:29, it cannot contradict the free will choice of John 1:12, and vice versa. In other words, Scripture interprets Scripture in the sense of clarification, focus, and parameters, but not as a substitute for the context.

### **10. The more immediate the context, the more significant it is for understanding**

We have looked at many factors that aid in understanding a passage. We first observed things like the author's style and the type of literature he was using. We considered word studies, culture, the author's intention, and other Scripture. Now we come to the most determinative aspect of interpretation.

***The final arbiter for all interpretation  
decisions is the immediate context***

I like what Grant Osborne said:

... the immediate context is the final arbiter for all decisions regarding the meaning of a term or concept. There is no guarantee that Paul uses a term the same way in Philippians 1 as he does in Philippians 2. Language simply does not work that way, for every word has many meanings and a writer's use depends upon the present context rather than his use of it in previous contexts [*The Hermeneutical Spiral*, p. 21].

In John 1:4, we read, *In Him was life*. How should we understand the word "life"? A concordance study reveals that the word "life" is used 37 times in the Gospel of John, and 17 of them have the word "eternal" with it. And most of the others could imply eternal life. So in 1:4 does John mean "in Him was eternal life"? The problem is, the immediate context deals with Jesus being the Creator. The previous verse says, *All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being* (John 1:3). So even though John usually uses this word for eternal life, it appears from the **context** that he is saying Jesus was the source of all life, specifically, the natural life which was given to Adam in the Garden of Eden. So our word study is eclipsed by the immediate context which focuses on Jesus as the source of physical life.

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 41.*

We have defined interpretation with four key words—the **author's intended meaning**, through the **context**. Then we extended that to ten principles. Review and restate those in your own words.

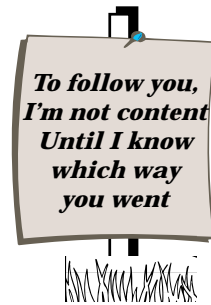
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# Application

A man, walking through a cemetery, came across a tombstone with the following words etched on it:



Next to the tombstone, someone had written a note on a scrap of paper and pinned it to the ground with a stick. It read:



We must be sure we know what an author meant before we apply his text.

Application is what bridges the gap between our world and that of the biblical author. And our worlds are different. The Bible says nothing about karate, yoga, acupuncture, genetic engineering, acid rain, or nuclear power. The Bible does not address abortion, birth control, euthanasia, leveraged buyouts, junk bonds, or managing for productivity. It does not deal with public education, prison reform, insurance, television, movies, housing, waste disposal, AIDS, arthritis, or Alzheimer's disease. [See *Living by the Book*, p. 316.] Besides that, I know of no one who eats locust and wild honey, washes their guests' feet, heals in synagogues on the Sabbath, or eats meat offered to idols.

So how do we get the truth of the Scripture into our lives today? [Everybody talks about application, but it's amazing how hard it is to find someone who has thought through just how that is done. A notable exception is Howard and William Hendricks in their book, *Living by the Book*, pages 284-340.]

## A Definition

Application is putting an interpretation into practice. Interpretation is tied to history. Application extends the author's meaning through all the centuries to today. According to the dictionary, application is "an act of putting to use" [*Webster's Dictionary*, p. 97]. So we can say,

***Application is putting the author's intended meaning to use***

Now let's flesh that out a bit.

## Ten Principles for Application

### 1. **Application does not always perform what the author commanded, but it always puts to use what the author intended**

Application answers the question, If the author of the passage we are studying were alive today, how would he respond to our situation?

***Application brings the author to the table today***

In other words, if the author lived with you this week, what kind of a letter would he write you next week?

Since application is using the author's intention, we must note the difference between **meaning**, **intention**, and **purpose**.

**Meaning** is the author's message to the specific audience of his day. Meaning is **what** the author had to say and is determined first from the immediate context, then from the surrounding context. For example, *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18) means the Israelites are to love fellow Israelites.

**Intention** is the moral, theological, and philosophical aim (mentality) the author has in mind which is manifested in a specific passage. Intention is about the mindset of **who** wrote the text, determined from the immediate and surrounding context. For example, *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18) reflects a mindset in God (and Moses) that God's people are to love one another. Specifically, from the context, this means *do not take vengeance nor bear any grudge* against each other. Notice:

***The meaning is true for one time or one situation.  
The intention is true for all times and in all situations.***

**Purpose** is the reason the author wrote this piece of literature (book, poem, parable, etc.). Purpose is about **why** the text was written. It is usually not given in the context and is unnecessary for determining either meaning or intention (unless the text itself is a purpose statement). For example, no purpose is given as to why the Israelites were to *love your neighbors as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18).

***The difference between intention and purpose is that the author's intention is always found in the context***

**Application always applies the author's intention.** We should apply his meaning and purpose only when they are the same as his intention. For example, the intention would be the same as the meaning in passages directed to the whole church age (like John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, etc.). This would be all of the New Testament except for personal commands for isolated situations, like *greet one another with a holy kiss* (Romans 16:16), *remain on at Ephesus* (1 Timothy 1:3), and *help Zenas the lawyer* (Titus 3:13). The intention would be the same as the purpose when we are considering a purpose passage (like John 20:30-31). Much of the time it seems like we are applying the meaning (as in most of the epistles). But that can be deceiving. Actually, we must **always** apply the author's intention. It's just that the meaning and intention are the same for most of the New Testament.

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 42.*

Read Genesis 1:28, then write down three statements about the phrase, *be fruitful and multiply*:

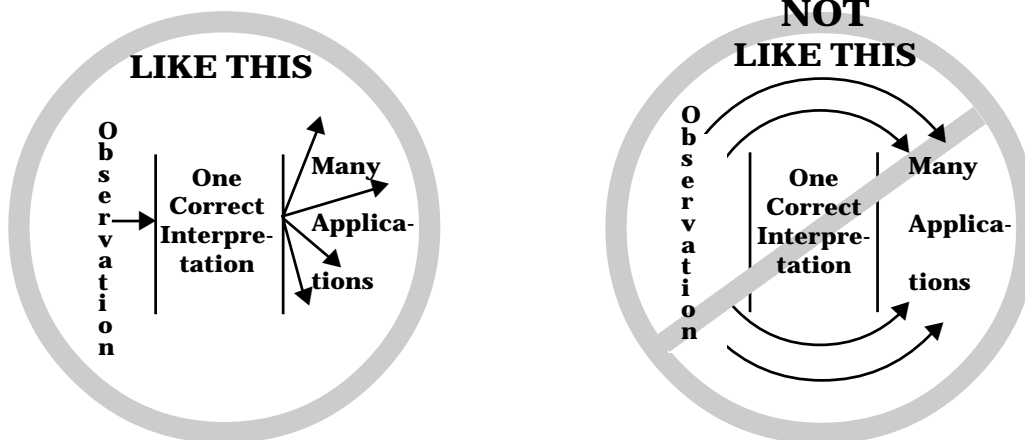
- (1) The author's meaning
- (2) The author's intention
- (3) The author's purpose

Next, read 1 Corinthians 8:13 and write down the same three things:

- (1) The author's meaning
- (2) The author's intention
- (3) The author's purpose

## 2. All applications must apply interpretations

We observe in order to interpret. We interpret in order to apply. We can only interpret what we observe, and we can only apply what we interpret. So the process is:



There is a popular teaching which implies “because Moses was individually led by God, we should all look for the individual leading of God for our lives today.” It’s clear from Exodus 3 that Moses was individually led by God, in his case, through a burning bush. But that’s just an observation. It requires an interpretation before we can apply it. We must use the ten principles of the last section to determine two things: first, what Moses meant, and second, what he intended. Clearly Moses meant to describe his experiences at the burning bush. But what was his intention? Did he intend for us to understand that we should all look for the individual

leading of God? If we brought Moses to the table of our discussion, would he say he expects all of us to be individually led by God? Or would he say that he intended to show us a unique experience authenticating him as the unique leader through whom God was giving His revelation to Israel? Whatever we conclude, we have to find the author's intended meaning through the context before we can apply it.

Does Jesus' doing miracles mean we should all do miracles? Do the specific ceremonies prescribed for the priests of Israel mean all churches today should be liturgical? Can we conclude that Jesus' use of stories means that all teaching should include stories? Not unless we have interpreted some passage to say it was the author's intended meaning.

If observations were to be applied, then all examples would be commands. If all examples were commands, we should all wear sandals because Jesus did, eat locust and wild honey because John the Baptist did, and be celibate because Paul was. But that does not mean no example is a command or that examples should not be followed. It depends on the interpretation of the example. If the author intended us to take it as a command, then the example is a command. And, of course, the final determination of that comes through the context. For instance, in Acts 2:42, I believe we have an example which the author (Luke) intended us to understand as a command. It reads, *And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* It seems to me that Luke intended that to be a model for the gathering of believers. If so, the example is a command because it is not just **observed** as happening but **interpreted** as both the meaning and the intention of the author for that to be normal for the church. Therefore, we can **apply** it by saying that the church should gather for one or more of those four purposes.

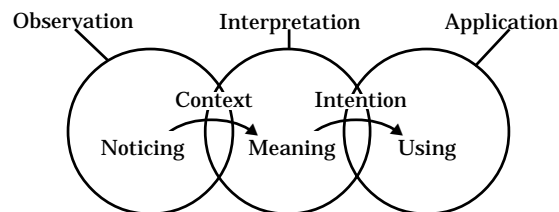
## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 42.*

Read Leviticus 19:18 and attempt to make an application from your observation. Then do the same with verse 19. Why does it seem like we can apply an observation of verse 18 but not verse 19?

### 3. If it cannot be interpreted, then it cannot be applied

Let's think through the analysis process again. **Observation** notices what is there in the passage. **Interpretation** uses the context to determine two things: First, the **meaning** for the author's audience—specific people at a specific time in a specific place. Second, using that meaning and re-examining the context, interpretation determines the **intention** in the author's mind which is true for other people, at other times, in other places. This intention launches us into an **application** which puts that intention to use in our lives today ("Therefore, I must ..."). Since application always applies the author's intention (which comes from the meaning and its context), if the intention cannot be determined, then no application can be made. So interpretation, both meaning and intention, are essential for application.



Something like 99% of the Bible can be clearly interpreted. The author's intended meaning is usually clear and obvious. But once in a while, we come across a passage we cannot interpret. In Revelation 1:10, John said, *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.* Personally, I cannot determine what he meant by "the Lord's day." Many like to tell us it's Sunday, but Sunday-keeping as a specific exclusive Christian day was not established until Constantine in the 300s. It could be Sunday (see Acts 20:7), but the apostles generally kept Saturday (the Sabbath) as a special day (Acts 17:2; see also Acts 13:14; 16:13). Others suggest that the Apostle John was referring to the prophecy of the End Times. So did John mean Saturday, Sunday, or the End Times? I do not know of any way to be sure. Therefore, I can't apply the passage. If a passage cannot be interpreted, it cannot be applied.

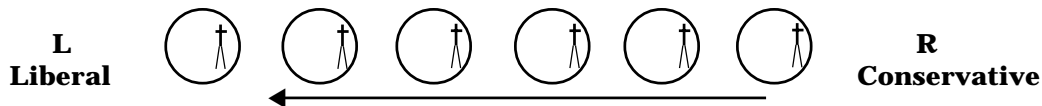
## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 42.*

Romans 12:20 gives two commands and a result or a reason for the commands. Apply the result/reason at the end of the verse.

### 4. Never change an author's intent because of what is going on in our culture

I'd like to offer two general observations about this. First, societies tend to move from some sort of conservative principles to some sort of liberalizing of those principles until they self-destruct. A recent example of this is the brief 70-year rise and fall of Soviet Communism. It began under Lenin in 1917. It was fleshed-out under Stalin, began deteriorating under Khrushchev, fell apart under Brezhnev, finally being dismantled by Gorbachev and Reagan in 1989.



Second, the religion of a society will usually move in the same direction and at the same speed as the general society, but on the conservative edge of wherever its culture is moving at the time. So if we look at the changes in morality being adopted by the general society, we can quite accurately predict what will be supported by their religion a few years down the road. For example, in 1917, many Russian Orthodox priests went to prison rather than follow Communism. By the time I went to the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, many of the priests were KGB informers. They moved with the culture but on the conservative edge of it. When I grew up in the 1950s, the morals being taught in the public schools were very similar (only a bit more liberal) than those taught in my conservative church. The same is true today.

The general culture of America and “the West” today focuses on tolerance—not only of races, creeds, and nationality, but also of moral, ethical standards. Divorce and remarriage are considered a solution not a problem. The role of women is to be the same as men, and any criticism of homosexuality is condemned. So where is the church of “the West”? Just a little behind that, going in the same direction but on the conservative edge. At the time of this writing, the western church generally (there are always exceptions, of course) accepts divorce/remarriage and is trying to justify women having all leadership roles equal to men. We haven't yet accepted homosexuality (although we are working on it with statements like, “We have to hate the sin but love the sinner”).

In interpretation principle #8, we demonstrated that cultural information outside of the Bible should not be used to interpret the Bible. It is also true that our culture should not be used to avoid applying the Bible. For example, some suggest that not accepting divorce and remarriage, calling homosexuality a sin, and not allowing women elders is out of step with our current culture. But application has to do with putting to use what the biblical author intended, not compromising it to fit our society. When we do that, the Bible is no longer our authority. One might argue that telling the truth, loving your enemy, doing good to those who spitefully use you, and giving your shirt to whoever demands your coat is also out of step with our culture. The Bible was out of step with its own culture, too. Forbidding Israel to marry foreign wives, avoiding everything the Canaanites were doing that had anything to do with idolatry, and not eating certain “unclean” food was contrary to the cultural times of the Old Testament. Recommending celibacy and forbidding the eating of meat offered to idols or things strangled was also out of step with the New Testament cultural times. That's because God is directing us to His righteousness, not accommodating Himself to our ever changing culture.

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 43.*

Do an analysis of 1 Peter 3:1-2. Include five steps: (1) **observe** what Peter said in this sentence. After the observation, note (2) **the context** (especially in verse 6) before you state (3) **the interpretation**. Next, state (4) the **author's intention** before giving (5) an **application**. From now on, it will be helpful to use the format on page 36 of this studybook.

### 5. Claim promises, but not someone else's promises

We cannot claim promises made to other people. Remember, when studying the Bible, we are reading someone else's mail. The author may make promises to specific people or groups which (because of the inspiration of the Spirit of God) must be **applied** to us, but they are not promises **made** to us. For example, 2 Chronicles 7:14 reads, *if ... My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* Many claim this for their own country. That's probably because they are going from observation to application, without doing interpretation. This promise was only made to the Jews and concerning the land of Israel. In no sense did God promise the blessing of 2 Chronicles 7:14 to **any** land that was obedient to Him.

Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would bring to their mind all that He said (John 14:26). That is a promise for the apostles. In no sense is that a promise for you and I. The Holy Spirit is not going to inspire us to remember the words Jesus spoke during His incarnation on earth.

These promises made to others are, however, to be **applied** by all of us. Try to get out of the habit of saying certain passages don't apply today. Because they are inerrant revelation from God, we can learn about the heart of God and then apply that to our lives. 2 Chronicles 7:14 must be interpreted as its **meaning** is a promise for Israel and its **intent** is to reveal God's interest in our humility, repentance, and seeking Him. Then it can be **applied** to us according to the promises given to the church age. One application might be, "I should humble myself, seek God, and turn from my sin (stating the specific sin in my life), so that God will forgive me and restore His fellowship with me" (see 1 John 1:6-9).

The **meaning** of John 14:26 is a promise specifically given to the apostles. The **intention** is to show that it's important to God that we know what Christ said and did. One **application** could be, "The same Holy Spirit, who would bring to the apostles' remembrance all the things Christ said to them, will also help me understand what they wrote" (see 1 Corinthians 2:12).

There are also promises in the Bible given to all believers. They can be applied to us just as they could be to the believers to whom they were given, because both the **meaning** and the **intent** of the author (the interpretation) was for these to be understood as true for all believers. For example,

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).*

*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:1-2).*

*He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; {He is} a shield to those who walk in integrity (Proverbs 2:7).*

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).*

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).*

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 43.*

Do an analysis of John 14:14, using all five elements (the three steps of observation, interpretation, and application, plus the two transitions of context and intention). Be sure to include John 14:13 and 15:16 in your context.

### 6. We should keep the commands given to all believers of this present age

The same thing that is true for promises is also true for commands. Many commands given to those living in earlier ages have been repealed. So which commands should we keep? Answer—The ones given to the age in which we live. We keep nine of the Ten Commandments (all except the Sabbath) because they are repeated for our age. We keep Leviticus 19:18, *you shall love your neighbor as yourself* because it is repeated for our age (Matthew 19:19), but we do not keep Leviticus 19:19, *you shall not ... wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together* because Christ ended the Law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3 and 4), and this Law was not repeated for the church age.

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 43.*

Use all five elements to analyze 1 Samuel 15:3

### 7. All examples must be applied, but never let an example negate a command

An example is harder to apply than a command. When the Bible gives a command, it must simply be kept, unless, as stated above, it is for another age or a particular person or group. But examples are different. Some are meant to be followed and some are not. The answer to this difficulty is the same as always. First, a passage must be interpreted. The author's meaning and intention must be determined. In the case of examples, we must discern (from the context) the point being made by the author through the example he uses.

The author of Genesis gave us an account of Abraham's obedience in chapters 12 and 22. It would seem the author meant for us to follow those examples. But on two occasions Abraham lies about his wife, saying she was his sister (Genesis 12:13 and 20:2). An interpretation of these passages would conclude the author's meaning was that Abraham lied. But his intention was not for us to follow those lies but consider them as a warning. So we should not apply them as examples to follow.

But some are not so clear. In both testaments and in every age, God condemns lying and deception. Satan is a liar (John 8:44) and God is truth (John 14:6). But there are occasions in the Bible where the truth was certainly concealed or hidden, and God rewarded those doing so. For example, there are the midwives of Exodus 1:15-21, Rahab hiding the Jewish spies—and the truth about the fact that she was hiding the spies (Joshua 2:1-6), and God's advice to Samuel (hiding the truth of his mission to anoint David king—1 Samuel 16:1-2). We need to realize that examples never take precedence over commands. So it is never correct to apply these passages by saying it is okay to lie. Why? Because no matter what situation we are reading about, we know there is a command in every age not to lie and the character of God demands it.

With an example, we must read the narrative, the parable, the poem, or the story in order to discern the intent of the author. With a command, that is usually clear from the statement itself in the immediate context. So the commands of Scripture must always govern the application of examples, never the other way around.

***A command must take precedent over an example because the interpretation of the command is more clear***



## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 44.*

Use the five elements to analyze 2 Kings 10:18-19.

### 8. **There is only one correct interpretation, but there can be many correct applications**

Since we assume an author is not schizophrenic, he only had one meaning in mind. Any other interpretation is wrong. So if you and I come up with differing interpretations of a passage, there are only three possibilities. Either (1) I'm wrong, (2) you're wrong, or (3) we are both wrong. But we cannot both be right if our interpretations contradict each other. The only right understanding is that in the author's mind. But applications are different. As long as we are both applying the same interpretation, we can do it in a multitude of different ways.

Let's apply a verse. Genesis 35:2 reads, *So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments."* I think we would agree on the interpretation of this verse. Jacob finally acted like the family patriarch he was supposed to be. He took charge of his family and told them to get rid of all their foreign gods. He commanded them to get rid of all evidence and any relic which smacks of idolatry. Verse 4 says they even gave him their earrings.

Application is that process where I put into my life the heart of God, revealed through the words composed by the human author of the biblical text. So how should I apply this idea God revealed through Jacob? Well, if I lived in India, I might apply this by getting rid of a stone or snake which I used as an idol. If I lived in Africa, I might apply it by stopping my visits to the witch doctor or not wearing the charms the witch doctor gave me to ward off evil spirits. In America, I might apply this verse by not reading the horoscope, by getting rid of New Age jewelry, or by avoiding pantheistic exercise programs. Each of these applications are quite different, but they put to use the mind of God as revealed to Moses, who inerrantly composed the story of Jacob.

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 44.*

Use the five elements to analyze John 13:14, but instead of just one, give three possible applications.

### 9. **Application applies but does not necessarily perform personal commands**

How do we know that we should practice head covering (1 Corinthians 11:6-10), male leadership (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2), and monogamous heterosexual marriage (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 3:2), but not necessarily wear sandals (Acts 7:33), robes (Acts 7:58), dress and eat like John the Baptist (Matthew 3:4), or greet one another with a holy kiss (1 Corinthians 16:20; Romans 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:26)? The answer comes (as always) through the author's intention, discovered through the context of what he wrote. Is the author simply mentioning it as a personal note, as part of the reality of the situation, or is he making a case for it (as with head covering in 1 Corinthians 11:10)?

All Scripture must be applied (2 Timothy 3:16), and that includes commands given to other people. But first those commands must be interpreted to determine the intent of the author. In the area of personal commands, one thing to look for (in the context) is the way this command is presented. The question we must ask is,

***Does the author make a moral or theological case for it?***

But even personal commands must be applied according to the author's intention. Here are possible applications of some personal commands:

<b>Observaton</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Application</b>
<i>greet one another with a holy kiss</i> (1 Corinthians 16:20; Romans 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:26)	Believers in Corinth, Rome, and Thessalonica were to do this as an expression of their love for one another.	We should visibly express our love for one another in our greeting—hugs, handshakes, high-fives, whatever.
<i>Remain on at Ephesus</i> (1 Timothy 1:3)	Timothy was to stay in Ephesus until his job of instructing and appointing elders was complete.	We should remain in whatever ministry we have until it's complete or we have completed it to the best of our ability.
<i>greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus, and his sister</i> (Romans 16:15)	The Romans were to deliver personal greetings to these people Paul knew.	We should send our personal greetings to people so they know we are interested in them as individuals.
<i>pray, lifting up holy hands</i> (1 Timothy 2:8)	Timothy was to instruct the believing men in Ephesus, who prayed by raising their hands, to focus on holiness	We should focus on holiness in whatever manner we pray, such as when lifing our hands.

## Let's Review

*The author's answers are in Appendix B, page 44.*

Do an analysis of Matthew 10:5-6.

### 10. Application must be aware of what is going on in our lives

In order to apply—put to use—the author's intended meaning, we need to know not only the author's meaning but our own situation.

In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul told Timothy, *pay close attention to yourself and your teaching*. Notice the order—first yourself, then your teaching. One thing which will aid our application is to take an inventory of our assets and liabilities. Hendricks wrote,

Let me give you two questions. First, What are your assets? What have you got going for you? Could you write down your three greatest assets on a three-by-five-inch card right now? (In my experience, most people have a hard time doing that.) Second, What are your liabilities? What are your limitations? What is your greatest hindrance to growth?

Now put these two together, and you'll see the value in application. If you know your assets, it will develop your confidence. If you know your liabilities, it will develop your faith. Your assets tell you what God has done for you. Your liabilities tell you what God needs to develop in you. The reason most of us don't grow more is that we really don't know what we need (*Living by the Book*, p. 294).

Think this through in various areas of your life. For example, you might list your three biggest assets, then list how you might use those to serve your spouse, your children, your grandchildren, your parents, your fellow believers, and your enemies. Next, think of your three greatest liabilities and list how they are affecting those same people. Third, ask which of those assets you can use more effectively and which of those liabilities you can change. Then, as you read Scripture and determine its author intended meaning, apply (put to use) that idea in those areas.

Picture yourself as a believer standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10).

***What should you emphasize and what should you change in order for Jesus to say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?***

## **Let's Review**

*No answer to this review is given.*

- (1) Write out your three greatest assets—those positive things about you that are of greatest value to the Kingdom of God with which you serve your spouse, your children, your community of believers, and yourself.
- (2) Write out your three biggest liabilities—those negative things about you that affect those same people.
- (3) Write out three things you might be able to change about yourself that uses your assets to overcome your liabilities.
- (4) Write down three things you will probably not be able to change about yourself that should change but require the grace of God and prayer.

# Analyzing a Biblical Passage

Make copies of this page to use when analyzing a passage

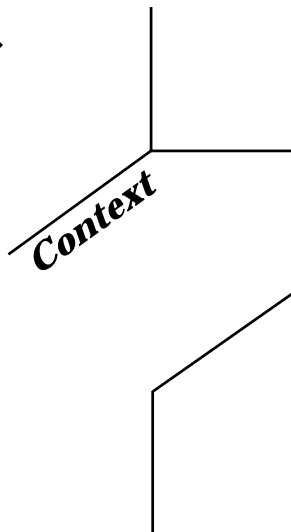
Observation	Interpretation	Application
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notice the kind of biblical literature this is part of.</li> <li>2. Identify the style of literature being used.</li> <li>3. Notice how this relates to the theme of the book.</li> <li>4. Notice the immediate context, especially the paragraph.</li> <li>5. Ask the basic (W<sub>5</sub>H) questions.</li> <li>6. See if this is an addition, a development, a cause and effect, a pivot, a contrast, a comparison, or a parenthesis.</li> <li>7. Notice the significance of each word.</li> <li>8. Identify any key word(s).</li> <li>9. Relate each word to the one before it and after it.</li> <li>10. Notice the phrase each word is in.</li> </ol>	<p><b><i>The author</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He expressed his meaning in words.</li> <li>2. What he meant is the only right meaning.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>His Intention</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Understanding is in the mind of the author.</li> <li>4. He is to be understood in a plain, ordinary, normal way.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>His Meaning</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Purpose does not determine meaning.</li> <li>6. Move from the known to the unknown.</li> <li>7. Rightly dividing the Scripture.</li> </ol> <p><b><i>His Context</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Only biblical culture determines the text's meaning.</li> <li>9. Scripture interprets Scripture.</li> <li>10. Application is to our own situation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring the intention of the author "to the table," to address us today.</li> <li>2. Apply interpretations, not observations.</li> <li>3. If you cannot interpret it, don't apply it.</li> <li>4. Don't ignore the author's intent just because it offends our culture.</li> <li>5. Claim promises if, and only if, they are for all believers of our age.</li> <li>6. Keep commands if, and only if, they are for all believers of our age.</li> <li>7. Apply examples and commands, but don't let examples negate commands.</li> <li>8. Remember— one interpretation, many applications.</li> <li>9. Apply, but don't perform, personal commands.</li> <li>10. Application is to our own situation.</li> </ol>

## The Text Reads ... (write out the verse you wish to analyze)

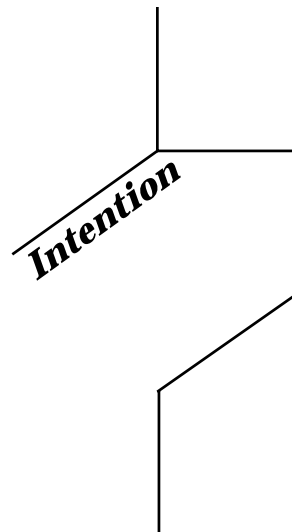
"

"

**He said ...**



**He meant ...**



**I must ...**

# Appendix A

## *The author's answers and explanations*

- 1.** B is correct. 2 Samuel 23:1-3 describes how David wrote the Psalms. *The Spirit of God spoke by me*. The inerrant writing of revelation is inspiration. A is incorrect because it is not the best answer. True, David described revelation from God, but he said more than that. He said that God guided his writing in the Psalms. Written revelation is inspiration. C is incorrect because illumination has to do with our reading and understanding the text, and that is not discussed in this passage.
- 2.** A is correct. 2 Timothy 3:16 describes the inspiration of the Old Testament, since that's clearly what Paul had in mind. B is incorrect because much of the New Testament was not yet written. C is incorrect for the same reason as B. However, if we include John 14:26 and 2 Peter 3:15-16, all of the writing of the apostles and Paul's writings are part of Scripture, so the New Testament is also inspired.
- 3.** C is correct. The Bible is a collection of the 66 books God has inspired throughout history, from Moses through the Apostle John. A is incorrect because it implies there are other inspired books from God. B is incorrect only in that C is the better answer. The Bible is only one book because we bind the 66 books from God under one cover.
- 4.** B is correct. The primary reason to study prophecy is because it confirms what God has said in the past in the Scripture is true (Isaiah 48:5). Prophecy has been fulfilled literally according to the author's intended meaning, confirming the truth of what God has said in the past. It also shows us we should believe it literally, i.e., according to the author's intended meaning. A is incorrect because, although unfulfilled prophecy predicts the future, that's not the reason to study prophecy. C is incorrect because the purpose of prophecy is to validate the whole inspired revelation of God, not just the Gospel.
- 5.** B is correct. Archaeology confirms the fact that the Bible is accurate. No archaeological discovery has ever disproved a biblical statement. A is incorrect because proof of the truth of the Bible includes a wider scope of evidence than just archaeology. C is incorrect because our understanding of the Bible must come from the author's intended meaning in the context, not extrabiblical archaeology.
- 6.** A is correct. The LXX is a Greek copy of the Old Testament in 250 B.C. The Dead Sea Scrolls give us much earlier copies of some Old Testament books, but not all of them. The earliest Hebrew copy we have of Genesis, for example, is in the 900s A.D. But the LXX was copied from a Hebrew manuscript of Genesis existing in 250 B.C. Even though we don't have that 250 B.C. Hebrew copy of Genesis, we know it existed and what it said because of the LXX. B is incorrect. The Greek translation used by Jesus and the apostles was the LXX, but only the Hebrew autograph it came from was inerrant. C is incorrect because Ezra lived 200 years before the LXX translation was made.
- 7.** C is correct. The most significant difference between my Bible and the Greek manuscripts (in the case of the New Testament) is that the New Testament was written in Greek, and these are Greek copies of that Greek original. A is incorrect because the Greek manuscripts are not inspired of God. They are very accurate copies of the original, but only the original author was inspired by God, not those who copied it. B is incorrect because the author's intended meaning in the context can be determined just fine from my translation of the Bible. I don't need to know Greek to understand the New Testament.

# Appendix B

*The author's answers and explanations*

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 12

Name the 7 kinds of books in the Bible with a brief description of each—

Old Testament			New Testament			
<b>History</b> True stories of what actually took place as God developed the human race and the Jewish race	<b>Wisdom</b> Poetic literature written to help us live wisely and righteously	<b>Prophecy</b> Predictive literature listing specific future events unfulfilled at the time of their writing	<b>Gospels</b> Four different accounts of the Good News of the life of Christ	<b>Acts</b> Volume 2 of Luke's gospel, the history of the early church	<b>Epistles</b> Letters written by the apostles, some to individuals, some to city churches, to be circulated among believers	<b>Apocalypse</b> Future predictive events, told in figurative language, of a sudden and violent end to this present world

Name the 7 styles of literature used in the Bible—

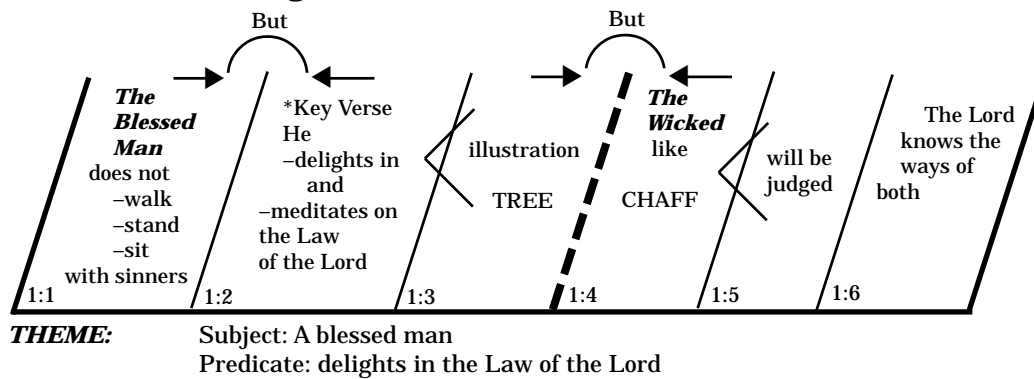
Name	Briefly describe that style of literature	Where can we find an example of this style in the Bible
<b>1</b> Prose	Ordinary, nonfiction, literature which uses straightforward logical explanations	Mosaic Law Epistles
<b>2</b> Narrative	Autobiographies, biographies, national histories, or other events presented in the form of a story	Genesis Acts
<b>3</b> Poetry	Figurative literature which expresses experiences, ideas, or emotions in a style which is more intense and imaginative than prose	Psalms, various songs (such as Judges 5)
<b>4</b> Parable	Short stories about familiar things which make a moral or religious point—a simile extended into a story and pre-announced as a parable	Matthew 13 Matthew 25:11-28
<b>5</b> Allegory	Short stories, with a hidden moral or religious meaning, which do not announce themselves. They are metaphors extended into stories.	2 Samuel 12:1-4 Proverbs 5
<b>6</b> Hyperbole	A conscious exaggeration, an overstatement purposefully made to increase the effect of what is being said	Judges 7:12 Matthew 5:29
<b>7</b> Euphemism	A substitution of a more gentle or modest expression for one considered socially more harsh or offensive	John 11:11 1 Corinthians 15:51

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 15

### Ten readings of Psalm 1—

- Reading #1 **Generally**, Psalm 1 is about the blessed man.  
 Reading #2 What's **repeated** is what the blessed man does not do (walk, stand, or sit with sinners).  
 Reading #3 The **motivation** of the author is to encourage his readers to be among the blessed men.  
 Reading #4 The **solution** is to delight in the Law of the Lord.  
 Reading #5 There are no **commands** in this psalm.  
 Reading #6 The **key verse** of this psalm is verse 2.  
 Reading #7 Each verse is a **paragraph division** in this psalm.  
 Reading #8 There are no **section divisions** in this psalm.  
 Reading #9 There is one **main division** between verses 3 and 4.  
 Reading #10 The **theme** is: A blessed man (subject) delights in the Law of the Lord (predicate).

A **chart** of Psalm 1 might look like this:

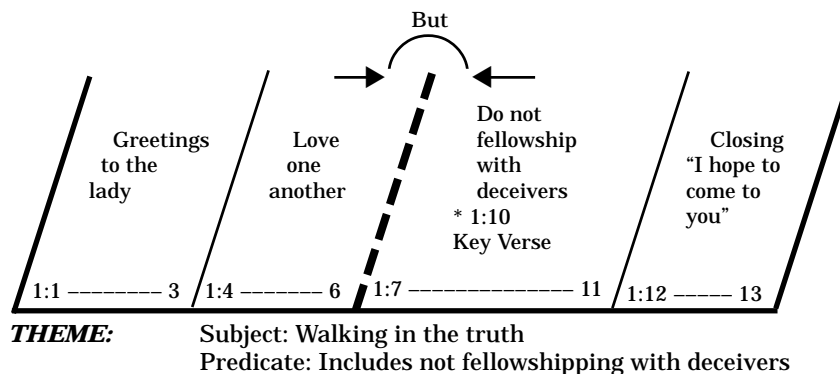


## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 17

### Ten readings of 2 John—

- Reading #1 **Generally**, 2 John is about how to respond to deceivers.  
 Reading #2 What's **repeated** is walking in the truth.  
 Reading #3 John's **motivation** is to correct a lady who is not discerning between fellowshiping with believers and deceivers (like the cults).  
 Reading #4 The **basic solution** is to fellowship with the truth (and true believers), not with deceivers.  
 Reading #5 John's **specific command** is "do not receive him [the deceiver] into your house" (verse 10).  
 Reading #6 The **key verse** is verse 10.  
 Reading #7 The **paragraph divisions** are after verses 3, 6, and 11.  
 Reading #8 There are no **section divisions**.  
 Reading #9 There is one **main division** between verses 6 and 7.  
 Reading #10 The **theme** is: Walking in the truth (subject) includes not fellowshiping with deceivers (predicate)

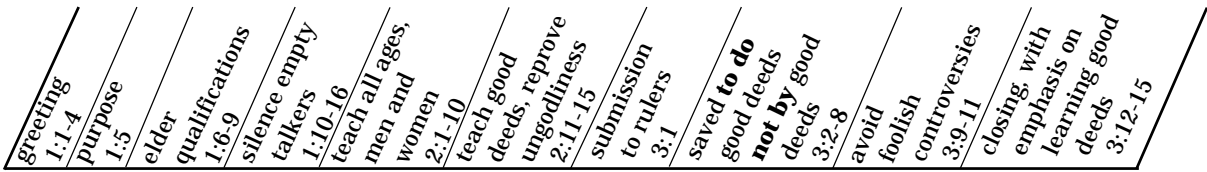
A **chart** of 2 John might look like this:



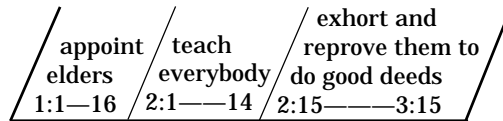
# Answers to "Let's Review" on pages 17-18

## Ten readings of Titus—

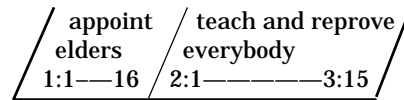
- Reading #1 **Generally**, Titus is about establishing order among believers.  
 Reading #2 **Repeated** are: good leadership (chapter 1), good teaching (chapter 2), and good deeds (1:16 and chapter 3).  
 Reading #3 Paul's **motivation** is: "to set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city" (1:5) and "... speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds" (3:8).  
 Reading #4 The **solution** is: appoint elders (1:5); speak things fitting for sound doctrine (2:1); teach older men to teach young men and bondslaves, and older women to teach young women (2:1-10).  
 Reading #5 The **commands** are: appoint elders (1:3); speak sound doctrine (2:1); exhort, reprove with all authority (2:15); remind them (3:1); and avoid foolish disputes about the Law (3:9).  
 Reading #6 The **key verse** of Titus is 2:14. The key passage is 2:11-14.  
 Reading #7 The **paragraph divisions** of Titus are:



Reading #8 The **section divisions** of Titus are:

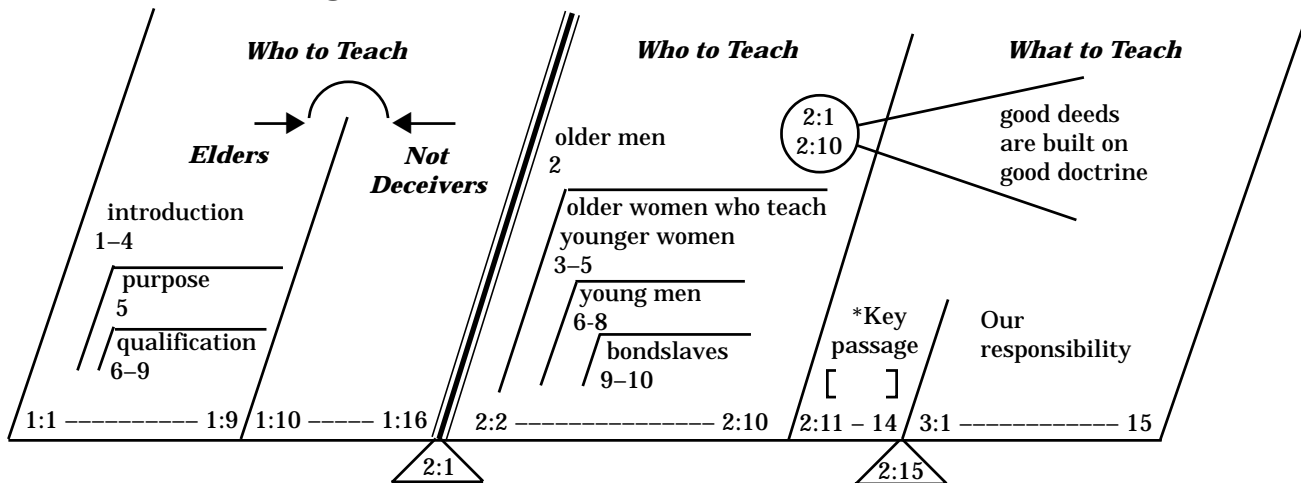


Reading #9 The **main division** of Titus is:



Reading #10 The **theme** is: Good deeds (subject) are built upon good doctrine (predicate).

A **chart** of Titus might look like this:



**THEME:** Subject: Good deeds  
 Predicate: are built upon good doctrine



## Answers to "Let's" Review on page 20

### 25 Observations from Titus 2:12—

- (1) This is part of a long sentence (verses 11-14) about the grace of God which (1) brought salvation to all men (v. 11), (2) instructed us (vv. 12-13), and (3) provided a Savior who gave Himself for us (v. 14).
- (2) This verse develops the subject of the book—good deeds.
- (3) This is a prose style—no figures of speech here.
- (4) This is part of an apostolic epistle.
- (5) This is a personal epistle written to one man—Titus.
- (6) This verse is about *what* Paul said God is teaching us. Where? When? Why? and How? are not discussed in this verse.
- (7) This verse is a development of the “grace of God” introduced in verse 11.
- (8) This verse tells us one thing which the grace of God did was to instruct us. “Instruct” is the key word of this verse.
- (9) The instruction here is to “*us*.”
- (10) There are five specific instructions in this verse.
- (11) The first two of the five instructions are of things we should deny, i.e., refuse to let into our lifestyles.
- (12) The first is ungodliness.
- (13) The next word “and” indicates the addition of another thing we are to deny.
- (14) “Worldly” is a modifying or descriptive adverb.
- (15) The second command is a specific denial of worldliness with respect to “desires.”
- (16) The next “and” introduces the third instruction.
- (17) “To live” indicates that the grace of God instructs us how to live.
- (18) The third command tells us that we are to live “sensibly.”
- (19) The fourth command is a second way to live— “righteously.” The word “live” is not repeated but it’s implied.
- (20) The next “and” is an addition of the fifth and last instruction of this verse.
- (21) The word “live” is again implied, i.e., we are to live “godly.”
- (22) The five instructions of this verse are for us “in the present age.”
- (23) The age being addressed is “the present” one.
- (24) The present time referred to is called an “age.”
- (25) The verse outlines like this: “The grace of God” (verse 11)

instructs us:

- to deny:
  - 1—ungodliness and
  - 2—worldly desiresand
- to live:
  - 1—sensibly
  - 2—righteously, and
  - 3—godlyin this present age

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 26

We have defined interpretation with four key words—the *author's intended meaning*, through the *context*. Then we extended that to 10 principles. Review and restate those in your own words.

1. *The meaning of the words is in how they are used by the author.*
2. *There is only one correct interpretation—the author's.*
3. *What is intended to be communicated is in the mind of the author.*
4. *The author's intentions are always revealed normally, not allegorically.*
5. *Meaning is not to be determined by purpose.*
6. *Meaning is understood from the known to the unknown.*
7. *Meaning is specific for each era (or dispensation).*
8. *Biblically revealed culture helps determine biblical meaning.*
9. *Scripture helps interpret Scripture.*
10. *The immediate context casts the deciding vote.*

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 28

### *Application Principle #1*

#### Regarding Genesis 1:28—

*And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth"* [emphasis mine].

- (1) The **meaning** is that God is commanding Adam and Eve to have children, who will have children, who will ultimately fill the earth.
- (2) The **intention** is the value of children and the virtue of having children.
- (3) The **purpose** is possibly to fill the earth.

#### Regarding 1 Corinthians 8:13—

*Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.*

- (1) The **meaning** is that Paul is telling the Corinthian believers that he would not eat meat (from the context, probably referring to meat offered to idols), if it caused a fellow believer to stumble.
- (2) The **intention** is that Paul does not want to cause a fellow believer to stumble in his faith.
- (3) The **purpose** is the same as the intention. This is one of the few passages where the author is stating his purpose for the chapter. So the purpose is that Paul does not want to cause a fellow believer to stumble in his faith.

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 29

### *Application Principle #2*

#### Regarding Leviticus 19:18-19—

*... you shall love your neighbor as yourself ... you shall not ... wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.*

Observations can never be applied without first interpreting them. Leviticus 19:18 sounds like we can apply the observation—God told them, "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" We are tempted to immediately write an application—I must love my neighbor as myself. Actually, though, the only reason we do that is because it sounds right. But suppose we observe part of the next verse (19) which says, *You shall not ... wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.* We soon realize our observation-to-application principle does not work. Our application would be—I must not wear clothing made of cotton and polyester, wool and cotton, rayon and silk, or whatever. This would eliminate most of the clothes available today. Since that doesn't sound right, we often fall into the trap of saying, "Well, that verse doesn't apply today." Wrong! (See 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; and Matthew 5:19.) The answer is that all passages must be interpreted before they are applied.

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 30

### *Application Principle #3*

#### Regarding Romans 12:20—

*But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.*

It's easy to apply the two commands of the verse because the author's meaning and intention are easy to understand and nearly the same. But what does Paul mean when he says, *for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head*? He quotes Proverbs 25:21-22, but I personally don't know what that statement means in either place. Does it have to do with judgment? Conviction? Motivation? or something else? I have no idea. I have read many different interpretations, but none satisfy me. Therefore, I can apply the two commands in the first part of the verse but not the last statement.

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 31

### Application Principle #4

**Observation**—In 1 Peter 3:1-2, Peter said, *wives be submissive to your own husbands ...even if [they] are disobedient to the Word with chaste and respectful behavior.*

The **context** in the following verses describe submission around *the hidden person of the heart*. Peter's example in verse 6 is Sarah, who lived 2000 years before Peter, in a completely different culture. She was a beduin, wandering around Canaan, living in a tent. Peter was a businessman. He and his audience lived in houses in cities, governed by the Roman Empire. Yet he considered Sarah a relevant model for his culture.

**Interpretation:** The **meaning** is that Peter expected the wives, in the churches to whom he was writing, who had non-Christian or unbiblically acting Christian husbands, to submit to those husbands, in the sense of having *chaste and respectful behavior* which reflects a *gentle and quiet spirit*. Peter's **intention** is for women with bad husbands to act biblically, with chaste, respectful, gentle, and quiet spirits, not to react with a demanding spirit. In other words, wives are to look vertically to God, not horizontally at their bad husbands, to govern their behavior.

**Application:** I (being a man) must encourage wives with disobedient husbands to not react in kind but in the context of a chaste, respectful, gentle, and quiet spirit.

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 32

### Application Principle #5

**Observation:** In John 14:14, Jesus said, *If you ask anything, I will do it.* The only qualification here is *in My name.*

**Context:** Jesus is addressing the 11 apostles after they ate the Passover.

**Interpretation:** The **meaning** is that Jesus told the apostles "if" (meaning "whenever") they ask Him for anything, He will do it for them. "In My name" is probably a way of saying they should address the prayer to Him. The **intention** is that Jesus is interested in answering prayers which are in the context of "in His name," "that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (14:13), those He "chose" and "appointed," and bearing eternal "fruit" (15:16).

**Application:** I (and all those Christ has chosen and appointed) must pray to Jesus in His name for things which glorify the Father and bring about remaining (eternal) fruit. [The common mistake here is to go from observation to application and say Jesus promised to do whatever any believer asks Him to do.]

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 32

### Application Principle #6

**Observation:** In 1 Samuel 15:3, the text says to *go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.*

**Context:** God is telling Saul to kill the Amalekites in accordance with the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 7:2-6; 12:2-3; and 20:16-18).

**Interpretation:** The **meaning** is that God told Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites. The **intention** is that the author is showing that God's way of dealing with the influence of sin and evil is to completely remove it.

**Application:** I must remove those things in my life which will sooner or later tempt me to sin.

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 33

### Application Principle #7

**Observation:** In 2 Kings 10:18-19, Jehu summoned the prophets, priests, and worshippers of Baal, telling them he had a sacrifice for Baal, but he did it in cunning.

**Context:** Jehu, the new king of Israel, called together the leaders and worshippers of the bad religion, telling them He planned to do a sacrifice to Baal. But it's not true.

**Interpretation:** The *meaning* is that Jehu concealed the fact that he planned to kill all the Baal worshippers. The *intention* is that the author is telling us, through this example, that every believer should take a severe stand against idol worship and other forms of idolatry.

**Application:** I must take a stand, forbidding any influence from the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, or Christian Scientists (for example) in my house.

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 33

### Application Principle #8

**Observation:** In John 13:14, we read that the Lord and Teacher washed the disciples' feet, so they should wash one another's feet.

**Context:** This is part of the Upper Room Discourse where Jesus, the Lord and Teacher of the apostles, took the position of a household servant. During this process, He discussed the subject of following His example as their Lord.

**Interpretation:** The *meaning* is that they were to recognize this metaphor of footwashing as a mentality of serving with which the apostles were to lead the church. The *intention* was that Jesus intended serving, as a slave would do in a household, to be the mental model for leadership in the church.

**Application:** I must look at any leadership I have among believers as one of serving them like a household slave.

## Answers to "Let's Review" on page 34

### Application Principle #9

**Observation:** Matthew 10:5-6 says that Jesus sent the 12 out after instructing them. He told them to not go in the way of the Gentiles and to not enter a Samaritan city.

**Context:** This occurred in the middle of Jesus' ministry, when He was presenting the Kingdom of God to the Jews and Himself as their Messiah. As part of His training of the 12, Jesus sent them out by themselves on a missionary journey. He gave them power to cast out demons and to heal, plus a list of instructions, including this one.

**Interpretation:** The *meaning* is that Jesus sent out the 12 apostles on a training mission with certain instructions, including not going to Gentiles or Samaritans but only to lost Jews. The *intention* of Matthew was to show Jesus training the 12 apostles to be part of what God was doing through Jesus at the time. Before the cross, God was still prioritizing the Jews and presenting Jesus as their Messiah. The disciples were able to be involved if they specifically followed the commands concerning what God was doing in their age. [Notice that this changed after the cross. See Matthew 28:18-20 and Galatians 3:24-28.]

**Application:** I must be involved in what Jesus is doing today—presenting the Kingdom of God to the world.