



3 • UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Becoming a disciplined student of God's Word. (John 8:31-32)

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

1. The Bible is the unfolding story of how God acted in human history to establish His Kingdom, to save man and glorify Himself. Jesus Christ is the Center of that activity (John 5:39) and the Promised Redeemer (Genesis 3:15; John 3:3). The Bible is divided into two main sections. The Old Testament is the record of God's relationship with people before and in the Law. The New Testament is the record of God's relationship with people after Jesus' birth, sacrifice and Resurrection as well as the unfinished record of the Church, His Body in the earth.
2. Reading the Bible is a " _____ " Experience
 - A. Because the Bible had been in the European culture for centuries, they believed that their cultural values and norms were the true expressions of Christian life and universal for all cultures. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) disagreed and brought Christ to the Chinese people in their "context." He founded the China Inland Mission with over 800 missionaries, and 125,000 Chinese Christians!
3. **Key Thought** — *Most of us tend to assume that our understanding of a Bible text is the same as the Holy Spirit's intent. However, the Bible was written to the first hearers or readers with a specific message and purpose on God's heart. God wanted them to understand what He was saying and therefore needed to put it into the language and life situations that they would be able to understand. Our task is to discover that message and accurately apply that to our lives in today's setting.*

FIRST THINGS FIRST

1. The unconverted cannot understand Biblical Truth. (John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 2:14)
2. We must be delivered from a _____ mindset. (Proverbs 4:4-9; 1 Corinthians 3:19; James 3:13-18)
3. It is in His light (His Presence) that we see light. (Psalm 36:9, 119:130)
4. Learn to _____ on Scripture. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:11-16)

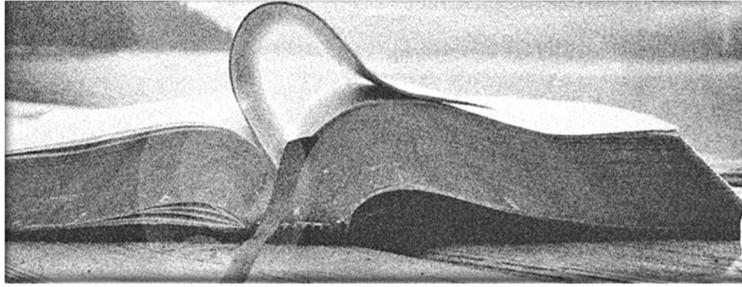
5. Read Bible passages in context. This is understood by the passages that precede and follow it.
6. Interpret the Bible as a progressive revelation of God. The Old Testament is largely foundational truth. The New Testament is largely fulfilled truth.
7. Never interpret the Bible in a way that _____ the rest of Scripture. Wherever possible, let Scripture interpret Scripture. (Matthew 13:18)

WRONG ATTITUDES IN READING THE BIBLE

1. Explaining the miraculous based on a **scientific method** (Matthew 14:13-21).
2. **More committed to erroneous beliefs** we have accepted in the past as truth.
3. **A fear of paradox** (Apparent contradictions).
4. **Selective literalism.** Picking and choosing specific words or phrases to concentrate on, ignoring others, and ignoring the overall message of the passage being studied.
5. **Allegorizing** ignores the actual meaning of a parable or Biblical story and the text is extended and applied beyond the true meaning of the story. A classic example is how Augustine, an early church historian, 354-430 AD, interpreted the parable of the “Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:30-37.
 - A. “Mankind started down the road of life but fell into sin which beat him and left him helpless in the ditch. The law of Moses came and passed him by. Finally, the good Samaritan, Jesus, bound up his wounds and brought him into the inn of safety, the church.”
6. **Eisegesis** is the erroneous but extremely common and widely accepted practice of forcing our own meaning into Scripture as opposed to discovering the writer’s original and intended meaning in a Biblical text.
 - A. This leads to a distortion of Scriptural meaning. Notice how Satan twisted Scripture to suit his own purposes in Matthew 4:3-11.
7. **Looking for easy answers** to complex problems without understanding the motivation behind our actions or practices.

TWO VERY IMPORTANT PRACTICES

1. _____ The careful, systematic study of God’s Word to discover the writer’s original and intended meaning, taking into consideration the historical and literary contexts and the cultural issues of the time of writing — to whom was it written and why.
 - A. Correct application of a text must FIRST begin with an understanding of the original intent. Otherwise the text can mean whatever it means to any given reader throughout history!
 - B. A text can never mean what it never meant to the original authors and readers of that message. Do you agree? Explain.



EXEGESIS, discovering the original and intended meaning of Scripture.

HERMENEUTICS, bringing contemporary relevance to ancient texts, the Bible's meaning for today.

2. _____ This is bringing contemporary relevance to ancient texts, the Bible's meaning for today.
- A. The proper practice for hermeneutics is found in understanding the original intent of a Bible text first and then discerning how that Truth can be applied to us by asking ourselves whether it is a standard of God or a cultural regulation.
- Highest ideals, norms and standards are uncompromising Biblical principles that have top priority in all we do. (Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 22:34-40; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, etc.)
 - Regulations for people of that particular Bible culture, not necessarily meant to apply to all people under all circumstances.
 - Read Leviticus 19. Differentiate between standards and the regulations. How did you arrive at those conclusions?

_____ **IS KEY!**

1. In a very basic sense, the meaning of a specific passage of Scripture is normally controlled by what precedes and follows it. The types of context include:
 - A. **Historical** — Determining what was going on in the history of the readers whose thinking was deeply influenced by the circumstances of their day.
 - B. **Cultural** — The cultures of Biblical times were very different from ours, and its writings must always be considered in light of its culture.
 - C. **Literary** — What type of writing is it? What was the basic purpose of this writing? There's an enormous difference between Leviticus, Proverbs, and James!
2. Basic context is the paragraph, chapter, or book. Why was it written? What is its basic message?
 - A. Similar words may not always have the same meaning. An example is the word "mystery" in Ephesians 3:3-6 and Colossians 1:25-27. Explain the difference.

BASIC FORMAT OF A BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET

Preparation — Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you understanding. Read the passage and identify the type of literature: History, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, etc. Briefly describe the story, the historical and cultural context.

1. What does it SAY? (**Observation**)
 - A. *Describe what is happening (outline the story plot, narrative). Where and why do the events occur? Who are the characters? What is the key verse or thought?*
 - B. Use books such as: Hayford's Bible Handbook, and Halley's Bible Handbook.

2. What does it MEAN? (**Interpretation**)
 - A. *What is the writer saying to the original hearers? Why did the writer say what he did?*
 - B. Use books such as The Hebrew and Greek Study Bibles (Zodhiates), Foundations of Pentecostal Theology (Duffield and Van Cleave).

3. How does it CONNECT to other Scriptures? (**Correlation**)
 - A. *Where is the message or theme stated in other books of the Bible? Link the message of the passage to major teachings of Scripture and give references.*
 - B. Use books such as Nave's Topical Bible.

4. How does it APPLY to me today? (**Application**)
 - A. *Discover the important applicable truths. Are there commands to obey? Are there errors to avoid, sins to forsake? Are there promises to receive? What does this passage suggest I should be or do as a believer in Christ?*
 - B. Use books such as the Life Application Study Bible.

"RIGHTLY DIVIDING" GOD'S WORD (Examples)

1. **2 Chronicles 7:14** *If My people...*
 - A. Context (12-22):
 - B. Message:
 - C. Application:

2. **Matthew 18:18-20** *..., whatever you bind (beseech, petition) on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose (dissolve) on earth will be loosed in heaven... For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*
 - A. Context (15-35):
 - B. Message:
 - C. Application:

3. **Philippians 4:10-18** ... *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

A. Context (12-13 and 18-19):

B. Message:

C. Application:

4. **Revelation 3:14-22** Hot or cold (15-16) ... Jesus stand at the door and knocks (19-20)

A. Context:

B. Message:

C. Application:

Answers: cross cultural , secular , meditate , contradicts , Exegesis, Hermeneutics, Context

FOR NEXT WEEK...

1. **Scan the QR Codes below** — QR code 1 is the main course. QR code 2 is for the current lesson notes. QR code 3 is a dramatic reading of Romans 8 by John Piper.
2. **Read lesson 4, Consistent Victory is Experienced in Him.** Check out the links.
3. **Memory Verse** — Romans 8:37-39.
4. **Weekly Time Sheet** and journal what God is speaking to you.
5. **Meet with your accountability group.**

Do the best you can and we'll see you next week. Pastors Jack and Jane.



QR Code 1
Main



QR Code 2
Lesson 4



QR Code 3
Romans 8

WEEKLY ACTIVITY SHEET Ephesians 5:16 *...redeeming the time...*

1. Name _____ Date _____

2. My accountability partners are _____

3. Journal and write the memory verse from memory before class.

4. Assignment

- Memory verse
- Read the assigned lesson and/or book.
- Special assignments.
- Use the Weekly Time Sheet.
- Meet with your accountability group.

Check  each box below as you do the activity for that day.

ACTIVITIES	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
Personal Prayer Time							
Bible Reading							
Lesson Reading							
Fasting							
Scripture Memorization							
Journaling							
Sunday AM							
Accountability Meeting							
Volunteer Service (specify below)							