

BECOMING FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST



Christian Life Center, A Foursquare Church | 951-689-6785 | www.DiscipleshipDevelopment.org

PART 3 | BASIC RULES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Understanding God's Word from God's point of view. Opening the Word of God is to step into a world where things are very unlike our own



The Bible is God's Word to us and He chose to speak into human history through human words. It speaks to ALL mankind, in EVERY age and in EVERY culture! In speaking through real people, in a variety of circumstances, over a period of 1,500 years, God's Word was expressed in the vocabulary and thought patterns of the people of those times and in their cultures.

Every book is therefore conditioned by the language, culture and historical environment in which it was originally given. If they were going to hear it, it could only have come through the language *they* understood.

Because we are far removed from them in time, culture, and in thought, the challenge is bringing that ancient text to our lives in the 21st century.

Two important aspects of Bible interpretation.

1. Exegesis — The systematic study of God's Word to discover the writer's original and intended meaning. What was God saying to them?
2. Hermeneutics — Bringing contemporary relevance to ancient texts, the Bible's meaning for today.

God's spiritual message.

Psalm 36:9 *For with You is the fountain of life, in Your light we see light.*

Because the Bible is a spiritual book, we can only truly understand Biblical Truth when we have been born of the Spirit (John 3:3) and freed from a secular mindset. 1 Corinthians 2:14 *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God,... because they are spiritually discerned.*

1. A relationship with the Holy Spirit in prayer is absolutely necessary. It is in His light, in His Presence, that we see light. (Psalm 36:9)
 - Psalm 119:130 *The entrance of Your words gives light;...*

Online

Click the QR code above to view the main Institute course. The code on the left takes you to the current lesson online. Put aside some time to read the information this week!

Memory verses

2 Timothy 2:15
2 Timothy 3:16-17

Answers

guide
true
in context

Next week

"Reading the Bible in Context."

Main thought that the Holy Spirit revealed to me...

2. Ask the Holy Spirit to be your _____.
- John 16:13 *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;...*

Additional thoughts...

The “exegetical” approach, understanding the Bible’s intended meaning.

2 Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, ... and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

3. Work from the conviction that the Bible is _____.
- 2 Peter 1:20-21 *...no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ... but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Timothy 3:16)*
4. Read Bible passages _____. This is understood by the passages or chapters that precede and follow it.
- Apparent contradictions in Romans 4:2-3 (faith) with James 2:20 (works); Philippians 2:12 and Ephesians 2:8-9.
5. Never interpret Bible text in a way that contradicts the rest of Scripture. Scripture can never mean what it did not first mean to the original hearers and readers.
- How do Ephesians 2:8-9 and James 2:20 relate to each other in light of apparent contradiction?
6. Always be charitable to those who may differ with your interpretation because we all see an incomplete picture as it states in 1 Corinthians 13:12.
- In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity.

The “hermeneutical” challenge, the Bible’s meaning for today.

James 1:22-25 *...he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (Galatians 5:16; Philippians 2:12-16, 4:9)*

7. Learn to meditate on Scripture. Biblical meditation is filling our hearts with God’s Word and pondering on its meaning. We are changed as we allow the Word to grow in our hearts.
- Joshua 1:8 *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, ... Then you will be prosperous and successful.*
 - Romans 12:1-2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ...*
8. Discover how the Scripture(s) apply to me today using proper exegetical practices and walk out His will for you.
- Are there commands to obey, errors to avoid, sins to forsake? Are there promises to receive? Most importantly, what does this passage suggest I should be and do as a believer in Christ?