



# Grasping God's Word

Part 1: Weeks 1–6

## GHCC Adult Education: CLASS NORMS

**COMMITMENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY** Our Classes, while open, are considered CONFIDENTIAL when anything is shared that might be personal in nature. Please exercise discernment and avoid gossip.

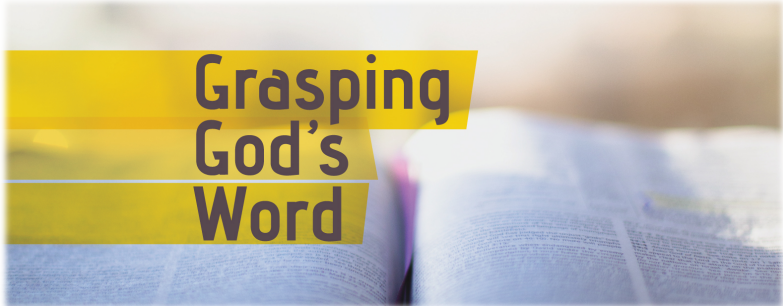
**COMMITMENT TO WELL-BALANCED CLASS SHARING** We ask all class members to be aware of the amount of time they have shared, and to not monopolize sharing opportunities.

**COMMITMENT TO STAYING ON TOPIC** While much of theology is connected, we ask that questions/comments stay focused on the topic at hand. This will help accomplish class objectives, and will show respect for the other class participants.

**COMMITMENT TO NOT INTERRUPT** We ask that you do not interrupt when someone is talking during a class discussion.

**COMMITMENT TO NOT TO FIX OTHERS** The class environment provides the freedom to safely share and process theological ideas. While the teacher has the duty to safeguard sound doctrine and maintain an orderly classroom, we ask class participants to engage in gentle and kind interactions with one another, refraining from judging, shaming, or excessively advising others.

**COMMITMENT TO TRUST** As brothers & sisters in Christ, we expect that maturity and reconciliation will be used anytime a conflict may arise within a class, especially involving theological or personality differences with others (including the teacher). This means that we first must assume the best of intentions in others, and fill any questionable interactions with trust, and not with suspicion or ill-motive. If a situation arises where you have a question or concern, or have been offended, please contact the teacher, the Adult Education Coordinator, or a pastor as soon as possible to engage in reconciliation.



# Grasping God's Word

**Sundays:** 2/5 — 4/30 (no 4/9)

**Where:** 130

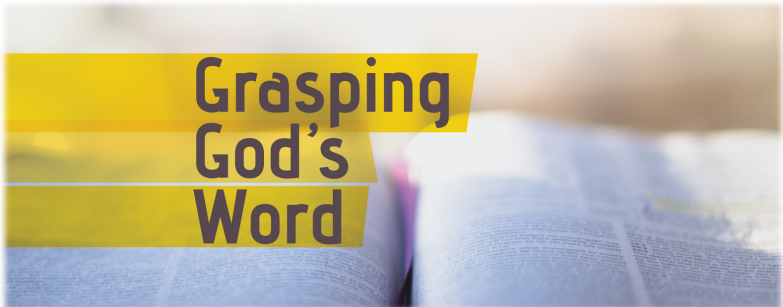
**Class website:**

<https://www.theologyclass.org/ggw23>

Book

Class Notes

Weekly videos/articles



# Grasping God's Word

## Week 1: Christocentric Hermeneutics & Biblical Theology

## Grasping God's Word—Week 1

### Christocentric Hermeneutics & Biblical Theology

#### Assignment:

Watch videos/read articles on the class webpage

#### Terms of the week:

**Biblical Theology:** A way of reading the Bible that looks for themes that run throughout the biblical story.

**Christocentric (Christ-centered):** To see Christ at the center of the biblical story.

**Exegesis:** To draw the intended meaning out of a text.

**Foreshadowing:** When something is anticipated in the future (e.g., God installs priests to serve sacrifices in Israel; foreshadowing/anticipating the eternal priesthood of Jesus)

**Hermeneutics:** The theory and art of interpreting a text.

**Typology (type/antitype):** This is a literary device that introduces characters, places, events, sayings, or institutions that God specifically designed to correspond to, and predictively prefigure, their antitype fulfillment. For instance, Adam, Moses, and David are all a type of Christ (with Christ being the antitype).

## I. THE BIBLE'S CENTRAL MESSAGE AND THEME

### A. ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

1. God reveals Himself through His Son
  - a. To demonstrate His redemption of creation
  - b. The Bible narrates the ongoing flow of redemptive history that moves to the person/work of Jesus
2. In order to transform people into Christ's image
  - a. So they can rule over creation, just as Adam was to rule over creation
3. The Bible isn't a moral-guide book/behavior manual
  - a. Jesus is the hero of the Bible (Genesis—Revelation)

## II. WHERE IS JESUS IN THE TEXT?

### A. JESUS SAID THE BIBLE WAS ABOUT HIMSELF

1. John 5:39, 45-47 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me... 45“But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. 46If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. 47But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”
2. Luke 24:27, 44-46
3. Christ-centered (Christocentric)

## II. WHERE IS JESUS IN THE TEXT?

### B. JESUS IN THE OT

1. Every story stands in relation to Jesus
  - a. Every page of scripture directly, or indirectly, speaks of Christ
  - b. Because he was always the plan of God to redeem creation to Himself
    - i. Cf. Acts 2:22-24 4:6-12; Rev 13:8
  - c. 2 Cor 1:20

## II. WHERE IS JESUS IN THE TEXT?

### C. QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. How does the OT pre-reveal Christ?
  - a. How to find Jesus where Jesus isn't mentioned?

## II. WHERE IS JESUS IN THE TEXT?

### B. QUESTIONS TO ASK:

2. Is the OT story showing:

a. Prediction

i. Is 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

## II. WHERE IS JESUS IN THE TEXT?

### B. QUESTIONS TO ASK:

2. Is the OT story showing:

b. A type of Christ? (**typology**)

i. **David**: The great king sitting on the throne of Jerusalem, a man after God's heart

ii. **Jesus**: The greatest king who sits on God's throne in the New Jerusalem and rules the world, the God-man who is completely pure in heart

## II. WHERE IS JESUS IN THE TEXT?

### B. QUESTIONS TO ASK:

2. Is the OT story showing:

c. **Foreshadowing**

i. Sacrifices/Law are just a shadow of the good things to come

Heb 10:1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near...)

## III. WHY DO WE READ IT THIS WAY?

### A. THIS IS HOW THE NT AUDIENCE READ THE OT

1. Is 40:3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Cf. Malachi 3:1)

a. Mark 1:2-3 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

### III. WHY DO WE READ IT THIS WAY?

#### A. THIS IS HOW THE NT AUDIENCE READ THE OT

2. Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

a. Acts 2:16-17 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams

### III. WHY DO WE READ IT THIS WAY?

#### A. THIS IS HOW THE NT AUDIENCE READ THE OT

3. Ps 102:25-27 O my God... Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 26They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, 27 but you are the same, and your years have no end.

a. Heb 1:8, 10-12 But of the Son he says... 10 “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, 12like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”

### IV. CAUTIONS

#### A. AVOID MORALIZING

1. Making the goal of the text a mere behavior modification
  - a. i.e., act/ behave in a certain way
2. Assuming that a “Judeo-Christian ethic is the goal”
3. Acting in a way that doesn't depend on God's justifying you through the cross
4. Acting in a way that doesn't depend on the Holy Spirit who empowers you

### IV. CAUTIONS

#### A. AVOID MORALIZING

“Satan doesn't mind a moral improvement plan; what he hates is Christ being proclaimed...morality might keep us out of jail, but only Jesus can keep us out of hell; only Jesus can change the heart presently and permanently.”

—Tony Merida, The Christ-Centered Expositor

#### IV. CAUTIONS

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##### **B. AVOID SPIRITUALIZING**

1. Any mention of wood doesn't automatically connect to the cross
2. Any mention of blood/the color red doesn't automatically connect to his spilled blood

#### IV. CAUTIONS

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##### **C. DON'T SKIP THE ORIGINAL CONTEXT/MEANING**

1. Maintain faithful **exegesis/hermeneutics**
2. We find Jesus once we find out what the text meant

#### IV. CAUTIONS

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##### **D. DOES THE CROSS HOVER OVER EVERY TEXT OF THE SCRIPTURES?**

1. If you were to give a talk/sermon/Bible Study on the OT, would it eventually lead to the cross?  
"If a Muslim/Jewish person liked/agreed with your (OT) sermon, then you didn't teach a Christian sermon" - Piper

#### V. WHAT IS THEOLOGY?

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##### **A. 4 BOXES**

1. Exegesis/Scripture
2. **Biblical Theology**
3. Systematic Theology
4. Practical Theology

Scripture

Biblical  
Theology

Systematic  
Theology

Practical  
Theology

Systematic  
Theology

Scripture

Biblical  
Theology

Practical  
Theology

## VI. THE MAIN NARRATIVE OF THE BIBLE

### A. REDEMPTIVE HISTORY: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THE GOSPEL

#### 1. Creation

- a. God dwelling w/ his people, the Garden

#### 2. Fall

- a. Humankind separated from God, Blessings & Curses

#### 3. Redemption

- a. Jesus perfectly obeys and receives blessings; the cross & resurrection; all in Christ are heirs

#### 4. Restoration/Re-creation

- a. New Jerusalem, all things have been made new

## HOMEWORK

### Syllabus A—Week 2: Interpretation & Translations

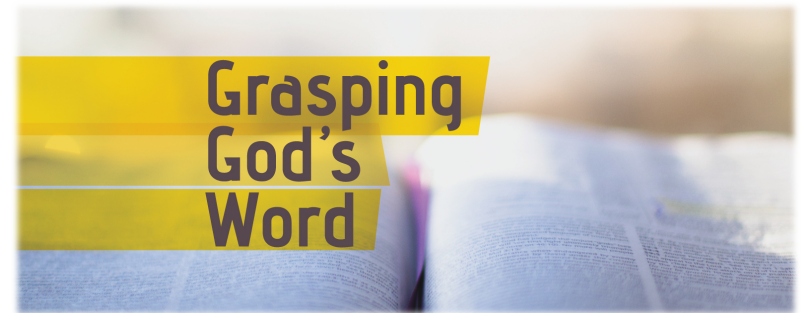
Assignment:

- Read Luke 15:15 in the following four translations ESV, NIV, KJV, and NLT
  - Note any differences/similarities that you find interesting
  - You can do this for free on [www.BibleGateway.com](http://www.BibleGateway.com)
- JIGW Reading: Chapter (7) [1]

### Syllabus B—Week 2: Interpretation & Translations

Assignment:

- Read Luke 15:15 in the following four translations ESV, NIV, KJV, and NLT
  - Note any differences/similarities that you find interesting
  - You can do this for free on [www.BibleGateway.com](http://www.BibleGateway.com)
- 40 Questions Reading: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 (if all chapters cannot be read, find the ones that seem interesting to you)



## Week 2: Interpretation & Translations

## HOMEWORK

### Assignment:

Read Luke 15:15 in the following translations ESV, NIV, KJV, and NLT

Note any differences/similarities that you find interesting

ESV	NIV	KJV	NLT
So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs.	So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.	And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.	He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs.

## I. INTRO

### A. DOES THAT VERSE REALLY SAY THAT?

1. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13)
2. "Where two or more are gathered" (Mt 18:20)
3. "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jer 29:11)

## II. THE BIG PICTURE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

### A. THE THREE HORIZONS OF STUDYING THE BIBLE

1. The *Textual Context (Grammatical—Historical—Christ-Centered)*
  - a. *Grammatical*
    - i. What do the words mean?
    - ii. This includes literary context (genres)
  - b. *Historical*
    - i. What is the historical context?
    - ii. What are the cultural/historical/etc. details that shed light on understanding?



## II. THE BIG PICTURE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

### A. THE THREE HORIZONS OF STUDYING THE BIBLE

#### 2. The *Epochal* Context

- a. Locating the story within God's unfolding plan
  - i. How does the story relate to the covenants?
- b. Christocentric: Where is Jesus in the text?
  - i. Foreshadowed? Typology?

## II. THE BIG PICTURE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

### A. THE THREE HORIZONS OF STUDYING THE BIBLE

#### 3. *Redemptive* History

- a. Creation
- b. Fall
- c. Redemption
- d. Restoration/Re-creation

## II. THE BIG PICTURE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

### B. SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE

#### 1. The "rule of faith" (*regula fidei*)

- a. Since all Scripture is from God we can expect consistency among itself

#### 2. Not everything in the Bible is equally clear

- a. Some texts are more clear than others
- b. After studying a passage and not finding the clear meaning, seek to find the clear meaning from a clearer passage

#### 3. Cautions

- a. Don't immediately jump to a clear passage because it affirms what you want the unclear passage to mean
  - i. E.g., James 2 & Ephesians 2

## II. THE BIG PICTURE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

### C. PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION

1. What does it **say**?
2. What does it **mean**?
3. Where is **Jesus** in the text?
4. How do I **apply** this to my life?

## II. THE BIG PICTURE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

### D. KEY STEPS TO INTERPRETATION

#### 1. Exegesis

- a. To pull out/discover the original meaning of the text
- b. "What is the text?"

#### 2. Hermeneutics

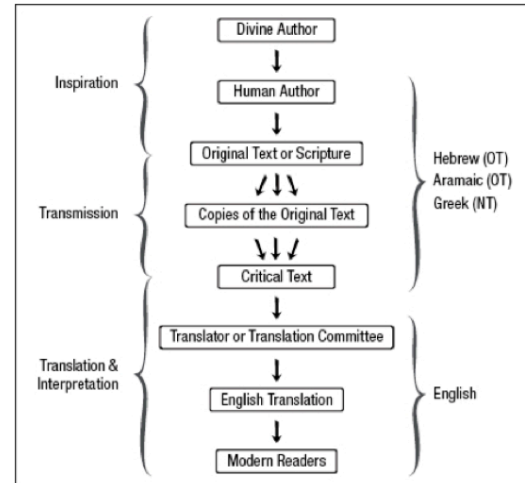
- a. The process and method of interpretation
- b. "This is what it means and how we apply it"

#### 3. Eisegesis

- a. Reading a meaning INTO the text
- b. Avoid this, be aware of why/how this happens

## III. HOW DID WE GET OUR ENGLISH BIBLE?

### A. THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE



## III. HOW DID WE GET OUR ENGLISH BIBLE?

### A. THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

1. God inspires the words of the biblical writers (autograph)
  - a. Paul isn't inspired, his words are
  - b. God used real people (in their time/culture/experiences/etc.)
2. The autograph is sent to its audience
  - a. It is then read to the audience, copied (manuscript), and redistributed

## III. HOW DID WE GET OUR ENGLISH BIBLE?

### A. THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

3. The early church began collecting/assembling early writings
  - a. Purpose of the NT writings
    - i. Letters were written to instruct/encourage the local churches
    - ii. Gospels were written to preserve the oral tradition of Jesus' teachings
  - b. These writings are collected by the early church; becomes the "canon"
    - i. Criteria for canonization:
      - (a). Apostle Authority
      - (b). Theological consistency
      - (c). Church Acceptance as Authoritative



III. HOW DID WE GET OUR ENGLISH BIBLE?

B. UNCIAL TEXT

1. NTHBGNNGGDCRTDTHHVNSNDTHRTH
2. INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHEWORDWASWITHGO  
DANDTHEWORDWASGOD

III. HOW DID WE GET OUR ENGLISH BIBLE?

C. TEXTUAL VARIANTS

- Manuscript #1: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole worl.
- Manuscript #2: Christ Jesus is the Savior of the whole world.
- Manuscript #3: Jesus Christ s the Savior of the whole world.
- Manuscript #4: Jesus Christ is th Savior of the whle world.
- Manuscript #5: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole wrld.

III. HOW DID WE GET OUR ENGLISH BIBLE?

D. NUMBERS AND HEADINGS

1. Chapter and Verses divisions
  - a. Not part of the originals
  - b. Added during the middle-ages/Reformation era as a help to the reader
  - c. Caution: don't let these man-made divisions limit your study
2. Chapter/section headings
  - a. Added by translators
  - b. Caution: don't let these man-made descriptions guide your interpretation

#### IV. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

##### A. TYPES OF TRANSLATIONS

1. Formal equivalence
  - a. “word for word” or “literal” translation
  - b. Translators seek to translate each word from the original language into an equivalent English word
  - c. e.g., NASB, ESV, KJV, RSV/NRSV

#### IV. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

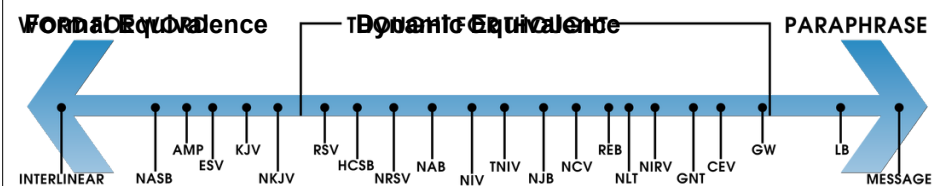
##### A. TYPES OF TRANSLATIONS

2. Dynamic/functional equivalence
  - a. “Thought for thought”
  - b. Translators seek to translate the meaning/message of the original language into an equivalent English word OR expression
  - c. e.g., NIV

#### IV. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

##### A. TYPES OF TRANSLATIONS

3. Paraphrase
  - a. Translators seek to translate the main idea in a way that is very fluid and understandable to the modern language
  - b. NLT, the Message
4. The “smoother” the translation the more interpretation is involved
  - a. Basis for all translations
    - i. From the Greek Text, scholars translate the Greek in the common tongue



AMP - Amplified  
CEV - Contemporary English Version  
ESV - English Standard Version  
GNT - Good News Translation  
GW - God's Word

HCSB - Holman Christian Standard  
KJV - King James Version  
LB - Living Bible  
NAB - New American Bible  
NASB - New American Standard Bible

NCV - New Century Version  
NIRV - New International Reader's Version  
NIV - New International Version  
NJB - New Jerusalem Bible  
NKJV - New King James Version

NLT - New Living Translation  
NRSV - New Revised Standard Version  
REB - Revised English Bible  
RSV - Revised Standard Version  
TNIV - Today's New International Version

#### IV. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

##### B. WHAT SHOULD I USE FOR STUDY?

1. Formal equivalence for study
2. Dynamic equivalence/Paraphrase for devotion?

#### IV. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

##### C. WHAT DOES GHCC USE?

1. ESV
2. The Golden Hills Podcast *“Why do we use the ESV?”*  
(Nov 24, 2019)



##### **Acts 8:36-38 (ESV)**

36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

##### **Acts 8:36-38 (KJV)**

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?  
37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.  
38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

**1 John 5:7-8 (ESV)**

7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.

**1 John 5:7-8 (KJV)**

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

**John 7:53—8:11 (ESV vs KJV)**

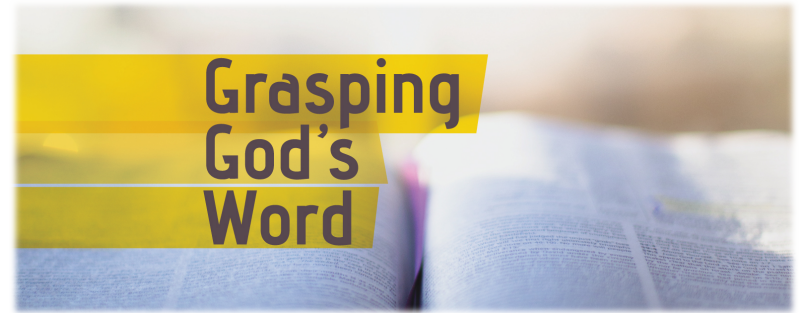
53 [[They went each to his own house,

8:1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. 3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."]]

**(ESV)**

Mark 16:9-20

[Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include 16:9-20.]



**Week 3: The Interpretive Journey, Levels of Meaning, Word Studies, Who Controls the Meaning?**

## I. INTRO

### A. THE MEANING ISN'T ALWAYS "PLAIN"



#### 2. Examples:

- a. Genesis 1:3-31 ...and there was evening and there was morning, the X day
- b. Genesis 2:24 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

## I. INTRO

### A. THE MEANING ISN'T ALWAYS "PLAIN"



#### 3. God said it, but first, WHAT does what He said even mean?

- a. A passage means what it means, so we develop application based on the meaning

## II. WHO CONTROLS THE MEANING, THE READER OR THE AUTHOR?

### A. WHO DETERMINES MEANING?

#### 1. Modernistic **Worldviews**:

- a. Pre-Modern: the gods/God reveal truth
  - i. Adam/Eve → 1700s (the Enlightenment)
- b. Modern: We have knowledge through science and reason
  - i. 1700 (the Enlightenment) → 1950s
- c. Post-Modern: Can knowledge/truth actually be known?
  - i. 1950s → 2023

## II. WHO CONTROLS THE MEANING, THE READER OR THE AUTHOR?

### B. THE AUTHOR DETERMINES THE MEANING

#### 1. Authorial intention: The text means what the AUTHOR wants it to mean

- a. Always strive to determine the Sender's Intended Meaning
  - i. Not what we want it to mean

#### 2. To ignore the author's intention can produce serious consequences for the readers

"We do not create the meaning. Rather, we seek to discover the meaning that has been placed there by the author." —195

II. WHO CONTROLS THE MEANING, THE READER OR THE AUTHOR?

C. APPLICATION

1. Identify what God communicated
  - a. The meaning is the same for all people
  - b. The meaning isn't subjective, and does not change from reader to reader
2. Determine application
  - a. Never ask "what does this mean to me"

II. WHO CONTROLS THE MEANING, THE READER OR THE AUTHOR?

C. APPLICATION

"It would be incorrect for us to ask in a Bible study, 'What does this passage mean to you?' The correct question sequence is, 'What does this passage mean? How should you apply this meaning to your life?'" — GGW p195

The Goal:

"...to grasp the meaning of the text God has intended. We don't create meaning out of a text; rather, we seek to find the meaning that is already there."



"It's a pickle jar, Tom... Twist the lid, not scripture."





### III. PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION

#### A. THE BASIC METHOD TO UNDERSTAND AND APPLY THE BIBLE

1. What does it *say*?
2. What does it *mean*?
3. Where is *Jesus* in the text?
4. How do I *apply* this to my life?

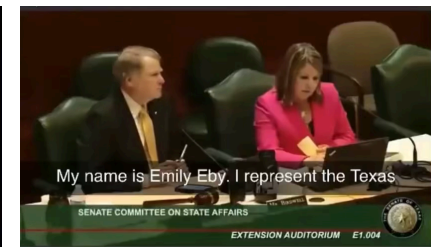
Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

### III. PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION

#### B. THE PROCESS

1. Exegesis
  - a. The process of discovering the meaning of a text
  - b. *Eisegesis* = the process of inserting a meaning into the text
2. Hermeneutics
  - a. Interpreting the text and learning how to apply it

### EXEGESIS OR EISEGESIS?



### III. PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION

#### C. PRESCRIPTIVE VS DESCRIPTIVE

##### 1. Descriptive

- a. When a passage describes what happened historically, but isn't making a command for people outside of that situation
- b. e.g., The Wall of Jericho

##### 2. Prescriptive

- a. When a passage prescribes (commands) an action or desired outcome
- b. e.g., The Great Commission

"If you move straight from your initial reading of a passage to the application of that passage, you will remain tied to your previous understanding of that text."

### IV. THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SENTENCES

#### A. REPETITION OF WORDS

##### 1. 1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

### IV. THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SENTENCES

#### B. COMPARISONS (SIMILARITIES, ITEMS, IDEAS, INDIVIDUALS)

1. Prov 25:26 Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked.

#### IV. THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SENTENCES

##### B. COMPARISONS (SIMILARITIES, ITEMS, IDEAS, INDIVIDUALS)

2. James 3:3-6 If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. 4 Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. 5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

#### IV. THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SENTENCES

##### C. LISTS

1. Make lists (explore their significance)
  - a. 1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

#### IV. THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SENTENCES

##### D. FIGURES OF SPEECH

1. Words used in a sense other than the normal, literal sense
  - a. Ps 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

#### IV. THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SENTENCES

##### E. VERBS

1. Action (past, present, future - progressive, passive, continued, indicative, imperative)
  - a. Col 3:1-4 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

#### IV. THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN SENTENCES

##### F. PRONOUNS & ANTECEDENT

1. Our, us, you, them, he, etc.
2. What/who is the antecedent?
  - a. A thing or event that existed before

#### VI. BIBLICAL WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

##### A. WHAT DOES LITERAL MEAN?

1. What do we mean by literal?
  - a. Historical? Physical?
2. Better to think **Literary/literarily**
  - a. The meaning the authors have intended
  - b. This is based on the type of literature (genre), the context, the historical background, the grammar, the word meaning
  - c. The literary meaning is literal/spiritual/etc. (the TRUE MEANING)

#### VI. BIBLICAL WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

##### B. SEMANTIC RANGE

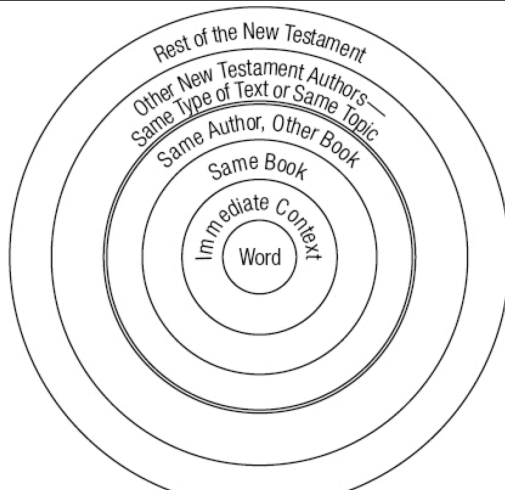
1. The range of meaning/semantic range = all the possible meanings of a word
  - a. "Draft"
  - b. Find the range of meaning for a Greek/Hebrew word
    - i. English dictionary are a mistake
  - c. Don't pick ANY meaning

#### VI. BIBLICAL WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

##### B. SEMANTIC RANGE

2. Context determines word meaning
  - a. This includes everything that surrounds the word paragraph, subject matter, author's argument, historical situation, the original audience, etc.
  - b. Use the "Circle of Context" for help:
  - c. Give more weight to the writings of by the same author
    - i. How does Paul/John/Luke use the word?
  - d. Finally, make your interpretive choices with conviction and humility

## VI. BIBLICAL WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS



## VI. BIBLICAL WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

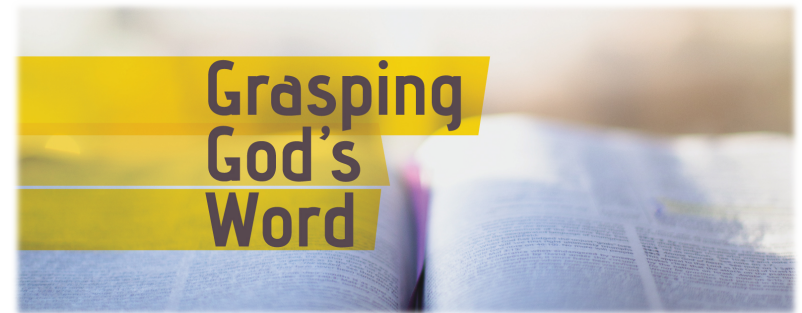
### C. THE PROBLEM WITH WORD STUDIES

1. Assigning one meaning to a biblical word
  - a. When we insist a word must have the same meaning every time it occurs.
  - b. “Word meanings are determined by context, not word counts” — Bock
  - c. Immediate context takes priority

## VI. BIBLICAL WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

### C. THE PROBLEM WITH WORD STUDIES

2. Limiting our study to a word over a concept
  - a. When we believe that since we've studied one word, we've studied an entire concept
    - i. *Ekklesia*
    - ii. What about: body of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit, household of faith?



Week 4: How to Read Paragraphs & Discourses,  
& The Literary Context

## I. READING PARAGRAPHS

### A. GENERAL AND SPECIFIC

1. Does the author introduce an idea?
2. Gal 5:16-23 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these... 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

## I. READING PARAGRAPHS

### B. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. A rhetorical question
  - a. Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
  - b. Diatribe: Teaching without dropping lots of information

## I. READING PARAGRAPHS

### C. DIALOGUE

1. Always observe:
  - a. Who are the participants?
  - b. Who is speaking to whom?
  - c. What is the setting?
  - d. Are other people around?
    - i. Are they listening?
    - ii. Are they participating in the dialogue?
    - iii. Is the dialogue an argument?
  - e. What is the point of the dialogue?

## I. READING PARAGRAPHS

### D. PURPOSE/RESULT STATEMENTS

1. Sentences that describe the reason, result, or consequence
  - a. Matt 1:22  
All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

I. READING PARAGRAPHS

**E. MEANS**

1. Look for the means that brings about an action, result, or purpose

a. Heb 9:12

he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

I. READING PARAGRAPHS

**F. CONDITIONAL CLAUSES**

1. The conditions whereby some action, consequence, reality, or result will happen.

a. "If/then"

b. 1 Cor 15:12-19

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

I. READING PARAGRAPHS

**G. EMOTION & TONE**

1. Relationships

a. Hab 1:2 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

b. 1 Thes 1:2-7

c. Gal 1:6-9

## II. DISCOURSES

### A. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS AND EPISODES (PERICOPE)

1. Ask how your paragraphs/episodes relates to and connects with the other paragraphs/episodes that come before and after the one you are studying
  - a. Luke 14—16

## II. DISCOURSES

### B. STORY SHIFTS: MAJOR BREAKS & PIVOTS

1. Look for critical places where the story seems to take a new turn
  - a. This could be a major break in a letter
    - i. Eph 1—3 (**indicative**) & 4—6 (**imperative**)  
4:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
2. A plot change
  - a. Nineveh repenting, and God not destroying them

## III. WHAT IS LITERARY GENRE?

### A. BIBLICAL GENRE: FORM/KIND

- |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. OT genres: | 2. NT genres:       |
| a. Narrative  | a. Gospel           |
| b. Law        | b. History          |
| c. Poetry     | c. Letter (epistle) |
| d. Prophecy   | d. Apocalypse       |
| e. Wisdom     |                     |

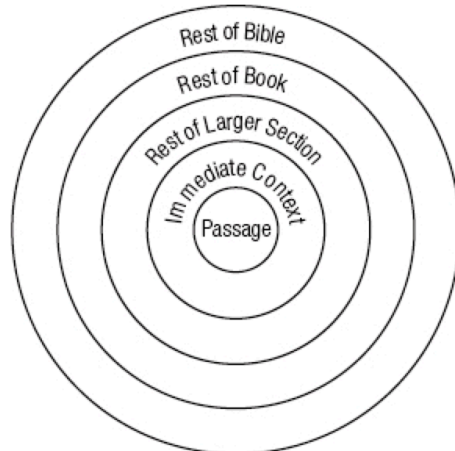
*“For communication to occur,  
the reader must be on the same page as the author  
In terms of genre.”*



#### IV. WHAT IS THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT?

##### A. IMMEDIATE CONTEXT: THE TEXT BEING STUDIED

1. The immediate context circle
2. Give the highest priority to the immediate context



#### IV. WHAT IS THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT?

##### B. SURROUNDING CONTEXT: THE TEXTS THAT SURROUND THE PASSAGE YOU ARE STUDYING

1. Words, sentences, paragraphs, and discourses that come before/ after

*“You can make the Bible say anything you want. That is true ONLY if you disregard the literary context.”*

GGW— p. 154

#### IV. WHAT IS THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT?

##### C. IGNORING THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT

1. “Never read a Bible verse”

**Phil 4:13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

**2 Chron 7:14** 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 and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

2. Chapter/verse distractions
  - a. Not part of the original documents

#### II. WHAT IS THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT?

##### D. HOW TO IDENTIFY THE SURROUNDING CONTEXT

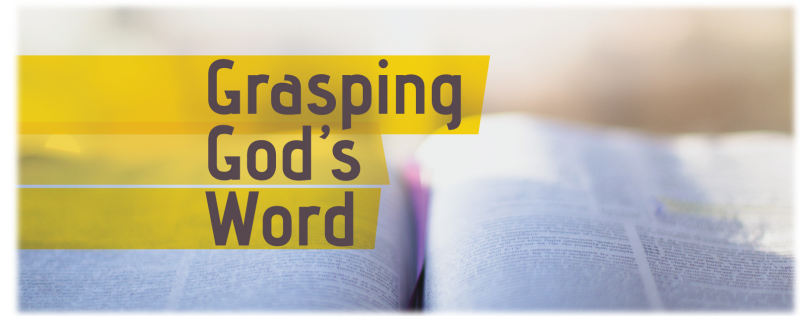
1. Main goal: identify how an author's thought flows from part to whole
2. Identify how the book is divided into paragraphs or sections
  - a. Items that mark changes or transitions:
    - i. conjunctions
    - ii. change of genre
    - iii. change of topic/theme
    - iv. changes in time/location/setting
    - v. grammatical change
3. The most accurate interpretation best fits the passage's surrounding context

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

3 So he told them this parable: 4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?...

8 "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?...

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons.



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## Week 5: What Do We Bring to the Text & The Historical Context

Read through Luke 15:1-32

With your best abilities, guess as to how the cultural context would help the modern reader in the following verses (i.e., is there a special significance to these verses that we miss in our modern context?):

- Took a journey into a far country/fed the pigs (15:13, 15)

- But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him (15:20)

- Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing...But he was angry and refused to go in (15:25-28)

## I. WHY BOTHER WITH HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT?

### A. DISCOVER WHAT THE SENDER ORIGINALLY INTENDED HIS AUDIENCE TO UNDERSTAND

1. Interpretation to be valid = consistent with the historical-cultural context
  - a. If it doesn't make sense then, we are on the wrong track

## II. IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT

### A. HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE ENTIRE BOOK

1. The author
  - a. Who was the author, what's his background?
  - b. When did he write, what's the nature of his ministry?
  - c. What kind of relationship did he have with the audience?
  - d. Why was he writing?

## II. IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT

### A. HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE ENTIRE BOOK

2. The audience
  - a. Who was the biblical audience?
  - b. What were their circumstances?
  - c. How was their relationship to God?
  - d. What kind of relationship did they have with each other?

## II. IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT

### A. HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE ENTIRE BOOK

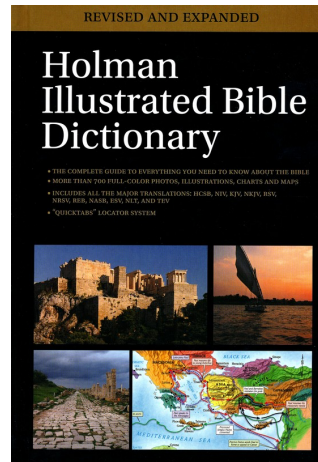
3. Historical/cultural background
  - a. What was happening at the time the book was written?
  - b. Other historical-cultural factors?
    - i. Geography/Topography
    - ii. Social Customs
    - iii. Economic Issues
    - iv. Political Issues

## II. IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT

### B. TOOLS

#### 1. Bible Dictionaries

- a. Have general articles about the Bible

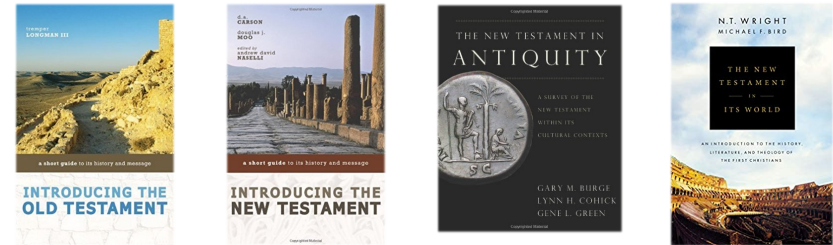


## II. IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT

### B. TOOLS

#### 2. Old Testament and New Testament Introductions and Surveys

- a. Supply detailed background information on each book of the Bible



## II. IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT

### B. TOOLS

#### 3. Commentaries

- a. Up-to-date/detailed information about the context of the book
- b. Know the background of the scholar you're reading



## II. IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CONTEXT

### B. TOOLS

#### 4. Historical-Cultural

- a. Dealing with geography, politics, religion, economics, family life, social customs
  - i. Bible Atlases
  - ii. Commentaries
  - iii. Background Commentaries
  - iv. Old Testament and New Testament Histories
  - v. Special Studies in Ancient Life and Culture

### III. DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH STUDYING BACKGROUND

- A. Inaccurate background information [Priest entering the Holy of Holies with a rope]
- B. Elevating the Background of the text
- C. Don't let yourself evolve into nothing more than a walking database of ancient facts

### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

#### A. PREUNDERSTANDING

- 1. Our preconceived notions and understandings that we bring to the text
- 2. Specific experiences
- 3. Previous encounters
- 4. Anything that makes us assume that we already understand something

### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

#### B. CULTURE

- 1. The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group
  - a. The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization

### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

#### B. CULTURE

- 2. National heritage
  - a. school, social media, language, customs, stories, the arts (movies, music, literature, etc), jokes, national habits
  - b. What about revolutions and Romans 13?
    - i. e.g., Boston Tea Party
    - ii. "If we start our interpretive analysis of Romans 13:1–7 with the preconceived, foregone conclusion that it cannot be critical of the Revolution, we are then placing our culture above the Bible." — GGW

#### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

### C. INTERPRETATIONAL REFLEX

1. We fill gaps from our culture
  - a. family's socio-economic situation and outlook
  - b. Relationships

#### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

### D. FAMILIARITY HAPPENS WHEN WE'RE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH A PASSAGE

1. We know all there is to know
  - a. Familiarity with a passage creates preunderstandings
2. Avoid coming to the text with a theological agenda already formulated
  - a. We will ignore anything that doesn't affirm the meaning we're looking for
  - b. are we "understanding" or "overstanding"?

#### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

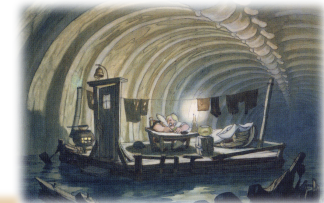
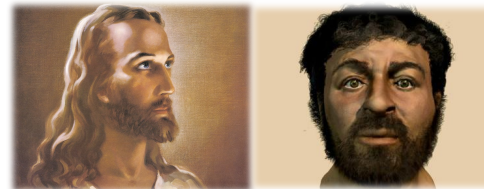
### E. CULTURAL BAGGAGE

1. Culture weighs us down  
[allows us to twist to fit into our culture - subconsciously/  
consciously]

#### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

### E. CULTURAL BAGGAGE

2. Examples of subconscious
  - a. Jonah (Pinocchio)
  - b. Jesus/Moses (biblical movies)



#### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

##### E. CULTURAL BAGGAGE

3. "What would Jesus do?"

a. We interpret to not conflict with our cultural norms

[Jesus = turning the other cheek, not the American way]



#### IV. PREUNDERSTANDING

##### F. TOTAL OBJECTIVITY

1. This is impossible [not the goal]

a. Reading the Bible apart from faith does not produce objectivity

[atheists with solid cultural background won't come to faith]

2. The goal is to SUBMIT to the text and interact with it

a. Allow your preunderstanding to change

Grasping  
God's  
Word

Week 6: The Role of the Holy Spirit & Application

#### I. CAN WE GRASP GOD'S WORD APART FROM THE SPIRIT?

##### A. THE UNBELIEVER'S ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE TEXT IS LIMITED

1. Sin has had an effect on the whole person

2. Unbelievers can understand the basic message, but reject the gospel

a. Unbelievers won't be persuaded of its truth/live out a biblical ethic

## II. THE SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN INTERPRETER

### **A. INTERPRETATION IS MORE THAN POSSESSION OF THE SPIRIT**

1. The Spirit doesn't make a valid interpretation automatic
  - a. False (and common) view
  - b. The Spirit won't do everything for you

## II. THE SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN INTERPRETER

### **B. GOD DOES EXPECT US TO USE OUR MINDS**

1. Matt. 22:37 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."
2. God works with/through people
  - a. Think clearly, reason soundly, study diligently and faithfully

## II. THE SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN INTERPRETER

### **C. WE UNDERSTAND AS WE MATURE**

1. Spiritual maturity
  - a. Beware of young/zealous interpreters

## III. INTERPRETATION & MEANING VS. APPLICATION

### **A. MEANING**

1. The passage means what the author intended to communicate
  - a. There is only one meaning to every text
  - b. It means what it means (in its original context)



### III. INTERPRETATION & MEANING VS. APPLICATION

#### B. APPLICATION

1. Our response to the meaning of the inspired text

### IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

#### A. STEPS 1—3

1. What does it *say*?
2. What does it *mean*?
3. Where is *Jesus*?

### IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

#### B. STEP 4: HOW DO I APPLY IT TO MY LIFE?

1. Ask if the passage is Descriptive or Prescriptive?
  - a. Descriptive: when a passage describes what happened historically
    - i. If something is descriptive, then application can be drawn from the basic principle of the situation
    - ii. Deut 22:8 “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it.”

### IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

#### B. STEP 4: HOW DO I APPLY IT TO MY LIFE?

1. Ask if the passage is Descriptive or Prescriptive?
  - b. Prescriptive: a passage prescribes/commands an outcome for all people
    - i. If something is prescriptive, then its direct principle is to be obeyed for the people of God in all generations
    - ii. Matt 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

**B. STEP 4: HOW DO I APPLY IT TO MY LIFE?**

1. Ask if the passage is Descriptive or Prescriptive?
  - c. Descriptive/Prescriptive is not always obvious, and often results in theological disputes among the church

IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

**B. STEP 4: HOW DO I APPLY IT TO MY LIFE?**

1. Ask if the passage is Descriptive or Prescriptive?
  - i. 1 Cor 14:33b-35 As in all the churches of the saints, 34 the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

**B. STEP 4: HOW DO I APPLY IT TO MY LIFE?**

2. Determine Application
  - a. Ask ourselves “what does this passage MEAN, and how do I LIVE IT OUT in my life”
    - i. We don't ask “what does it mean to me”
  - b. The Spirit doesn't change for our purposes/circumstances
    - ii. Don't adjust the meaning to fit your situation/purposes/feelings

IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

**B. STEP 4: HOW DO I APPLY IT TO MY LIFE?**

3. Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context
  - a. We have to be students of the ancient world (to understand the meaning), as well as students of the modern world (to understand the application)
  - b. Don't create a parallel meaning/application where there isn't one
  - c. “Real-world scenarios should accurately reflect the meaning of the biblical text and be relevant to contemporary life”

#### IV. HOW TO APPLY THE MEANING

##### C. APPLICATION THROUGH THE CHURCH

1. Corporate application is just as important as individual application
2. “Personal interpretation” as a downfall of the Reformation
  - a. It’s not just “me and God”
  - b. It’s God and His people

#### V. PERSONAL PRAYER & DEVOTIONAL

##### A. PRAYING THE BIBLE (ADAPTED FROM DONALD WHITNEY)

1. The Psalms are a great foundation for biblical prayer
  - a. This helps us pray for the things that God sees as important

#### V. PERSONAL PRAYER & DEVOTIONAL

##### A. PRAYING THE BIBLE (ADAPTED FROM DONALD WHITNEY)

2. E.g., Psalm 23
  - a. “The LORD is my shepherd...”
    - i. Lord, I thank you that you are my shepherd. You’re a good shepherd. You have shepherded me all my life. And, great Shepherd, please shepherd my family today: guard them from the ways of the world; guide them into the ways of God. Lead them not into temptation; deliver them from evil. O great Shepherd, I pray for my children; cause them to be your sheep. May they love you as their shepherd, as I do. And, Lord, please shepherd me in the decision that’s before me about my future. Do I make that move, that change, or not? I also pray for our under-shepherds at the church. Please shepherd them as they shepherd us. — Praying the Bible (pp. 29-30).

#### V. PERSONAL PRAYER & DEVOTIONAL

##### A. PRAYING THE BIBLE (ADAPTED FROM DONALD WHITNEY)

2. E.g., Psalm 23
  - b. By praying the Bible... “you never run out of anything to say, and, best of all, you never again say the same old things about the same old things.” — Praying the Bible (p. 32).

**V. PERSONAL PRAYER & DEVOTIONAL**

**A. PRAYING THE BIBLE (ADAPTED FROM DONALD WHITNEY)**

3. Responsible ways to do this?
  - a. The goal of Praying the Bible is NOT to engage in exegesis
    - i. Exegesis is very important, we cannot make the Bible say anything we want it to
    - ii. Don't confuse this with study

**V. PERSONAL PRAYER & DEVOTIONAL**

**A. PRAYING THE BIBLE (ADAPTED FROM DONALD WHITNEY)**

3. Responsible ways to do this?
  - b. The focus of Praying the Bible is to glance at the text and reflect upwards
    - i. It's using Scripture to guide our thoughts upward
    - ii. Sometimes we pray something specific from the text (i.e., it's telling us what to pray)
    - iii. Sometimes the text points us to a certain idea/person/etc.
    - iv. The goal is NOT to hear God's audible voice, this is using God's Word to spark ideas and direction as you pray TO HIM

**V. PERSONAL PRAYER & DEVOTIONAL**

**B. DEVOTIONAL**

1. "Devotions" = who are we giving devotion to?
  - a. Is our goal of devotions to make ourselves feel a certain way?
  - b. Are we spending more time reflecting on ourselves or God?
2. Read and reflect
  - a. What does it say (if you know the meaning that makes it more meaningful), and how does it help you reflect about the goodness of God?

**VI. CONCLUSION**

**A. THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES US IN MEANING & APPLICATION**

1. Meaning and application shouldn't be private
  - a. Scripture is for the church, not just for individuals
2. But we can pray through Scripture for ourselves too