Nuts and Bolts of Bible Study

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Nuts and Bolts of Bible Study

“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 2:15

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**1. God’s Communication Tool**

I. THE PROPER ATTITUDE IN APPROACHING SCRIPTURE IS NECESSARY IF WE ARE GOING TO USE GOD’S COMMUNICATION TOOL CORRECTLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

A. We must approach the Holy Scriptures with the proper attitude - trembling at the treasure of God’s Word.
   1. Psalm 119:11
   2. Isaiah 66:2

B. Treasuring the Scriptures
   1. We must approach the Scriptures as our greatest treasure (Psalm 119:14-16, 20, 47-48, 97-99, 127-128, 162-163).
   2. Seeing the Scriptures as our greatest treasure provokes us to take the time to increase our understanding of them and master their contents to the best of our ability.

C. Tremble before the Scriptures
   1. We must approach the Scriptures as our first and final authority.
   2. Approaching the Scriptures as our ultimate authority demands that we are humbly receptive to all that God says.

II. SCRIPTURE IS DEFINES LIFE.

A. Those who treat the Word of God as trifling or empty words, forfeit life. Careful belief is necessary.
   1. Deuteronomy 32:46-47
   2. 1 Peter 1:23
   3. We go on living by God’s Word (Matthew 4:4; Deut. 8:3).
   4. This study will teach us how to look at Scripture through the discipline of rigorous thought, leading to deep and sound doctrine.

III. DEFINING TERMS FOR BIBLE STUDY

A. “Hermeneutics” - “The science & art of Biblical interpretation”
B. “Interpretation” - “A way of understanding or explaining a passage of writing or a concept.”
   1. Sound hermeneutics is the solution to erred interpretation.
2. Everyone is an interpreter.
3. A believer does not have the right to interpret the Bible according to his own rules.

C. “Exegesis” - “The application of principles of hermeneutics to arrive at a correct understanding of the text” or “The obtaining of the meaning of a passage by drawing the meaning out from, rather than reading into the text.”

1. Exegesis is opposed to eisegesis, which means looking for a particular meaning, and reading it into a text.

D. “Meaning OF TEXT” - “The meaning of the text is what its author meant and what it meant to the original audience, regardless of what it means to you.”

1. The meaning of the text is not “What it means to me.”
   a) “It is the first business of an interpreter to let the author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.” (Calvin)
   b) Look for objective meaning, not subjective meaning.

E. Objective Meaning vs. Subjective Meaning

1. Definition of objective meaning: as if observing an object from a distance and seeing the real picture.
2. Definition of subjective meaning: as if you are part of it and it is subject to the way you see it.
3. Our common problem: We all struggle with subjection!
4. The aim of interpretation is not uniqueness.

F. “THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE” - Scripture can be understood by all of us.

1. Martin Luther stated the classic Protestant understanding of the clarity of Scripture in his own favorite (and arguably most important) writing, The Bondage of the Will.
2. What do these authors assume about the clarity of the Bible?
   a. John in John 20:31—“These have been written that...
   b. Paul in 2 Timothy 3:14-15—“The sacred writings which were able to give you.....

G. INSUFFICIENT approaches to the Word of God

1. Informal Approach to the Word of God– (facts only) What can I know? As if Godliness is KNOWLEDGE: Results in pride/delusion. (I Cor. 8:1; James 1:22) Me Centered.
2. Devotional Approach to the Word of God. (checklist) What can I do? As if Godliness is BUSINESS: Results in Legalism/Zeal with knowledge and a works orientation- “God will punish me for failing
“You have an anointing from the Holy One...as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”  
1 John 2:20, 27

“For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God....
"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God...."
1 Corinthians 2:9-14

“No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
2 Peter 1:20-21

to have my devo’s” -Me Centered

3. Mystical Approach to the Word of God (magical) How can I feel good? As if Godliness if GOOD FEELINGS: Results in Feeling orientation and expectations that something will jump off the page and speak to me; “What impresses me?” - Me Centered.

**H. NECESSARY Approach to the Word of God.**

-Meditational Approach to the Word of God. (Seek to) - What has God communicated/and how should I respond? Godliness is implementation of true righteousness with the right motives from a transformed heart: Results in wisdom and maturity–

God Centered. Study the Bible with the purpose of seeking to understand what GOD HAS SAID so then your may respond properly in heart and behavior in order to mature.

**IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT ILLUMINATES SCRIPTURE**

**A. The Spirit of God, as the author of Scripture, enables humans to understand Scripture. We speak to God in prayer, He speaks to us through Scripture**

1. The Holy Spirit resides in every believer as Teacher (1John 2:20,27).

2. Holy Spirit enables a believer to understand Scripture (1 Cor. 2:9-14)

3. The Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21).

4. Keep the following truths in regarding the way in which the Holy Spirit illuminates Scripture.

   a. Holy Spirit does not give new revelation on par with Scripture.

   b. He does not guarantee that our interpretations are infallible.

   c. He does not give one person new insights no one else has.

   d. Non-Christians can apply sound hermeneutics to understand the meaning of Scripture; without the Spirit, however, they refuse to adequately apply their lives to it.

   e. Spiritual preparation is crucial. Am I confessing my sin? Am I spiritually prepared so that I’m applying my life?

   f. There is no substitute for diligent study.

   g. The Spirit does not rule out study helps.

   h. He does not override or contradict the teaching of Scripture.

   i. He does not make all of the Bible equally clear nor ensure complete understanding.
Homework: “God’s Communication Tool”

What do the following Scriptures teach about the importance of cutting Scripture straight?

Read 2 Timothy 2:7.
What effort are we to expend? ___________________________________________
What does God promise? _______________________________________________

Read 2 Timothy 2:15
What effort are we to expend? ___________________________________________
If we don’t accurately interpret what God is saying, how should we feel? ________
______________________________________________________________________

What three reason are given in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 as to why we should know the Scriptures?
Vs. 15: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Vs. 16: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Vs. 17: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

What do you learn from these Scriptures about God’s Word?
Psalm 119:11 _____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Psalm 119:47 _____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Psalm 119:50 _____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Psalm 119:105 _____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Nail It: Evidence that I treasure Scripture and tremble before Scripture by reading daily, thinking about what I’ve read, and putting it into practice.
2. Introducing Two Big Rules

I. THE TWO BIG RULES

A. Big Rule #1: The natural meaning of a passage is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax, context, and historical situation (Grammatico – historical).

1. When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, but take every word at its primary, literal meaning, unless the facts of its immediate context clearly indicate otherwise!

2. Grammatico – historical - - “The meaning of a text is the author’s intended meaning and (that meaning) can be derived most accurately by observing the facts of history and the rules of grammar as they apply to the text being studied.” (Virkler, 73)

3. The grammatico – historical rule is the basis for the following analysis, which we will be studying further throughout the year.
   a) Studying Scripture with a view of back then and what it was like (Historical – cultural analysis).
   b) Considering the big picture (Contextual analysis).
   c) Understanding language use with a look at various translations (Lexical-syntactical analysis).
   d) Ways writers use words (Literary-style analysis).

B. Big Rule #2: No part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture (Scripture interprets Scripture)

1. The plain statements of Scripture explain the obscure ones. (Interpret the obscure in light of the clear).

2. Historical narratives are to be interpreted by the clear teaching passages.

3. The principle that Scripture interprets Scripture is the basis for Theological Analysis (theological method).

II. TYPES OF ANALYSIS (DERIVED FROM THE TWO BIG RULES)

A. “Historical – Cultural Analysis” - - Considers the historical-cultural environment in which an author wrote, in order to understand his allusion, references, and purpose.

1. We will learn how to consider the historical and cultural contexts that affect Scripture’s intended meaning. “What does it mean?”

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
B. “Contextual Analysis” - - Considers the relationship of a given passage to the whole body of an author’s writing in order to understand their overall thought.
   1. We will learn to ask, “Where does it fit?”

C. “Understanding Language and Bible Translations” (lexical/syntactical analysis)- - Develops an understanding of the definitions of words and their relationship to one another.
   1. Here’s where we ask, “What does it say?”
   2. We will come to understand various translations and their value.

D. “Understanding the Theological Method and Context” - - Studies the level of theological understanding at the time a revelation was given in order to ascertain the meaning of the text for its original recipients.
   1. Here’s where we ask, “Am I trying to use a text to support my ideas?”
   2. Do we bring presuppositions to the text?

E. “Literary Analysis” - - Identifies the literary form used in a given passage.
   1. Studying the ways Scripture writers use words can help us understand the text (1 John 4:7-12).

F. Style Analysis - - Considers the various types of literature methods (styles) which the Bible uses.
   1. We will learn to understand the following styles: Biblical narrative, poetry and psalms, wisdom literature, Old Testament law, prophecy, New Testament epistles, parables, typology and apocalyptic.

G. “Reflective or Practical Analysis (Application)” - - Clearly grasping the meaning of a biblical text for its original hearers and what that means in terms of the life of the person hearing or studying today.
   1. “How do we relate, how do we change?”

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13

God can provide the strength to learn to be content in any and every circumstance.
Review Big Rule One: The natural meaning of a passage is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax, context, and historical situation (Grammatico – historical).

1. When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, but take every word at its primary, literal meaning, unless the facts of its immediate context clearly indicate otherwise!

Review Big Rule Two: No part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture.

2. Check Scripture with Scripture.

We must understand how important studying the Bible actually is. The following passages will encourage us in carefully studying God’s Word.

1. Read Hosea 4:1-6. Note how when the people reject God’s law and the knowledge of God, the door is opened to chaos.

   Why were the people destroyed? _______________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. Read Proverbs 1:20-33. Who loves simplicity (vs. 22)? ________________

   What must we give attention to, or else reap the consequences (vs. 23, 25, 33)?
   ________________________________________________________________

3. Read Romans 12:2. What is necessary to rise above the mentality of our culture?

   ________________________________________________________________

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:17. What has been provided so that we may be equipped to do what God wants us to?

   ________________________________________________________________

Homework:

“Two Big Rules”

Nail It: Apply my life to all of Scripture, not just the parts I’m comfortable with.
3. Historical Cultural Analysis

I. BACK THEN AND WHAT IT WAS LIKE: HISTORICAL CULTURAL ANALYSIS

A. Studying the historical and cultural surroundings in which an author wrote, can help us understand his situation and purpose.

1. The more we understand the world of the Bible, the better we will understand the Bible itself.

2. There are many study tools that can aid in understanding:
   f. *Bible Background Commentary*, Keener.

3. Recognize that in America our culture is technologically oriented, while the culture of the Bible was often farming and nomadic.
   a. Farmers are rich in understanding weather, dirt, animals.
   b. Gypsies have a different mindset than house-dwellers.

4. Historical/Cultural analysis involves an understanding of many aspects of life:
   a. Political situation
   b. Climate and drought (Psalm 1:3; Jeremiah 17; John 4:10)
   c. Geography and typography
   d. Finances (Matthew 20:1-16)

B. Questions to ask when examining the history and culture of a passage:

1. What general historical situation faces the author and his audience?
   a. What is the date of writing?
b. What were the political, economic, and social situations?
c. What was the main source of livelihood?
d. What were the major threats and concerns?

2. What is the purpose of this book?
   a. Who was the writer?
   b. To whom was he writing?
      i. Sometimes stated in the text (Colossians 1:2).
      iii. Sometimes by deductive evidence (Hebrews).
   c. What was the writer’s intention in writing this book?
      i. Author’s statement or repetition of phrases (Acts 1:1; Luke 1:1-4; John 20:31; 1 John 1:4; 2:2; 5:13)
      ii. Observe exhortations (Hebrews exhorts that Jesus is the one and only sacrifice, Galatians exhorts against legalism which mean anything plus Jesus for salvation, Romans exhorts sound doctrine)
      iii. Observe points omitted, or issues focused on (1 & 2 Chronicles).

3. Historical Context Diagram

It makes a difference when you know something about the writer’s personal background, and the occasion and purpose for writing.
4. Example: Proverbs 22:28 commands, “Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set.”

   Does this verse mean:
   A. Do not make changes from the way we have always done things.
   B. Do not steal.
   C. Do not remove the guideposts that direct travelers from town to town.
   D. None of the above.
   E. All of the above.

   What general historical situation faces the author and his audience?

   Geography ~ Geographic setting is Israel, where God had allotted the boundary lines by tribe.

   Politics ~ Solomon is the third king. The ancient landmark, or boundary stone, represents the ancient constitution of Israel, put in place by God’s command, and moving a boundary stone meant you were violating God’s command.

   Culture ~ Jewish, ancient Israel. The “Thirty Sayings” are similar to the Egyptian writing of Amenemope, who also wrote a text with 30 divisions. As for boundary stones (ancient landmarks), if you tried to move one it meant you were attempting to seize land furtively.

   Situation ~ Solomon, who had asked for and been granted wisdom, is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

   Date ~ Approx. 700 B.C.

   What is the purpose of this book? (Proverbs 22:17-21)

   Recipients ~ Solomon’s wisdom was known far and wide, so the recipients may have exceeded the scope of Hebrew listeners.

   Author ~ Read Proverbs 22:17-21 to find out why this proverb is written. Solomon has put together “Thirty Sayings” in Proverbs 22:22—24:22. The introduction to these sayings (Proverbs 22:17-21) makes it clear that he is writing for the purposes of drawing the reader to trust God and developing integrity in the reader.

   Text ~ Now we can choose B.

5. How can we discern between an abiding principle and a cultural matter?

   a. An abiding principle is trans-cultural and forever relevant. A cultural matter is restricted to the culture addressed and is relevant only to that culture.

   b. We must ask the following questions before we look at something as a “cultural issue.” As a general rule, commandments rest on abiding principle if they are grounded in:

      i. Created order: Are there any pre-fall mandates regarding this topic?

      ii. The nature of God: What can we learn about this topic from the character of God?

      iii. The Word of God: Are there any direct commands given?

      iv. Work of redemption: How do I apply my redeemed life to God’s Word?
Prepare for next week’s lesson by reading the following passages and noting any questions you have. (As you write down your questions, keep in mind what you have learned about Historical/Cultural Analysis).

- Ruth 3:6; 4:7; Deuteronomy 25:5 & 7-10
- Mark 7:11; Mark 7:1-13
- Matthew 25:1-13
- Mark 14:12-14
- John 16
- Luke 15:11-32
- Luke 10:30-37
- Deuteronomy 22:5

Homework: “Historical Cultural Analysis”

Nail It: Live by biblical principles. They will be applicable around the world.
4. Historical Cultural Analysis (cont’d)

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?

1. How do Ruth’s actions with Boaz on the threshing floor reflect the culture of that day? (3:6)
   List differences between our legal culture and the legal culture of that day (4:7; Deut 25:5; 7-10).

   Geography:
   Politics:
   Culture:
   Situation:
   Date:
   Recipients:
   Author:
   Text:

2. What is Corban? How would a historical understanding of Corban (Mark 7:11) help us to better understand Jesus’ remarks in Mark 7:1-13?

   Geography:
   Politics:
   Culture:
   Situation:
   Date:
   Recipients:
   Author:
   Text:

3. How is the carelessness of the five foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 magnified by a historical-cultural understanding of the parable?

   Geography:
   Politics:
   Culture:
   Situation:
   Date:
   Recipients:
   Author:
   Text:

“He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.” Psalm 1:3
4. What is incredibly unusual about Mark 14:12-14 in regard to the culture of ancient Palestine? Does a knowledge of this unusual circumstance supply any insight into the text?

Geography:
Politics:
Culture:
Situation:
Date:
Recipients:
Author:
Text:

5. Why were the scribes and Pharisees upset to see Jesus sitting with sinners (Luke 15:1-2; 19:1-7)? How does a historical-cultural understanding help one to understand this conflict?

Geography:
Politics:
Culture:
Situation:
Date:
Recipients:
Author:
Text:

6. Consider Israel’s response to the Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000 (John 16). How did their historical-cultural situation impact their understanding of that event?

Geography:
Politics:
Culture:
Situation:
Date:
Recipients:
Author:
Text:
7. How may a historical-cultural analysis aid in one’s understanding of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)? Especially in reference to the prodigal’s request for the inheritance? In reference to the misery of the prodigal? In reference to the father’s response at the prodigal’s return?

Geography:
Politics:
Culture:
Situation:
Date:
Recipients:
Author:
Text:

8. What would Jesus’ hearers understand him to mean when he said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23)? How might a historical-cultural analysis aid one to fully understand Jesus’ meaning?

Geography:
Politics:
Culture:
Situation:
Date:
Recipients:
Author:
Text:

9. How will a historical-cultural understanding of Jesus’ parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) bring out nuances (subtle qualities) that might be missed otherwise?

Geography:
Politics:
Culture:
Situation:
Date:
Recipients:
Author:
Text:

10. Some Christians on the basis of Deuteronomy 22:5 teach that a woman should not wear slacks or shorts. Is this a valid interpretation of this passage? Why or why not?
Homework: “Historical Cultural Analysis”

For all the following questions, include the passage or passages that led to your conclusion.

1. Why did the Apostle John write the gospel of John? How should this affect your understanding of the book?

2. Why did the Apostle John write his first epistle?

3. Who wrote Hebrews? Why can we be relatively certain that it was not the Apostle Paul? (Hint: Hebrews 2:1-4 and 13:23).

4. For what purpose did Paul write the letter to the Galatians?

5. For what purpose did Paul write the letter to the Romans?

6. For what purpose did Paul write the first letter to the Corinthians?
5. Contextual Analysis

I. HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

A. Understanding language means being aware of how words, phrases, and sentences fit together, gives us a paradigm to work from. Studying how texts fit together is called contextual analysis.

1. Smaller parts make a whole. There is a dynamic relationship between the parts and the whole.
   a. When insight is gained into the parts, you grasp more of the whole.
   b. When insight is gained of the whole, you grasp more of the parts.

2. When looking at a text, consider how it fits into:
   a. Immediate context
      i. Definition of context: the parts just before and after a word or passage, that determine its meaning—Websters
   b. Same sections
      i. Romans—sections are easily outlined.
      ii. James—more flexible.
      iii. Chapters—While by and large they are good, be careful not to assume that chapter divisions always give an accurate break (1 Peter 2:21-3:6).
   c. Same book
      i. Other statements on the topic in the same book.
      ii. Other books of same type by the same author (Paul’s epistles).
      iii. Other books of different style by the same author (John’s gospel, epistle, and apocalyptic combination)
   d. Same literary style
      i. Books of similar literary style by different authors (2 Peter and Jude; Kings and Chronicles; Matthew, Mark and Luke)
   e. Same Testament

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
f. Whole Bible
   i. Always keep in mind the whole story of creation, condemnation, redemption, salvation (new creation), grace, and eternity.
   ii. Any way you cut the Bible, it bleeds. How does the passage fit into the fact of Christ?
   iii. The Old Testament points to Jesus’ coming and how to live in light His coming.
   iv. The Gospels tell about Jesus’ coming to earth, and the rest of the New Testament points to Jesus’ return and how to live in light of His return.

3. Literary context diagram

B. A text without context is a pretext. Don’t misuse Scripture to reinforce your ideas.

1. Matthew 5:43-44
   a. If we begin with the idea that to speak in love means soft words, we can misuse Scripture to reinforce that idea. Rather, we must look at Scripture in literary context, to see what Jesus said.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”
Matthew 5:43-44
2. Example Matthew 5:43-44 Jesus’ teaching on love.
   a. Whole Bible:
      
      * I am condemned as a sinner
      * I am justified by faith in Jesus’ Christ, the Son of God.
      * God is working sanctification in me, a believer.
      * My home is in glory!

      Not as much teaching on love in OT. God’s love seems overshadowed by His concern for holiness.

   b. Same testament:

      1 Corinthians 13, Galatians 5:22, 2 Corinthians 5:14, and James 2:8 = we could preach a message that love means soft words.

   c. Same book

      If considered with Jesus’ other teachings on love as recorded by Matthew (Matthew 10:34-39 and Matthew 23), we get a much more accurate picture of what Jesus meant.

C. Example: Sections in Romans 1-8

   1. Paul wrote Romans with easily identifiable sections, wherein we can learn four basic doctrines of the church. As we look at any of the verses in Romans 1-8, it’s helpful to think of them in light of the doctrine being taught in the section.

      a. Romans 1:17-3:20—The Doctrine of Condemnation

      b. Romans 3:21 – 5:21—The Doctrine of Justification

      c. Romans 6:1 – 8:18—The Doctrine of Sanctification

      d. Romans 8:18 – 8:39—The Doctrine of Glorification
A text without context is a pretext.

1. Read the first four sections found in Romans, writing out the meaning of the verse that is singled out:

Romans 1:17-3:20 Condemnation
1:21 ~ ______________________________________________________

Romans 3:21 – 5:21 Justification
4:5 ~ ______________________________________________________

Romans 6:1 – 8:18 Sanctification
8:13 ~ ______________________________________________________

Romans 8:18 – 8:39 Glorification
8:37 ~ ______________________________________________________

2. Consider Romans 3:23 using contextual analysis.
   a. What does Romans 3:23 mean to you at first glance?

   b. Explain Romans 3:23 in light of immediate context:

   c. Explain Romans 3:23 in light of section:

   d. Explain Romans 3:23 in light of same book:

   e. Explain Romans 3:23 in light of other epistles of Paul:

   f. Explain Romans 3:23 in light of NT epistles in general:

   g. Explain Romans 3:23 in light of the New Testament:

   h. Now, what does Romans 3:23 mean in light of the whole Bible?

Nail It:
God’s Word in context will motivate me to love and serve Him.
I. LANGUAGE HAS TWO STRUCTURES: SURFACE STRUCTURE AND DEEP STRUCTURE

A. Why does this matter?

1. If we understand the difference between surface structure and deep structure, it will help us see the difference between various translations.

B. Surface Structure: The basic thing that needs to be grasped is the nature of language as a system of symbols of meaning.

1. What is the meaning which the symbols represented to the author that he wanted the reader to grasp?

   a. Languages have sounds and languages make different sounds. The people who study this call it phonology. (eg.- rolling r’s in German, hard k sounds in Eskimo)

   b. Words are comprised of letters spelled in a particular way, and changing the spelling slightly changes the meaning of the word. (eg. “s” makes a word plural)

   c. Words not only have sounds and are made of letters, they fit together in relationship, or syntax (construction). There are syntax or construction rules for every language. (eg. God ist Die Liebe, vs. God is love)

   d. Some words have several meanings. When we talk about meaning of words, that is called semantics. (e.g. “agape” means concept of unconditional love vs. “agapeo” means benevolent actions of unconditional love. Both are translated “love” in 1 John 4).

   e. All these terms and facts about language have to do with the study of surface structure.

C. Deep Structure: The basic thing in deep structure is overall meaning.

1. What we’re really after is not the surface structure, but the meaning of the message of the passage (deep structure). More than one surface structure can convey the same deep structure.

   a) The message of the words (iconics), the situation (pragmatics) and the symbolic figures of speech (historical situation, world view, goals, and way of por-
traying situations) that were used occurred long before the words were written down.

b) The surface structure was combined - codified (encoded). As we read, we de-codify (decode). To do this correctly, we must grasp the culture and the semantics of the author.

c) This does not occur in a vacuum - we bring our own words, situations, goals, and ways of viewing situations.

d) Thus, we need built in safeguards to prevent us from seeing deep structure that we want to see (to suit our situation, ministry, or desires).

II. UNDERSTANDING BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

A. All of our translations come from manuscripts, none of which are original yet all are extremely ancient.

1. Some translations are based on a preference of age, and some on a preference of number of manuscripts.
   a. KJV – from scripts 1000 years after the time of the NT, but the most readily available (greater in number).
   b. NIV – from scripts 300 years after time of the NT (earlier scripts).

2. Some translations are based on the theory of dynamic equivalence, and some on the theory of formal equivalency.
   a. Dynamic equivalence (deep structure) – meaning is not tied to form because the same outward forms sometimes express different meanings. Deep structure is conveyed.
   b. Formal equivalence (surface structure) - stresses literal translation or the manner in which the original was stated. The original manner surface structure is kept through searching for similar words, phrases, forms, and syntax.
   c. Free translations don’t observe either equivalence. They seek to convey dynamics, not equivalence.

3. Examples of translations that follow these methods:
   a. Dynamic equivalence: NIV, NEV
   b. Formal equivalence: ASV, KJV, NKJV, RSV
   c. Free translations: Philips, Living Bible

B. Which is better?

1) Suggest staying with same version for personal reading so you will have familiarity.

2) Occasionally reading a passage from another version will enhance understanding.

3) Suggest using more than one translation for personal study. Using a literal translation with formal equivalence as your primary source assures
a true surface structure, then using a dynamic equivalence translation as your secondary source allows for personal dynamic equivalent understanding as you study.

III. UNDERSTANDING WORD STUDY

A. There is a lot of dangerous word study going on these days with all the literature available to us. We must be careful not to use word studies apart from context.

B. Unless a word is seen in the context of other words, there is no precise range.
   1) “battery”
      a) the = electrical meaning
      b) charge with = criminal meaning
      c) manager charged the = sports meaning.

Study of words must be more than just a study of historic potencies of the semantic range of meaning – it must involve actualities in particular contextual situations.

C. There are two ways of studying the use of words.
   1) Diochronic study = the use of a word through time, the ranges of word meanings. Don’t assume that words keep meaning over time.
      a) “Charity” in 1 Corinthians 13 is not about giving to the poor, rather about love.
      b) “Hilarious” givers in 2 Corinthians 8 does not mean chuckling, rather a deep abiding joy.

   2) Synchronic study = the use of a word in simultaneous relationship to other words, the actual meaning of the word in a semantic field.
      a) Be interested in the moment of time, the immediate context of the statement.
      b) Giving priority to the synchronic approach keeps words closer to the original context.

3) Warnings:
   a) Avoid illegitimate totality transfer = thinking that every possible thing the word could mean is what it does mean.
   b) Recognize the distinction between deep and surface structure. The same form can have more than one meaning, and the same meaning can be conveyed through different forms.
Homework: “Language Use & Translations”

As we study the Bible to learn what it says, we must avoid superficial interpretation. This is what happens when people sit around saying, “What does this verse mean to you?” It also happens when people conduct a Bible study by doing a word study of parts of a verse and addressing it to their situation, while taking the verse out of context.

1. **Read 1 Timothy 5:17.** It’s important that Scripture has been studied properly to see what it is saying. What does 1 Timothy 5:17 tell us that the job of the elders in preaching and teaching is like? ________________________________

2. **Read 2 Corinthians 2:17a.** What does Paul say about those who corrupt the Word of God to fit their own ideas? ________________________________

3. **Two examples of the importance of language use:**
   a. **Read Hebrews 6:1 & 7:11.** Find the word *perfection.* Read Hebrews 6 & 7 entirely. As this word *perfection* is studied in the relationship to the full text, you’ll see that in this passage, it has to do with salvation, not spiritual maturity.
   b. **Read 1 Corinthians 4:1.** Find the word *minister.* What do you think of when you hear the word minister? An official position like the minister of defense? It sounds like Paul is saying that being a minister of Christ is a really great position. Yet the Greek word is *huperetes.*

   *Huperetes*: a third-level galley slave on a ship.

   Now that you know the meaning for *minister* that Paul actually used, how would you write out the meaning of 1 Corinthians 4:1? ________________________________

   How are you a minister of Christ? ________________________________

A book you may find helpful if you are interested in looking up an English word and learning the Greek meaning is: W. E. Vines, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.* (Moody Press: 1985)
I. LITERARY STYLES AND DEVICES IN SCRIPTURE

A. Literary Analysis begins with identifying the literary device or style used in a given passage.

1. The more we understand the literary devices used by the author (and the literary style in which they write), the better we will understand the intended meaning.

2. After we identify the literary devices or styles being used by the author, it helps to understand the rules governing that device or style.

B. Ask these questions before an in-depth study of a passage.

1. What predominant literary style (or genre) comprises the text being studied? Next week we begin to look at the literary styles found in Scripture.

2. What literary devices are present? Today we will consider 12 fascinating literary devices that are used in Scripture.

II. LITERARY DEVICES

A. Personification - “poetic device by which inanimate objects or animals are given human characteristics”

1. Romans 8:19—longing of creation
2. Psalm 96:10—
3. Romans 6—sin as a cruel taskmaster

B. Hyperbole - “a statement intentionally exaggerated for effect, and not meant to be taken literally; overstatement”

1. Psalm 6:6—weary with sighing I drench my couch with tears
2. Matthew 7:8—
3. Matthew 23:24—

C. Simile - “figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another”

1. Psalm 42:1—as the deer pants
2. Matthew 9:36—

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
D. Metaphor - “figure of speech in which a word or a phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them; an implied comparison between two things that are basically unlike”
   1. Matthew 7:6—do not throw pearls before pigs
   2. Matthew 5:14—you are the light of the world, like a city set on a hill

E. Understatement - “smoothing things over a bit; euphemism”
   1. Act 1:25—Judas turned aside to his own place (hell)
   2. Judges 3:24—“attending to his needs” (going to the bathroom)

F. Interrogation - - “Rhetorical questions”
   1. Romans 8:31—If God be for us who can be against us?

G. Apostrophe - “Taking to an inanimate (lifeless) object”
   1. 1 Cor. 15:55—Rhetorical question with apostrophe, “Death, where is your victory?” is a very strong figure of speech.

H. Paradox - “Doesn’t make sense”
   1. John 1:10—The world which was made through Him did not know Him or receive Him.
   2. Proverbs 12:10—Mercy of the wicked is cruel

I. Oxymoron - “Contradiction of terms at first glance”
   1. Romans 1:20—God’s invisible attributes are clearly seen
   2. Ephesians 3:19—Know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (means you can’t know it fully and have to keep getting better at it all your life)

J. Irony or Satire - “Say one thing but mean another; dry type of humor”
   1. Psalm 2:3—Dark laughter of sarcasm
   2. Matthew 23:31-37—Jesus pronouncing woes on Pharisees when His deep longing was that they believe.
   3. 2 Corinthians 12:13—Paul says he did not become a burden. He has not wronged them and if they want to accuse him, he says, “Well, excuse me, please forgive me this wrong” (which he hadn’t done).
   4. Galatians 5:12—Paul uses biting satire (implications re circumcision)

K. Allegory - “a story in which people, things, and happenings have a symbolic meaning”
   1. Ephesians 6:10-17—armor of God

L. Symbols and Symbolic Action - “signs that suggest rather than state meaning; we must make the connection; sometimes the author explains it, sometimes gives clues; sometimes we can pick it up from historical context”
   1. Miraculous Symbols
a. Exodus 3:2—burning bush  
   b. Exodus 7:9-10—Aaron’s staff became a serpent  

2. Visionary Symbols  
   a. Daniel 2:7—four kingdoms  

3. Material Objects  
   a. Isaiah 1:18—Colors scarlet and white  
   b. 1 Corinthians 3—Ministry is referred to as gold, silver  

4. Symbolic Actions  
   a. Ezekiel 4,5—Bizarre things symbolize God’s prophecy  
   b. Jeremiah 18, Romans 9—Image of potter and clay  
   d. John 13:1-17—Washing feet in symbol of humble servitude  

5. Baptism and Communion (Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 10)  
   * Be careful not to undermine the importance of these by saying it’s a mere symbol. These two ordinances are commanded by God and He uses them in our lives.  

6. Symbols must be understood flexibly as they don’t always have the same connotations  
   a. Concept of lion  
      i. 1 Peter—describes Satan as a lion  
      ii. Revelation—describes the Lord Jesus Christ as a lion.  
   b. Leaven  
      i. Matthew 6—refers to evil and false teaching  
      ii. Leviticus 6:17—used in some offerings  
      iii. Matthew 13—refers to something good.  

7. Interpretive Principles for Figures and Symbols  
   a. The author may be using figures of speech to get the listener’s attention, or keep truth from people in rebellion.  
      i. Mark 4:11,12—Concealed from outside  
      ii. John 1:5—Darkness  
   b. Identify whether it is symbolic  
      i. Does it make good sense? Then view it literally.  
      ii. Follow historical/cultural/literary context. If it seems to be a figure of speech, sense what is being implied based on that time in history, not on our culture.  

8. In addition to imagining, identifying and interpreting, if we imitate Scriptures use of figurative language, it make us better communicators.
Homework: “How Words Are Used In Scripture”

1. **Read James 4:13-17.** What attitude is confronted in vs. 13? ___________
   
   What is revealed in vs. 14? _________________________________
   
   Have you been deceived by thinking you have control over what life brings your way? _________________________________

2. **Read Hosea 6:4 and 13:3.** What symbolism (images) did Hosea use to represent Israel’s weak love for God (Hosea 6:4)? _________________________________
   
   The symbolism of being easily blown away refers to people who trusted in idols (Hosea 3:13). What word pictures does Hosea use? _________________________________

3. **Read Psalm 1:4.** What symbolism is used to represent wicked people in comparison to the righteous? _________________________________

4. **Read Isaiah 17:13.** What symbolism does Isaiah use to describe people who oppose God? _________________________________

5. **Read James 4:13-16.** This passage teaches us to rely on God, using Old Testament symbolism to reveal how futile dependence on any other thing is. When we try to do things on our own, our pride is revealed. To live a life of humble reliance on God, we must confess the sin of self-sufficiency. What should we say instead of relying on ourselves, our plans, and agendas (vs. 15)? _________________________________

   A humble attitude will manifest itself in humble actions of obedience to God. If we are arrogantly acting according to our own agenda, what is that (vs. 17)? _________________________________

**Nail It:**
Confess my sin of depending on anything other than God and His Word.
8. Literary Style: Old Testament Narrative

I. BIBLICAL NARRATIVE IN GENERAL

A. Main Rule: Historical narratives are to be interpreted by the instructive passages (clear commands or teachings).

1. God knows it’s easier to keep people’s attention with story. He gave us the Bible in a manner that gets and keeps our attention.

2. It’s important to recognize that narrative units flow together to develop a coherent theme for the entire Bible. (Don’t get bogged down with lists such as genealogies, they have their part in communicating the theme.)

B. Other helpful interpretive items:

1. Occasionally, the author intrudes into the narrative to give the reader a better understanding of the meaning of the passage (1 Kings 16:19).

2. Repetition of key themes can reveal the author’s intent.
   a. Repetition of various recurring themes are used by authors to make their point.
   b. Look for end stress.
      i. The Book of Judges is full of the cycle of prosperity, sin followed by judgment upon Israel that led to repentance, and God’s deliverance (through the person of one of the judges). The end stress of many stories in Judges and Kings is that they “did evil in the sight of God.”

3. Key dialogue from authoritative speakers (prophets, apostles, good priests, etc.) should be relied upon as true and authoritative, unless the narrator reveals otherwise.

4. Comparing a character’s life-style and character in light of previous revelation is a good guide to understanding whether they are righteous and wicked.

5. Watch the story (characters, plot, etc.). How do literary units or episodes fit together and develop a coherent theme for an entire book? Think of the story in terms of episodes, books, and the entire Bible.
   a. Example: The book of Joshua is full of episodes that are part of the story of the Israelites taking over the land of Canaan. It
b. helps complete the picture of God’s people Israel, and provides continuity in that throughout all of the Bible, God’s people obey His Word and courageously serve Him (Joshua 1:7-9; 23:6, 8, 11, 14-15).

6) Feel the direction.
   a) Tragedy: prosperity to adversity
   b) Comedy: adversity to prosperity
   c) Adam and Eve’s story is tragedy, Joseph story has comedic movement, Job’s story is comedic; gospels move from tragedy of cross toward comedic movement of hope of resurrection

II. OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

A. Extent

1. OT narrative involves all of Genesis, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther; and parts of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Jonah, and Haggai. So, we must handle it—such a great part of Scripture is not irrelevant.

B. Interpretative principles:

1. Old Testament narratives are not just stories of Old Testament people, but first and foremost true stories about what God did for, to, and through His people.
   a. God is always the main character!
   b. The Old Testament is our spiritual history, our heritage.

2. Look for the two chief types of characters:
   a. Believers
   b. Unbelievers and undecided onlookers.

3. Always look for points of crisis, climax, and resolution.

4. Think about the relationship of the parts to the whole.

C. Application Questions (for both Old and New Testament history):

1. What does this passage reveal about God and his ways with mankind?

2. What does the drama show us about the life God blesses or judges?

3. Is there activity that we should imitate or avoid? How might we do so today?
D. An example

1. Genesis 12-50

a. Genesis 1-11 comprises at least several thousand years of information, while Genesis 12-50 comprises only several hundred years.

b. In the relationship of parts to the whole, we can conclude that the whole book is quite selective, not telling all that occurred. We realize that Gen. 1-11 is much more selective and quite compressed, while Gen. 12-50 is comparably expanded.

c. In Genesis 12, God begins to build Himself a people based on the seed of Abraham.

d. What does the passage reveal about God and His ways with mankind? God is interested in preserving His people in obedience to Him. This was frustrated in the days of Adam, then also under the human government that began with Noah. Genesis 12-50 introduces God’s people Israel, whose story continues to unfold throughout the Old Testament.

e. What does the drama show us about God’s blessing? In looking at the end stress of the story, we see that God meant for good what had been meant for evil (Genesis 50:20).

“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people.”

Genesis 50:20
Homework: “Old Testament Narrative”

   Identify a crisis in the narrative (Genesis 22:7). _____________________
   ________________________________

   What is the climax (high point) of the narrative (Genesis 22:12)? ______
   ________________________________

   What resolution is seen in the narrative (Genesis 22:13)? ______________
   ________________________________

   What does this passage reveal about God and His ways with mankind (Genesis 22:14)? ________________________________

   What does the drama show us about the life God blesses or judges? _____
   ________________________________

   Is there activity here that we should imitate or avoid? How might you do so? ________________________________

2. The Book of Judges is full of the cycle of prosperity, sin followed by judgment upon Israel that led to repentance, and God’s deliverance (through the person of one of the judges). We can learn a lesson by noting the end stress of the narratives. What is the recurring idea in each of these verses?
   Judges 2:10 – ________________________________
   Judges 3:12 – ________________________________
   Judges 4:1 – ________________________________
   Judges 6:1 – ________________________________
   Judges 10:6 – ________________________________
   Judges 13:1 – ________________________________
   Judges 17:6 – ________________________________
   Judges 21:25 – ________________________________

   Judges reveals our need for a Savior King. What can you personally learn from the failure of Israel during the time period of Judges? ________________
   ________________________________

Nail It: All the themes and end stresses of Scripture point to the gospel. Identify ways my conversation can point to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I. NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY

A. 59% of NT is narrative—not just the gospels. Acts is also a narrative.
   1. Is Acts narrative, or does it tell us how to live today?
      a. Is Luke’s intent to describe the progress and growth of the early church?
      b. Is Luke’s intent to lay down a pattern for the church at all times?
      c. Conclusion: It is Luke’s intent to show the expansion of the church from Jews to Gentiles, not by man’s design, but by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.
         i. Acts is a description of the early church moving from its Jerusalem-based, Judaism-oriented beginnings, to a worldwide, Gentile-predominant phenomenon. It also serves as a pattern for the church to follow (Acts 2:42).

II. NEW TESTAMENT NARRATIVE

   1. Jesus Christ is the unifying focus, the central character of the gospels.
      a. The gospels give us episodes in Jesus’ life. They are not straight historical accounts in chronological order.
   2. The gospels are thematic portraits of Jesus Christ. Each writer highlights a main idea about Jesus, and arranged the episodes they tell about to present a specific theme.
      a. Matthew:
         i. A Jew writing to Jews about the King of the Jews.
         ii. Theme: Jesus is the King of the Jews
         iii. Central teaching: Kingdom of God (Matthew 5)

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?

Nail It:
The four gospels show us Jesus Christ, God in the flesh. Acts shows us how the church continues to be the body of Je-

When reading NT narrative, observe the unity of the story, noting how each episode relates to the overarching framework and how the episodes relate to each other as the story unfolds.
~ Ryken
b. Mark
   i. A Jew writing to the Romans about Jesus the Servant.
   ii. Theme: Jesus is the perfect Servant
   iii. Central teaching: Service (Mark 10:45)

c. Luke
   i. A Gentile writing (Luke) to the Greeks about Jesus the man.
   ii. Theme: Jesus is the perfect, humble man.

d. John
   i. A Jew writing to the world about the Divine Son of God.
   ii. Theme: Jesus is the Son of God.
   iii. Central teaching: Jesus is God (“I am” passages)
       (1) John 6:35—I am the Bread of Life
       (2) John 8:12—I am the Light of the world
       (3) John 10:7—I am the Door
       (4) John 10:11—I am the Good Shepherd
       (5) John 11:25—I am the Resurrection
       (6) John 14:6—I am the Way
       (7) John 15:5 I am the Vine

3. The gospels include a wide variety of literary devices. Jesus taught by using parables (which we will study closely later), and other devices including:
   i. Hyperbole (Matthew 5:29-30)
   ii. Proverbs (Matthew 6:21)
iii. Similes and metaphors (Matthew 10:16; 5:13)


v. Questions (Matthew 17:25)

vi. Irony (Matthew 16:2-3)

4. The gospels present both historical narrative and direct teaching passages.

B. Analytical Questions:

1. How is the material arranged? What theme is portrayed by the collected material?

2. What type of literary device is being used?

3. Is the text a historical narrative or direct teaching passage?

C. Important: A proper understanding of the Kingdom of God!

1. “One dare not think he or she can properly interpret the Gospels without a clear understanding of the concept of the kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus.” ~Fee and Stewart

2. “A second question involving the kingdom (and the interpretation of the parables) is almost unanimously agreed on by evangelical scholars. This is that in some senses the kingdom has come, in other senses it is continuing, and in some senses it will not ultimately come until the eschatological completion of this age.” ~Virkler

Matthew is often called a Jewish gospel with little relevance for today. Yet it is the only gospel to use the word church (Matthew 16:19), and gives the church her great commission (Matthew 28:19,20). In looking at the content of the narrative, we receive great encouragement for people from all backgrounds and circumstances. When we understand who Matthew was writing for, we praise God for His mercy to us.
 Homework: New Testament Narrative


What does this passage reveal about God and his ways with mankind?

What does the drama show us about the life God blesses or judges?

Is there activity here that we should imitate or avoid? How might we do so today?

Matthew is often called a Jewish gospel with little relevance for today, rather for the future kingdom, yet it is the only gospel to use the word church (16:19) and great commission (28:19,20).

2. Read Matthew 1 Who was most spiritually in tune with God’s plan?

3. End stress and theme of Matthew’s writing. Look at what is stressed in these verses. Determine who Matthew wrote this gospel for.

Matthew 12:21 ________________________________

Matthew 24:30 ________________________________

Matthew 24:14 ________________________________

Matthew 28:20 ________________________________

Matthew 1:23 ________________________________

Nail It: As I recognize God’s mercy and unfailing love, my heart is filled with love for Him, resulting in obedience.
10. Literary Style: Biblical Poetry

Nail It: Scriptural poetry evokes love for God.

As we enjoy the beauty of poetry and learn to appreciate its form, we must not get so caught up in the form that it overrides function. Never stop asking, “What is this poem teaching me?”

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?

I. BIBLICAL POETRY

A. One third of the Old Testament is written in the form of Hebrew poetry.

1. Poetic form is the most prevalent form used in Scripture next to story (narrative).
   a. Poetry is less concerned with praise description than with evoking emotions and creating certain impressions (Exodus 14 & 15; Judges 4 & 5).
   b. Poetry addresses imagination, emotion and our sense of beauty.
   c. Poetry is a powerful tool for memorizing.

2. Hebrew poetry is characterized by rhythm of ideas rather than sound.

3. Following the importance of imagination as a key feature in poetry, one must recognize parallelisms of thought.
   a. “In parallelisms, the second line looks back on the first, completing it, commenting on it, restating it, expanding it, or intensifying it” (Doriani, Getting the Message, 87)
   b. Three main types of parallelisms
      i) Synonymous - second line or part restates the first line using a slightly altered manner of expression (Psalm 1:1; 2:4).
      ii) Synthetic - when two parts are set in contrast to each other (Psalm 1:6; Psalm 37:17,21,22; Luke 1:53).
      iii) Antithetic or step – first part of passage creates a sense of expectation which is completed by the second part, which develops the thought of the first line without repeating any of it (Psalm 1:3,4; Psalm 23:3; Psalm 104:5).
   c. Chiastic poetry. There are multiple examples from Genesis through Revelation.
   d. Chiastic poetry’s design reveals an even deeper message than the story of the poem, as you’ll see from the example.
i. Follow the main points of the story of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 12-21, using the chiastic style in which it was written.

*ch. 12a Promise given (son as heir)*

*ch. 12b Sarah and King (sister)*

*ch. 13a Lot & Sodom (entrance)*

*ch. 14 Abraham & Nations (creates alliance and frees nephew)*

*ch. 15:6 Covenant initiated*

*ch. 16 Hagar: Sarah tries to control by taking matters into own hands.*

Sarah takes human initiative in trying to bring about God’s story. This low point of faith is framed by God’s giving of promise and confirming it. The message in the form of poetry is: **God fulfills His promises despite human failure and lack of faith in God’s ability to keep His promises.**

*ch. 17 Covenant confirmed*

*ch. 18 Abraham & Nations (intercedes for Sodom/Gomorrah)*

*ch. 19 Lot in Sodom (exit) – rescued out before destruction*

*ch. 20 Sarah and King (sister)*

*ch. 21 Promise fulfilled (Isaac is born)*

ii. Each single story is part of the larger story that communicates a main point. Each single story has a parallel story of a similar theme. The people would be conditioned to listen for this pattern in a largely verbal culture (no page numbers or periods to end sentences).

iii. Note that the “Sarah and King” story happened repeatedly, not just twice. It was their lifestyle everywhere they went (20:13). The story is included twice in chiastic form to make the remembering and retelling of the story easier, and to emphasize the point.

iii. There is a lesson in the design. The main point is God’s great grace.

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1 Peter 3:6 “For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands. As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.”
**B. Interpreting Biblical Poetry**

1. Pay attention to the setting of the poem. How do the verses fit together and what is the flow of thought of the entire poem?
   
a. The Song of Solomon is a frank love poem that celebrates the sensuous relationship of a husband and wife.
   
i. Song of Solomon 4:1-5 is a description of the woman’s body. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 teaches wives that their body belongs to their husbands.
   
ii. Song of Solomon 5:10-15 is a description of the man’s body. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 teaches husbands that their body belongs to their husbands.

2. Develop reflective and meditative abilities.
   
a. Pay attention to figures of speech and understand them by remaining in close touch with the writer’s culture which may use different imagery than our culture.
   
i. Song of Solomon is full of garden images. Do you think of your marriage bed as a beautiful garden?
   
ii. Song of Solomon 8:8-9 describe an unmarried girl. She is to be like a guarded wall and a boarded door.

b. Avoid simplistic hyper-literal interpretation by thinking and sensing what the poet is really saying.

3. Don’t forget the basic questions.
   
a. What does a passage say?
   
b. What does it mean?
   
c. How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
   
d. How can I train to apply my life to it?

"Make my garden breathe out fragrance, let its spices be wafted abroad. May my beloved come into his garden and eat its choice fruits.”

*Song of Solomon 4:16*
1. Read Psalm 67

Read vs. 1 and 7 What is the writer asking God to do in each of these verses?____
__________________________________________________________________

Read vs. 2 and 6 What word do you find in both of these verses?_____________
__________________________________________________________________

Read vs. 3 and 5 What are the people to do?_____________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Read vs. 4 What is the central point of this passage?_______________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. Write down the main ideas to identify the chaism in Psalm 67

Vs. 1____________________________________

Vs. 2______________________________________

Vs. 3_______________________________________

Vs. 4_______________________________________

Vs. 5_______________________________________

Vs. 6_______________________________________

Vs. 7_______________________________________

3. Determine which type of Parallelism the following passages contain:

Synonymous, Step, or Antithetical.

Numbers 6:24-26 ______________________
Psalm 8:3-4 ______________________
Psalm 20:7 ______________________
Psalm 24:3-6 ______________________
Psalm 92:9 ______________________
Psalm 95:6 ______________________
Psalm 139:4 ______________________
Proverbs 1:7 ______________________
Prov. 3:1 ______________________
Isaiah 42:2 ______________________
Isaiah 42:3 ______________________
Isaiah 53:5 ______________________

Nail It:
Choose a form of poetry that you like, and write a poem of praise to God.

Homework: "Biblical Poetry"
I. PSALMS

A. Two great purposes of the Psalms (not the only purposes)

1. To encourage us to consider God’s ways.
   a. The Psalms do not teach a system of doctrine.
   b. The Psalms demonstrate the importance of deliberate meditation on things that God has done for us.
   c. They are full of prayer with the example of controlled thoughts on God’s Word.

2. To help us to express ourselves to God.
   a. A wide range of human emotions and responses is covered.
   b. The Psalms demonstrate how we can relate honestly to God.
   c. They encourage us worship God in fellowship with other believers.

B. Extent and types

1. According to titles: David wrote 73, Moses wrote 1, Solomon wrote 2, and the sons of Asaph and Korah several.

2. Types of Psalms (there may be some overlap)
   a. Laments - individual and corporate laments that express struggles, sufferings, and disappointments to the Lord
      i. Individual—(3, 22, 31, 39, 42, 57, 71, 120, 139, 142).
      ii. Corporate—(12, 44, 80, 94, 137).

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
b. Thanksgiving - express joy to the Lord because something had gone well.
   i. Individual—(18, 30, 32, 34, 40, 66, 92, 116, 118, 138).

c. Hymns of Praise - center on praise of God for who He is (8, 19, 33, 66, 100, 103, 104, 111, 113, 114, 117, 145-149).

d. Salvation History Psalms - review the history of God’s saving works (78, 105, 106, 135, 136).

e. Psalms of Celebration and Affirmation -
   i. Covenant renewal liturgies—(50, 81).
   ii. Royal psalms—(2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 144).
   iii. Enthronement psalms—(24, 29, 47, 93, 95-99).
   iv. Songs of Zion or Jerusalem—(46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122).

BLESS the LORD,
O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies.
Psalm 103:1-4
Let me hear joy and gladness, let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
Psalm 51:8

The Psalms are full of David's experiences. In them we are reading David's personal account of suffering under God's wrath.

f. Wisdom Psalms—(36, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133).

g. Songs of Trust - God can be trusted even in times of despair (11, 16, 33, 27, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131).

h. Messianic—Christ’s experience is greater than David's experience. These Psalms are typological and flow out of David’s life experience. David sets the pattern which Christ repeats in intensification (2, 8, 22, 35, 69, 89, 102, 118).

i. Requests for Divine Justice - invoke judgment of God upon His enemies. Recognize that while the psalmist wishes for God to be vindicated; they are not mean spirited, rather indicate a profound appreciation for God's holiness, and a concern for His Kingdom (7, 39, 83, 137, 139).
Homework: “Psalms”

Six Days of Meditating on God from Psalm 139

Day 1  Read Psalm 139:1-6
Is there anything about you that God does not know? _______________________
What does God know before you think it? _________________________________
Will you ever be able to outsmart God? _________________________________
Today I will meditate on: _______________________________________________

Day 2  Read Psalm 139:7-12
Where is God? _______________________________________________________
Can you escape God? _________________________________________________
Does God know what’s going on in your life even in your darkest moments? ______
Today I will meditate on: _______________________________________________

Day 3  Read Psalm 139:13-16
Did God know how you would look before you were born? _________________
Did you turn out the way God intended? _________________________________
Does God know how long your life will last? _____________________________
Today I will meditate on: _______________________________________________

Day 4  Read Psalm 139:17-18
Are God’s thoughts of you good thoughts? _______________________________
How often does God think of you? _____________________________________
Does God ever leave you? _____________________________________________
Today I will meditate on: _______________________________________________

Day 5  Read Psalm 139:19-22
Have you learned to hate what God desires? ______________________________
Are you willing to give up things He hates if you are doing those same things? ____
What is something you have stopped doing because God wanted you to? ______
Today I will meditate on: _______________________________________________

Day 6  Read Psalm 139:23-24
Do you want God to search and know your heart? _________________________
Do you want to know what is in your heart that displeases Him? _____________
Will you allow God to lead you away from the sin in your heart? ___________
Today I will meditate on: _______________________________________________

Nail It:
Take time to consider God’s ways and express praise to Him daily.

Homework: “Psalms”

Take time to consider God’s ways and express praise to Him daily.

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Homework: “Psalms”

Take time to consider God’s ways and express praise to Him daily.
12. Literary Style: Wisdom Literature

I. WISDOM LITERATURE

A. Understanding Biblical Wisdom (Proverbs)

1. Proverbs teach practical righteousness before God in every area of life. This discipline of skillfully applying one’s life to truth must be passed on from one generation to the next.
   a. Proverbs contain practical life skills, or rules, for acknowledging God in all our ways.
   b. Proverbs are written to provide wisdom for keeping God’s law in the specifics of life.
   c. Proverbs are brief wise sayings. Their purpose is not to guarantee success, but to promote a life lived in the fear of God.

2. Every proverb is summed up under one of two headings: wisdom or folly.

3. Don’t forget general principles of Bible study:
   a. Historical context helps you understand the imagery and mindset. Recognize the limitations of our knowledge of historical context.
   b. Types of collections of proverbs:
      i. Parallel (A-B-A-B)
      Proverbs 10:27-30
      ii. Chiastic (A-B-B-A) or (A-B-A)
      Proverbs 12:19-22; 31:10-31

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”
Psalm 90:12

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
iii. Catchword collection
Proverbs 15:15-17

iv. Thematic collection
Proverbs 10:31-32

v. Inclusion collection
Proverbs 11:23-27

vi. Random repetition for instructive purposes
Proverbs 17

b. When reading Proverbs and other wisdom literature, interpret parts in light of the whole (literary context).
   i. Proverbs is intended to be helpful even when read in short portions, but when Job and Ecclesiastes are read only in bits and pieces, the overall message is neglected, and the line of argument is not followed.
   ii. Job—Don’t take Job’s friends advice as good wisdom. Job’s friends speak biblical theology, but are rebuked.

c. When the Proverbs refer to God they are undeniable and unchangeable laws.
   i. Proverbs 15:3

d. Be careful not to negate what is being taught as wisdom by stating that it is not a command (don’t deny the wisdom of description by saying it’s not prescription).
   i. Only a fool would disregard wisdom by stating that it is only useful as descriptive for that time only. The message of Proverbs transcends thousands of years.
B. The problem of bad advice in the Bible (Job)

1. Job’s friends were wrong to assume he had sinned, and accuse him of evil (Eliphaz in Job 4:7; Bildad in Job 8:3,4,13; Zophar in Job 11:4). God calls Job a blameless and upright man (Job 1:8; 1:1; 1:22; 2:3,10).

   a. To use what the friends have said against Job as statements of truth would be using error.

   b. Read Job 22:21-25. This is a speech by Eliphaz (the first of Job’s friends to give a speech, in the third and final round of speeches).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eliphaz calls Job to:</th>
<th>Result will be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VS. 21 Submit to God</td>
<td>Peace with God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS. 22 Accept instruction</td>
<td>Words laid up in heart - renewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS. 23 Return to God</td>
<td>Restoration, be built up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS. 24 &amp; 25 Remove injustice and lay down wealth</td>
<td>GOD WOULD BE THE WEALTH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i. Sounds like a Biblical call to repentance, doesn’t it. Yet in Job 42:8, God tells Eliphaz that unless he repents, he will deal with him according to his folly because He had not spoken of God what was right.

ii. It is clear that Eliphaz wrongly and rigidly applied correct theology by insisting that Job had sinned. This is called “Rigid Retribution Theology”.

Job knows the fragility of life. He loses his children, possessions, and health. What does God do after Job’s friends accuse him? God helps Job see his frailty to an even greater degree by telling him vividly of His greatness. Sovereign Almighty God presents Himself to Job. God is the answer to all of our frailties. How do you respond when you finally get your eyes off your frailty and onto God’s greatness? Respond like Job in utter humility. Recognize your pride before God, and repent.

~Job 42:1-6
Homework: “Wisdom Literature”

Foolishness of Pride vs. Wisdom of Humility

Read Job 41:34.
After God gives Job a vivid picture of the might of His creation, which responds
to every circumstance in exactly the manner God has created it to respond, God
compared His creation to man. What does he call man? Sons of p_________

Job 42:1-6 Does Job defend himself? What is Job’s only response to God? ____

Job 1:21 How does this verse show us that Job humbly accepted God’s sover-
eignty? _____________________________________________________________

What time in your life have you had to humbly accept God’s sovereignty? ____

___________________________________________________________________

Read Ecclesiastes 12.
What is the end stress of Ecclesiastes?

LESSONS FROM PROVERBS

What uncompromisingly firm lessons on pride do you learn from these verses:

Proverbs 8:13 How does God feel about pride? ___________________________

Proverbs 11:2 What comes with pride? _________________________________

Proverbs 16:18 What does pride precede? _______________________________

Proverbs 13:10 What does pride breed? _________________________________

Proverbs 16:5 What does the Lord detest? _______________________________

Proverbs 29:23 What does pride do to a man? ____________________________

How will you lay aside your pride today, and humbly rest in God’s sovereignty,
no matter what the situation of your life?________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Nail It: Pride stops me from accepting God’s sovereignty and applying my life to the truth of His Word.
I. EXTENT OF OLD TESTAMENT LAW

A. What is law?

1. Any command is a law in the broad sense (Romans 7:21,23,25).
   a. When we think of Biblical law, more often we are referring to the Law of Moses (given in the Exodus from Egypt).
   b. By extension, ‘Old Testament Law’ then refers to the books written by Moses.
      i. Moses is credited with writing the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).
2. Paul refers to the Psalms as law; sometimes the entire OT is referred to as ‘law’.
3. How does law develop salvation?
   a. Jesus said He came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17).
   b. Paul refers to Christianity as a new law (Romans 8).
   c. James spoke of Christianity as law (James 1:25); as fulfilling royal law (James 2:8); that we are judged by law of liberty (2:12).

B. Law and Salvation

1. We must grasp the purpose of the law to understand how it lines up with grace and salvation. To do so, we must view it as Paul did – good and spiritual.
   a. Instead, we often view the law as problematic because we see the Pharisees as adhering to the law. However, Jesus indicated that their religion was not a clear representation of the law of Moses (Matthew 15:3,6).
   b) So, retrace the origin of Mosaic law to understand it in its historical setting, and in relationship to fulfillment by Christ.
      i. The basis of the OT law is in grace
      ii. It began with redemption by power and by blood (Passover lamb, Red Sea parting)
      iii. God’s zealous loyalty to His people is made clear in
iv) The Law’s purpose was to preserve God’s people on earth as a holy nation, saved by grace having experienced God’s redemption, living in obedience to God because they loved God and were acknowledging that love.

v) Some kept the commands and loved God and His Word (Psalm 119).

  c) Israel’s falling away
     i) Real prophets called Israel to obedience, while false prophets are described (Deuteronomy 18:14-22)
     ii) God had set the choice before them (Deut. 30:15-20)

2) From start to finish, Law is a gracious administration

  a) Daniel grasped this as we see him pleading with God to be continually gracious and loyal, asking Him to act in accordance with Himself and for His sake (Daniel 9:1-19; Deut30:15-20).

  b) Law is fulfilled in Christ
     i) Christ is not an antithesis of the law, rather a fulfillment. Compare John 1:14-18 with Moses experience when he hid in the cleft of the rock (Matthew 5:17-20; John 17:21).
        ii) The high standards of the law could not be fulfilled, and helped people to love such a holy God, with gratitude for His grace (Romans 6:14,15; 3:31; 3:19,20).

C. Interpreting Law

  1) Look at factors that deal with the unchanging character of God when considering the principles of the law, versus the activity. God’s plan is to have a special people; while the manner has changed there is still continuity in that the people of the church are to be His and to be like Him.

  2) In Christ is fulfillment of law, and we must seek to live in obedience (Matthew 5-7).
Homework: “Old Testament Law”

1. How is God’s zealous loyalty to His people made clear in:
Exodus 13:31
Exodus 19:4
Exodus 20:22

2. How is the Law’s purpose of preserving God’s people on earth as a holy nation, saved by grace, having experienced God’s redemption, living in obedience to God because they loved God and were acknowledging that love evidenced in:
Deuteronomy 34:31-37
Deuteronomy 4:1,20
Deuteronomy 6;
Deuteronomy 7:6-8

Nail It: When I listen to a sermon or read the Bible, I should ask God to soften my heart, and thank Him for His mercy and grace when He convicts me.
14. Literary Style: Prophecy

I. PROPHECY

A. Extent of prophecy
   1. Old Testament
      a. All major and minor prophets wrote between 760 and 460 B.C.
      b. Major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
      c. Minor prophets: Hosea, Jonah, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, Micah, Zephaniah (Pre-exilic, prior to Israel’s exile to Babylon) Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi (post-exilic).
   2. New Testament prophecy includes:
      a. Olivet discourse (Matthew 24)
      b. 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy 4; 2 Peter 3; Revelation

B. The function of biblical prophets was to call their contemporaries back to God (2 Chronicles 36:15).
   1. The Prophets were subordinate to Moses.
      a. Moses surpasses the prophets in mode of revelation (face to face vs. visions).
      b. Moses surpasses the prophets in quality of message.
   2. The Prophetic Ministry
      a. Prophets were forth-tellers as well as foretellers. Their ministry was more concerned with proclamation (to reveal the will or message of God) than prediction (to predict the future).
      b. It is too simplistic to teach that prophecy is “history written in advance.”
      c. One key to understanding predictive prophecy is to study prophecies fulfilled in the New Testament.
   3. Prophets were covenant enforcers.
      a. Blessings and curses
         i. Blessings for faithfulness: life, health, prosperity, agricultural abundance, respect, safety.

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?

Nail It: Prophecy occasionally predicted the future, and always dealt with present disobedience.

The prophets can constantly serve to remind us that God enforces His covenant, and that He is faithful to His promises.
ii) Curses for disobedience: death, disease, drought, dearth, danger, destruction, defeat, deportation, destitution, and disgrace.

C. Characteristics of Biblical Prophecy

1. Prophecy occasionally predicted the future and always dealt with present disobedience. We must not be preoccupied with what will happen, but must live up to what we already know.

2. Predictions do not always differentiate between different phases of fulfillment, they are a blend of near and far that is not clearly distinguished (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6).

3. Biblical prophecy takes the forms of:
   a. Poetry = parallelism, syntax, images, figures, form of ‘woe’
   b. Collective oracles, not always put together chronologically
   c. Not even always arranged topically, rather in sporadic arrangement of oracles (Isaiah 1:1; 2:1; 3:1(continues second oracle); 6:1; 7:1; 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1)
   d. Complex blend of events indicate what is yet to come in telescopic nature

D. Issues in the relationship of prophecy to the Church

1. Church age involves a mystery that is revealed only in NT times (Ephesians 3).

2. Purpose of prophecy is to point to Christ (Revelation 19:10). Any approach to Biblical prophecy that does not make us want to be more like Christ and see Him sooner is not a Biblical approach to prophecy.

“The prophets were inspired by God to present to their generation, in their own language, the original curses and blessings of God to His people. What we read is not a new concept but a new wording of the same message delivered by God through Moses. They are simply using their own style and vocabulary. The message of the prophets is unoriginal.”
~Fee and Stuart
Homework: “Prophecy”

How did prophecy enforce God’s Word with blessings for faithfulness in the following passages:
Leviticus 26:1-3

Deuteronomy 4:32-40

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

How did prophecy enforce God’s Word with curses for disobedience:
Leviticus 26:14-39

Deuteronomy 4:15-28

Deuteronomy 28:15-32; 42

Nail It:
Rather than being preoccupied with predicting what will happen, I must live up to what I already know. I know that the purpose for confession of sin and repentance is joy.

I. NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLE

A. Purpose

Task letters to specific churches and individuals to address specific needs and problems.

They are composed by visiting preachers during the heat of battle.

B. Format

1. Know the form of an ancient letter. Although this is not a rigid straightjacket, noting discrepancies to the normal structure aids in understanding, as does noting where in the structure of the letter a passage falls.

   a) Prescript or Salutation: Reference to the sender and recipient of letter along with a greeting.
   b) Proem: Thanksgiving and / or Prayer
   c) Introduction: avoid abrupt shift into matter by transitioning
   d) Body: exhortation and instruction, general purpose for letter
   e) Greeting & farewell: specific greetings, concluding prayer

---

Nail It:
As task oriented letters, the New Testament Epistles complete the picture of how believers are to live as overcomers, availing ourselves of Christ’s victory over sin.

The New Testament epistles are a combination of private correspondence and public address. They are letters addressed to specific people and situations. ~Ryken

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
In the culture of the New Testament church, letters generally consisted of an opening, a proem, an introduction, the body, and a closing greeting and farewell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistle</th>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>Proem</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Body &amp; Farewell</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>1:1-7</td>
<td>1:8-10</td>
<td>1:11-17</td>
<td>1:18-15:13</td>
<td>Lengthy opening and farewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor.</td>
<td>1:1-3</td>
<td>1:4-10</td>
<td>1:10-16:14</td>
<td>15:14-16:27</td>
<td>No introduction</td>
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<td>2 Cor.</td>
<td>1:1-2</td>
<td>1:3-7</td>
<td>1:8-11</td>
<td>1:12-13:10</td>
<td>Lengthy proem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galatians</td>
<td>1:1-5</td>
<td>1:6-10</td>
<td>1:11-6:17</td>
<td>6:18 (cf. 6:11-18)</td>
<td>No proem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippian</td>
<td>1:1-2</td>
<td>1:3-6</td>
<td>1:7-11</td>
<td>1:12-4:9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colossians</td>
<td>1:1-2</td>
<td>1:3 -</td>
<td>? – 4:6</td>
<td>4:7-18</td>
<td>Proem prolonged into body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Thess.</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>1:2-4</td>
<td>1:5-10</td>
<td>2:1 – 5:22</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Thess.</td>
<td>1:1-2</td>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>1:4-12</td>
<td>2:1 – 3:15</td>
<td>Proem, intro unclear</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Timothy</td>
<td>1:1-2</td>
<td>1:12-17</td>
<td>1:3-11, 18-20</td>
<td>2:1 – 6:19</td>
<td>Proem in middle of intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Timothy</td>
<td>1:1-2</td>
<td>1:3-4</td>
<td>1:5 -</td>
<td>-4:8</td>
<td>Proem, intro unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>1:1-4</td>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>1:5-3:11</td>
<td>3:12-15</td>
<td>Long opening, 1:5 cf.1 Tim. 1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philemon</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8-20</td>
<td>21-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>1:13-17</td>
<td>13:18-25</td>
<td>No epistolary beginning but epistolary ending</td>
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<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>1:2-5:20</td>
<td>12-13-14</td>
<td>No proem, intro, farewell</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Peter</td>
<td>1:1-2</td>
<td>1:3-5</td>
<td>1:6-12</td>
<td>1:13-5:11</td>
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<td>1:1-4</td>
<td>1:5-3:18a</td>
<td>5:12-14</td>
<td>3:18b</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 John</td>
<td>1:1-4</td>
<td>1:5-5:20</td>
<td>5:21</td>
<td>No opening, or proem</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 John</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>No proem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 John</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>5-23</td>
<td>24-25</td>
<td>No proem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. What can we learn from the format of these epistles?

1. What is the situational characteristic of each of the following letters? In other words, what is the situation in which the author finds himself, or what is the occasion for writing?

   a. Corinthians: *Addresses specific situations and questions*
   
   b. Ephesians: *More gentle, not so situational teaching*
   
   c. Galatians: *Paul is beside himself due to apostasy.*
   
   d. 2 Timothy: *Paul faces the crisis of his own impending death*
   
   e. Philemon: *Discusses the problem of Onesimus, not as urgent in tone as Galatians.*
   
   f. Hebrews: *A stern warning to Jewish Christians considering a return to former traditions*
   
   g. 1 John: *False doctrinal influence upon the church is an urgent problem*
   
   h. 3 John: *John strongly addresses Diotrophes, who wasn’t taking care of itinerant preachers.*
   
   i. Jude: *An urgent warning against false teachers – the writer jumps right in, because he had wanted to write about common salvation, but now has to write a warning.*
   
   j. Romans: *A more gentle letter, Paul spends a lot of time introducing himself (as he has never seen them), then patiently & thoroughly outlines and teaches doctrine*

II. UNDERSTANDING NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES

A. Context

1. Historical context or setting will sometimes be clearer than others.

2. When reading an epistle to understand context, follow these steps:

   a. Read through in one sitting, as you would any letter.

   b. Think paragraphically. Explain the point of each paragraph and its relationship to other paragraphs. List main ideas, along with how the ideas fit together.

   c. Where does the passage fit into the time line of the early church?

   d. How does the passage fit into God’s plan for redemption (believers are overcomers – we share in Christ’s victory over sin).
DO A LITERARY CONTEXT STUDY OF THE BOOK OF PHILEMON (THE PROBLEM OF ONESIMUS).

1. Read the book as you would any letter, in one sitting. Do so at least twice.

2. Think paragraphically. Explain the point of each paragraph and relationship to other paragraphs. List main ideas, along with how it fits together.

3. How does the book fit into the time line of the early church (Paul wrote this letter prior to the writing of 1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy). Is the church already in place or is it being established? How is disciple-making evidenced?

4. How does the passage fit into God’s plan for redemption?
16. Literary Style: Parables

I. DEFINITION AND EXTENT OF PARABLES

A. Definition

1. Parable: A simple story illustrating a spiritual truth, and a concrete story conveying an abstract truth.

   a. Jesus, Master Teacher, told stories to clarify points in teaching.


      ii. He could have said “Be humble when you pray” or taught Luke 18:9-14.


      i. Parables often had a shocking aspect that caught people’s attention (Luke 10:29-37). No one expected the Samaritan to be the good neighbor. Samaritans were considered antagonistic to the Jews.

      ii. They were often delivered as an offensive message or warning (Luke 13:6-9).

      iii. Parables often called for response, such as in Luke 14:7-11 where the call to humility is given.

B. Extent

1. Old Testament parables are found in Judges 9:7-15; 2 Samuel 12:1-4; and Isaiah 5:2-6.

2. About 35 parables that Jesus told are recorded in the New Testament gospels.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE INTERPRETATION OF PARABLES

A. History of the interpretation of parables

1. Allegorizing is taking a real story that is a lesson about life or history, and reading a different lesson into it to make our point.

   a. Origen (185-232 A. D.): Was the first to allegorize Scripture.
He was a wildly radical intellectual with crazy views that led to castrating himself at a very young age.

b. Augustin (354-430 A.D.): allegorized the parable of the Good Samaritan to say that the man on the road is Adam, the Good Samaritan is Christ, and Paul is the innkeeper, which is still used by Romans Catholicism. Augustine took great pains to create and project a powerful image of himself beyond the churches and towns where he wrote and taught in Roman north Africa.

c. In medieval times, theologians looked for four levels of meaning in each parable – one literal and three spiritual.

d. In 1888, Julicher (One Main Point) began the idea of finding only one main point, at the expense of ignoring the details. He taught a social gospel where Jesus’ teaching is restricted to one point or “the moral of the story.”

e. Dodd and Jeremias (Sitz im Leben Jesus), took a good look at the historical context and details so that if there was more than one point it would not be ignored, but they modified Jesus’ teaching.

f. Often in modern Bible study, parables are viewed as having open ended meanings with several reactions and meanings possible – subject to the reader, with as many meanings as there are readers.

2. Accurately interpreting parables

a. Recognize the benefits of story telling, and listen rather than smothering the story with sophisticated exegesis. Back off and get a wider view – Jesus told parables to catch the listener’s ear and lead to lifestyle changes.

b. Flexibility is important. There may be one central idea, and details as they relate to that idea. There may be several points, or an open question at the end.

B. Guidelines for arriving at the teaching of a parable

1. Is the interpretation given in the text? Are there other clues given by Jesus to help us understand what He is teaching?

   a. For example, in Matthew 24:36, He tells us we don’t know when His return will be. He then tells the parables in Matthew 24:45—25:30 without telling us He will return, but we conclude that we must be ready for His return.

2. How does Jesus adapt the parable to fit the needs of the people? Why here? Why this parable? Is there a string of parables with similar themes?

3. Who are the main characters? Who gets the most mention?
4. What is the life setting or situation?
5. What occurs at the end?
6. What occurs in conversation between characters in the story (direct discourse)?

C. Examples

1. **Luke 15—Parable of Lost Sheep (vs. 3-7), Lost Coin (vs. 8-10), Lost Son (vs. 11-32)**
   Is the interpretation given in the text? Interpretive clues?

   How does Jesus adapt the parable to fit the needs of the people? Why here? Why this parable? Is there a string of parables with similar themes?

   Who are the main characters? Who gets the most mention?

   What is the life setting or situation?

   What occurs at the end?

   What occurs in conversation between characters in the story?

2. **John 10—Parable of The Good Shepherd**
   Is the interpretation given in the text? Interpretive clues?

   How does Jesus adapt the parable to fit the needs of the people? Why here? Why this parable? Is there a string of parables with similar themes?

   Who are the main characters? Who gets the most mention?

   What is the life setting or situation?

   What occurs at the end?

   What occurs in conversation between characters in the story?
Parable of Good Samaritan—Luke 10:24-37

Read vs. 25-26. What is the lawyer asking Jesus? __________________________________________

Read vs. 27. Did he give the right answer? ____________ Compare his answer with Matthew 22:37-40. _____________________________________________

His theology was right, but his heart was not. In his wish to justify himself, what did he ask in vs. 29?_________________________________________________

To make the point that genuine salvation is proved by how we react to people, Jesus used 4 impactful methods of parable telling.

1. Jesus used cultural background to give an unexpected twist. The much hated Samaritan does what in vs. 33?_________________________________________________

   The lawyer shows us how much he hated Samaritans because he wouldn’t even say the word Samaritan at the end of the story (vs. 37). Rather than naming him as Jesus had, he said, “The one who showed mercy.”

2. Jesus used skillful repetition to build suspense before the good guy came in. Where did the Priest and Levite pass by? (Vs. 31-32)

3. Jesus responded to the people who were self-righteous and didn’t think they needed a message against self-righteousness. He used people who thought they were getting it done (religious leaders) to build suspense and emphasize the sin of self-righteousness.

4. Jesus’ conclusion did not fit the question that had been asked. What was asked in vs. 29?___________________________________________

   Jesus answered with what question in vs. 36?________________________

What do you learn from this parable? ___________________________________________
How will you apply your life to Jesus’ teaching this week?__________________________

Nail It: Parables help me to understand that it is in everyday experiences that godly decisions are made and God’s grace is put into action.
17. Literary Style: Typology

I. WHAT IS TYPOLOGY?

A. Understanding Typology

1. Typology is the most overused, underused, and misused aspect of Scripture, yet it holds great treasure.
   b. Typology helps us understand salvation and the historical unity of God’s plan.

   a. John 20:25—nail prints
   b. Acts 7:43-44; Hebrews 8:5—divinely given pattern
   c. 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3; Titus 2:7—model
   d. Romans 5:14—historically connected. Adam is a historically connected type through sin of Adam and righteousness of Christ
   e. 1 Corinthians 10:6—examples

B. Typology is seen in the following ways:

1. Persons:
   a. Hebrews 7—Melchizadek and Jesus
   c. Matthew 12:39-40—Jesus said Jonah was a type of Himself.

Important questions:

1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?

"These things became our examples, to the extent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.”
1 Corinthians 10:7
2. Institutions:
   a. 1 Corinthians 5:7—Passover
   b. 1 Peter 1:19—blood of bulls and goats sacrifice and Jesus’ blood
   c. Hebrews 4:9-10—Sabbath is a type of the rest of those saved

3. Offices:
   a. Deuteronomical priests are a type of Christ’s High Priesthood
   b. David over Israel is a type of Jesus’ ultimate Kingship

4. Events:
   a. John 3:14—Lifting of serpent in wilderness & cross
   b. 2 Peter 3:5-7—Noah’s ark and flood

C. General Characteristics of Typology
   1. Type is not to be understood in terms of equality or identity, but rather in terms of heightening or amplification, escalation or acceleration, consummation or completion, and fulfillment.
   2. Typology connects the OT and the NT through correspondence, pattern, similarity, or analogy.
   3. Type is designed or intended by God to be there, later to be tied together with corresponding NT text.
   4. There is interconnectedness between typology and fulfillment, but not prediction.
      a. Jonah is a picture of Jesus in the grave, but not a prediction of it—Matthew 12:39-40).
   5. As we look at typology, we must recognize the sovereignty and providential control of God.
      a. We must view type cautiously and carefully, in light of God’s plan or goal.
      b. Typology is based on history as the scene of the outworking of God’s plan within two testaments (OT and NT).
      c. To grasp typology we need a comprehensive grasp of OT and NT history.
NUTS AND BOLTS OF BIBLE STUDY


1. Psalm 80:8-15: Israel is pictured as God's vineyard.

2. Isaiah 5:2: Israel is described as a fruitful vineyard which God raised and nurtured.
   a. What did He expect from it?
   b. What actually happened?

3. John 15:1: Jesus is described as the true vine, and the Father is described as the vine dresser.
   a. Note the connection between Jesus and the people of Israel.
   b. Where Israel fails, Jesus succeeds.

4. Galatians 5:22: The word used to describe the result of God's spirit in His people is fruit.
   a. The typology of vineyard and fruit corresponds to and reveals the design of God's redemption plan: Jesus our Savior who does not fail.
   b. The fruit that shows you are abiding in Jesus is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

5. What happens to those who do not bear fruit? (John 15:6)

6. The fruit that shows you are abiding in Jesus is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.
   (Galatians 5:22-23).

E. Example typology in Joshua 2:18

1. In the conquest narrative of Jericho, Rahab saved the Israelites. God revealed Himself to her and promised that she would not be destroyed by the Israelites.

   a. She tied a scarlet cord in the window
   b. Some say her scarlet cord is a type of Christ's blood
   c. It is debatable whether or not there is a divine design of correspondence between the scarlet cord and the blood of the Passover lamb.
   d. However, it is not debatable that the blood of Jesus Christ covers our sins so we are not destroyed (Hebrews 9:10).

2. The fruit that shows you are abiding in Jesus is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

3. John 15:1: Jesus is described as the true vine, and the Father is described as the vine dresser.
   a. Note the connection between Jesus and the people of Israel.
   b. Where Israel fails, Jesus succeeds.

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5. What happens to those who do not bear fruit? (John 15:6)

6. The fruit that shows you are abiding in Jesus is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.
   (Galatians 5:22-23).

7. John 15:5

8. Hebrews 9:14

9. John 15:5

"I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man abide in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Apart from Me you can do nothing."

What happened when the people looked at the serpent that Moses had lifted up? (Numbers 21:9) ____________________________________________
What is the similarity between the bronze serpent that Moses lifted up and Jesus (John 3:14)? ____________________________________________

The connection between the temporal redemption of Israel through gazing at the bronze serpent, and the eternal redemption of man is validated by Jesus words in John 3:15. Who did Jesus come to save (John 3:16)? _______________________

Colossians 3:1-3 and Romans 6:6 talk about the necessity of being crucified with Christ. What will the result be? ____________________________________________

Just as God’s people Israel had to see the corruption of their sin, so we must be willing to have our sins exposed in order to escape condemnation (John 3:17-20).


Compare John 20 with 1 John 1:8-10. What is necessary in order to walk in fellowship? ____________________________________________
Walking in fellowship with God and man (in the light) will only take place when there is confession of sin. What sin have you confessed today? ______________

Whenever you respond to situations with actions other than love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, meekness, faithfulness, and self control, you must confess your sin and receive forgiveness through Jesus being lifted up on the cross (1 John 1:9). What will the result of confessing sin be (1 John 1:9b)? _______________________

Homework: “Typology”

Nail It: Typology helps me see the great mercy and grace of God when I understand the necessity of Jesus’ crucifixion, and accept the mercy that follows confession.
I. UNDERSTANDING APOCALYPTIC

A. Extent of biblical apocalyptic

3. Revelation is a unique combination of three styles of literature.
   a. Apocalyptic
   b. Prophetic
   c. Epistle
4. The period of time between the OT and NT (inter-testament period) appeared to have no genuine prophets, so God’s people were in dire straits.
   a. The style of apocalyptic literature flourished during this time with authors purporting to be describing events before they happened, but actually reporting after the fact.

B. Understanding Apocalyptic Literature

1. Apocalyptic is a different kind of literature.
   a. Apocalyptic includes cryptic sayings, bizarre and extravagant symbols, visions, and dreams.
   b. There is a stress on the present age of the writing, and destruction of it.
   c. The question that must be asked is, “What was the intended meaning to the intended audience?”
2. The function of biblical apocalyptic is to comfort God’s persecuted people with the only hope in sight coming from God.
3. Accept apocalyptic passages as a description of reality through the imagination.
   a. It is NOT fantasy literature vs. reality literature, rather it is thinking about reality in imaginary terms.
4. Historical context
   a. To understand apocalyptic, we must know the Old Testament well, 
      and pay attention to the historical content of dark days for 
      God’s people.

5. Literary context
   a. In Daniel, where does one vision begin and end? Daniel’s visions 
      are arranged more by theme than chronological order, and 
      were written in two languages.

6. Don’t view apocalyptic writing apart from biblical theology
   a. View apocalyptic in light of the “big picture” of God’s plan of re-
      demption for mankind.
   b. Keep in mind that there is unity in the Bible’s unfolding of 
      God’s redemption plan, with Revelation 22 being the last chapter of 
      the story. (Don’t forget, we win!)

C. Comparing Apocalyptic to Prophecy
   1. Apocalyptic uses more extravagant symbolism, while 
      prophecy uses more verbal communication.
   2. Apocalyptic tends to be more strictly oriented to the future, while proph-
      ecy is more for the present.
   3. Apocalyptic tends to be more pessimistic or negative about the present, 
      with the answer coming as a smashing of sinners when God’s Kingdom 
      returns. Prophecy, on the other hand, calls sinners to repentance.

D. Example
   1. Daniel 2 and 7
      a. It helps to think in terms of visions, when reading parts of 
         Daniel, and ask where one begins and one ends. On pg. 74 is an 
         artist’s rendering of the visions described in Daniel 2 and 7.
      b. Daniel’s visions are arranged more thematically than 
         chronologically. In Daniel 2 and 7, the visions were originally 
         written in Aramaic, while Daniel 8 was written in Hebrews.
      c. In Daniel 3 and 6, we see God’s people being victorious.
      d. In Daniel 4 and 5, two kings are given their “medicine” by God.
         i. King Nebuchadnezzar repented.
         ii. King Belshazzar does not.
1. **Read Colossians 3:1-4.** What are we to set our affections on? ________________
How often do you have heaven on your mind? ____________________

2. **Read Philippians 3:20.** What are we citizens of? __________________

3. **Read Matthew 6:19-21.** The only treasure we’ll ever possess forever is in heaven. Where are you committed to laying up treasure?

   ________________

   How does your life evidence where you are committed to laying up treasure, in heaven or on earth?

   ________________

4. **Heaven is our home, where everything we love, cherish, or hold valuable will be.** What do the following verses teach us about what we can expect in heaven?

   Matthew 6:9 ____________________________________________

   Hebrews 9:24 __________________________________________

   Hebrews 12:23 __________________________________________

   1 Peter 1:4 _____________________________________________

5. **Heaven is God’s home.** How do the following verses describe His dwelling?

   Isaiah 57:15 ___________________________________________

   Isaiah 63:15 ___________________________________________

   Psalm 33:14 ____________________________________________


   ________________

7. **Read Luke 15:18.** Who has the prodigal son sinned against? ________________

   ________________


   ________________

**Homework:**

**“Apocalyptic”**

Nail It:

Apocalyptic helps me have hope, giving me an eternal perspective,
1. Understanding Theological Analysis

A. Theological Analysis: Studies the level of theological understanding at the time a revelation was given in order to ascertain the meaning of the text for its original recipients.

1. The more we understand the level of theological comprehension at the time of the writing of a passage, the better we will see the author’s intended meaning to his audience.

2. Good theological analysis recognizes the progression of biblical revelation and understanding concerning its contents, as well as the overarching story of redemption that is the Bible’s central theme.

B. Analytical Questions

1. What was the theological understanding at the time of this revelation?
2. How does the passage fit into the whole of God’s revelation?
3. Does my understanding of this passage contradict any other passage in the Scriptures?

C. Example of John 3

1. How do we understand “You must be born of water and of the spirit” (John 3:5), given Nicodemus’ theology? Nicodemus paid a visit to Jesus at night and Jesus got right to the heart of the matter.

   a. Theologically – reference to Christian baptism? Yet it is doubtful that Jesus expected Nicodemus to know something about Christian baptism (Sacramentalists who take it as Jesus speaking of a step of salvation are not viewing the fact that Nicodemus did not have the 100’s of years that refined baptism as a sacrament).

   b. Birth of water? Symbol of natural birth, spirit – regeneration

   c. Vs. 4 – person can’t enter womb again and be born of water again. Is “born of water” in vs. 5 truly a reference to physical birth? Was this a symbol current in culture? Would he think of physical birth or baptism? These are doubtful, rather is would have been used in a cleansing fashion, which was part of culture or OT ceremony and Ezekiel 36:24-27 speaks of cleansing the heart and a new heart and spirit.

   d. Vs. 10 – Are you teacher of Israel and you aren’t informed by message of OT?
II. THEOLOGICAL METHOD

A. Warning: We all bring baggage to our thoughts about theology. We must candidly recognize the inevitable role entrance of presuppositions in our theological approach – a complex web of past events, present feelings and future goals.

1. Everyone has an organizational framework around which Biblical data is understood (worldview).

2. There are major implications dependant upon the view we take. Our teaching will be affected by this.
   
a) If we emphasize continuity we will ........
      1) Use the Old Testament more frequently in teaching and preaching.
      2) Find more examples of Old Testament principles which possess continuing relevance for Christians today.
      3) Old Testament principles, precepts, commands, and promises will remain valid unless annulled or fulfilled in the N.T.

b) If we emphasize discontinuity we will ........
      1) Use the New Testament more frequently in teaching and preaching.
      2) Old Testament principles will be viewed as less relevant for contemporary believers than the New Testament.
      3) Old Testament principles, precepts, commands, and promises will not be regarded as valid unless they are repeated in the New Testament.

B. Correctly choose your presuppositions.

1. As Christians we have a definite pre-understanding that this is God’s Word, and so it is authoritative.

2. Presuppositions are inevitable, but can be correctly chosen and utilized self-consciously.

3. The Holy Spirit’s ministry in our lives gives us this ability, and forever changes our views and values. Basic beliefs and faith presuppositions include:
   
a) Existence of God and His attributes
b) Savior-hood and Lordship of Christ
c) Grace of God in Christ, power and desire to obey Him.
d) Reliability, infallibility, sufficiency, and authority of Bible as God’s message.

4. Those not saved bring basic beliefs of skepticism, ignorance, unbelief, apostasy, etc.

Examine your suppositions:

* Do you believe in the existence of God and His attributes?

* Do you believe in the Savior-hood and Lordship of Jesus Christ?

* Do you believe that the grace of God in Christ gives us the power and desire to obey Him?

* Do you believe God’s Word is reliable, infallible, sufficient, and authoritative?
C. Theological method: Every believer in Jesus Christ ought to be a growing theologian.

1. Understand the difference between doctrine and theology
   a) Doctrine: What God said
   b) Theology: Understanding what God said, a human framework to help us remember and understand doctrine.

2. As you do theology, be honest. Do you have an open mind to what God says in His Word, or do you view His Word in light of what you have always believed or what you feel comfortable believing?
   a) Changing moods, sentimentality, comfort level, ministry goals….be careful about how these affect how you view theology.
   b) Be honest about fundamental assumptions.
   c) Is what you do in level 6 based on levels 1-5? Are you firmly grounded in levels 1-5 or do you listen to every charismatic person who comes along?
   d) Do you put sufficient effort into level 6? Christians must be experts in the doctrine of how to change and grow (progressive sanctification). That’s grace!
Homework: “Growing Theologians”

Read Genesis 3

Genesis 3:14-15 is the first promise of the gospel in the Bible

1. What was the theological understanding at the time of this revelation?
2. How does the passage fit into the whole of God’s revelation?
3. Does my understanding of this passage contradict any other passage in the Scriptures?

Galatians 4:4 God’s Son born of a woman with allusions to Genesis 3

1. What was the theological understanding at the time of this revelation?
2. How does the passage fit into the whole of God’s revelation?
3. Does my understanding of this passage contradict any other passage in the Scriptures?

Rev. 20:1,2

1. What was the theological understanding at the time of this revelation?
2. How does the passage fit into the whole of God’s revelation?
3. Does my understanding of this passage contradict any other passage in the Scriptures?

Romans 16:20 Paul makes promise that in spite of dissensions and hindrances, nevertheless their strong obedience has been well known – wise in what is good and innocent in evil (like what Eve heard). God of peace will soon crush Satan underneath your feet.

We must see the believer as overcomers while at the same time standing there in Gen. 3 with heads hung. Do you see the ray of light at end of tunnel?
20. Study Scriptures: Theological Analysis

   - compared to Christ, we must hate others.

   - Jesus Christ is the dividing line, the line in the sand, you are one side or the other

3. What does the Bible teach concerning giving to the poor in Matthew 5:42?
   What does it teach in regard to 2 Thessalonians 3:10? How can these two passages be reconciled?
   - Matthew 5:42 - we should give generously and unconditionally
   - 2 Thessalonians 3:10 - we should not support idleness

4. How do the following tools help shed light on the meaning of the phrase “you have no need for anyone to teach you” in 1 John 2:27?
   - Historical Analysis (studying the historical situation)
     - Gnostics were teaching that something needed to be added to Apostles teachings
   - Contextual Analysis (observing the direct context)
     - in context of false teachers, not church or elders
   - Theological Analysis (comparing Scripture with Scripture) 2 Timothy 2:2
     - what we have learned from the teachers of Scripture we are to pass on to other faithful men who will be able to continue to teach others.

5. To what is the silence in 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 referring? To what can it not be referring to in light of 1 Cor. 11:5?
   - Orderly worship = not that woman can’t speak in church, but that they would ask their own husbands regarding theology questions, rather than usurping husbands authority by publicly asking theology questions.

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
1. Some writers have suggested that there is an inconsistency between the doctrine of Paul (Rom. 3:28), and the doctrine of James (as found in James 2:24). Do you believe these two truths can be reconciled? If so, how would you reconcile them?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. Some have taught that when Paul says, “not I, but the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:10), he is making it clear that his opinion is not authoritative. Is this true in the light of the rest of Scripture? What does he mean by this phrase?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

3. A favorite passage quoted by unbelievers is “Do not judge lest you be judged” (Matthew 7:1). Does this mean a believer is never to condemn a person or an action? Does this mean a believer is never to hate moral evil and express this hatred? Does this mean one can never discern the actions of another? In short, what does this verse mean?

Make sure you consider in light of 1 Corinthians 5:3; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:2.

_____________________________________________________________________

Homework: 
“Theological Analysis”

Nail It: “Determine how this passage fits into the total pattern of God’s revelation” Virkler
I. COVENANT THEOLOGY AND DISPENSATIONALISM THEOLOGY

A. Two methods of understanding the continuity or discontinuity of Scripture (Systematic theology).

1. Covenantal Theology
   - Stresses the unifying factor of the Bible as God’s plan to redeem a people for Himself.
   - Adam’s disobedience will be charged (imputed) to the entire human race and God’s grace and obedience will be imputed to all the elect.
   - The Bible is the outworking of one covenant of grace – with an emphasis on one people, one grace, the unity of God’s plan (Israel as OT church), and a viewing of the OT Christologically (all about the Messiah).
   - End-time theology (eschatology) views one general resurrection and one judgment.
   - Weakness: neglects future of ethnic Israel as OT promises to Israel are placed upon NT church. Biblical theology is ignored.

B. Covenant Theology

1. Strengths: continuity viewed at the expense of discontinuity.

2. This view sees the Bible as revealing seven time periods covering the entire period of human history. Usually it is viewed along a horizontal axis with vertical lines breaking up each dispensation, however, if the themes are viewed as overlapping, continuity is not lost.

3. In each time period there is a specific test where man failed and a judgment ended that dispensation, ushering in a new dispensation, with a repeated pattern of test, failure, and judgment. To overcome the weakness of discontinuity, we will consider the themes that cross into future periods (ages or dispensations).

Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
Examining Our Presuppositions

a. Innocence (Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, to sin)

**TEST:** Man was created very good, accountable to obey God’s law and care for His creation. They did not obey, ate from tree, fell into sin, and as a result, ushered in the curse of Genesis 3.

**THEME:** Today there are ramifications of the dominion mandate as man is still accountable to God, must care for His creation. Mankind is still fallen.

b. Conscience (Adam and Eve out of the Garden, to the Flood)

**TEST:** The test was the responsibility to live up to the voice of conscience, mankind did not do so (Genesis 6:6), and suffered the judgment of the flood.

**THEME:** The concept of sacrifice comes out of this dispensation (one accepted and one rejected, with Abel’s offering offered in faith). Sacrifice for sin begins here and continues. Conscience began here (Romans 2), and is active today, not meritorious (praiseworthy) before God, but still ongoing.

c. Human Government (Noah & his family after the flood, to Babel)

**TEST:** Noah’s family was tested regarding how they would live under human government, they failed and the judgment was a sorry end at the Tower of Babel.

**THEME:** Human government is ongoing from this time, is ordained by God, and is an institution of God (Genesis 6). The image of God flowed into this theme with governments’ vested authority to punish (Romans 13).

d. Promise (Abraham, to his seed leaving Egypt)

**TEST:** The seed of Abraham fell, sojourned in Egypt, and exodused to the Promised Land. The judgment came upon their unbelief and complaining.

**THEME:** The trans-dispensational theme is that Christ blesses all who trust in Him, and whoever believes is counted as seed of Abraham who believe (Romans 4). The promise of God and faith of Abraham is seen in Romans 11 and Ephesians 2.

e. Law of Moses (Covenant given to Moses, to the Pentecost)

**TEST:** Moses was given the Levitical Law, failure is described throughout the Old Testament, especially Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, judgment began with Babylonian capture, and ending with Roman rule.

**THEME:** Trans-dispensational theme is the moral law of God, wherein the 10 commandments are not negated. They are true before law and after, with all but the Sabbath day command being re instituted in NT. Another trans-dispensational theme is that the covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 and Ezekiel 24:36 is stated in Hebrews 8, with the new covenant being not only external but also in our hearts (Ephesians 2:11). The new covenant is deeper and more powerful than the old.
f. Church Age or Age of Grace (Early church, to the present)

**TEST**: According to Romans 6, we are not under law, but grace. Will we walk in unity in the Spirit (Galatians 5 & 6)?

**THEME**: The trans-dispensational theme is a gradual increase of Jesus’ reign. The believing Jews became the nucleus of the NT church.

g. Thousand Year Reign (future)

4. Dispensationalism must be careful not to minimize the fall of man in Genesis 3 by emphasizing other falls. Much of the content of each successive dispensation carries on to the next, as each dispensation appears to be a starting over with factors that carry over.

a. 1 Peter 2:9—The church today fulfills the purpose God originally had for the nation of Israel.

b. Rev. 21:12-14—Symbolic presentation of New Jerusalem – gates named after 12 tribes and 12 apostles.

c. Israel and the church are not one, with promises and prophesies from one applicable to the other. At the same time they are not two separate peoples with two separate destinies. They are one people of God in two different aspects.

d. Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism are both attempts to not get lost in the forest, but to see the trees.

i. At FFC, the teaching is from a viewpoint that dispensationalism holds the most promise for accurate understanding of Scripture.
How we look at Scripture is affected by what we have believed about it, based on our assumptions. We have learned that we cannot isolate passages from the context of the Bible to make them fit with what we have always thought, but that we must correlate passages to see the continuity in God’s plan. Let’s do that by taking a look at us, the church (the present people of God), and the relationship of the church to the OT covenants.

1. **Read Romans 11:11-24; 15:7-13.** What does this passage teach about the people of God? Are there two separate peoples with two separate destinies: the nation Israel and the church? ______________________________________

2. **Read Ephesians 2:11-22.** How is God forming one new man in Christ? ___

3. **Read 1 Peter 2:9.** How does the church today fulfill the purpose God originally had for nation of Israel? ______________________________________

4. **Read Revelation 21:12-14.** In the symbolic presentation of New Jerusalem, it is evident that Israel and the church are not two separate peoples with two separate destinies. The proper distinction is that we are one people of God in two aspects. How are the 12 tribes represented? How are the 12 apostles represented? ______________________________________

5. **Read Zephaniah 3:16-17 and Acts 2:29-37.** Christ will reign as King of Israel, and He is King and Lord of the church. At this time, the church functions as His agency on earth. The relationship of the church to the Old Testament covenants is that they are fulfilled through the church. According to Acts 2:37-42, how does the church function? __________________________

6. **Read Acts 2:42.** It clearly outlines four things we are to be devoted to. This week, how are you applying your life to:  
The doctrine of the apostles (Scripture): __________________________
Fellowship in the church: __________________________
Worship of God (breaking of bread): __________________________
Prayer: __________________________
22. Unity of Old and New Testament

I. NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. What is the extent of New Testament (NT) use of the Old Testament (OT)?

1. The OT is not complete without NT development, and the NT is not complete without OT background.
   a. “New is in the old concealed, and old is in the new revealed.”

2. 10% of the NT is comprised of OT quotes or allusions, conveying genuine theological unity.
   a. There are around 300 direct, formal quotations of the OT in the NT (with some type of introductory formula).
   b. There are also many informal allusions to the Old Testament that are more indirect and casual

3. So, if we don’t have a healthy grasp of the OT, it shows how weak we are in NT knowledge and that we aren’t genuinely familiar with the NT.

B. Nature of Old Testament sources

1. Single OT passages are quoted.
   a. Matthew 2:6
   b. Hosea 11:1

2. Multiple OT passages are quoted using a chain of references.
   a. Romans 3:7-18—includes many passages linked together in one process.
   b. Hebrews 1:5-12—each verse introduces a new contrast using a different passage.

3. Combined OT sources link an idea together.
   a. Matthew 21:13 puts together a couple of OT verses, blending them into one statement with an introductory formula.
4. There are unknown sources of OT quotes as well.
   a. Matthew 2:23 and Isaiah 11:1 is a play on words. Nazareth sounds like “Neze” which means “shoot or branch.”

   1. The NT often refers to OT for authority (Matthew 4:4,7,10).
   2. Prophetic fulfillment of the OT is revealed in the NT (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:4,6).
   3. Typological descriptions, patterns, persons, events of the OT are revealed in the NT (Matthew 2:14; Isaiah 11:1).

D. We should become more self conscious about approaching the Bible as one Bible, instead of two separate testaments.
   2. Both the Old and the New Testament are dominated by answers to questions about the character of God. Nearly every passage will answer the question “What is God like?” or “What is God’s will?”

E. Approaching the Old and New Testament as one Bible.
   1. Begin with a NT passage that quotes the OT, consider the context and notice how the OT quote fits in.
      a. Think about what the writer is saying and what is going on. Is he using the OT quote as authority, as a type, etc.?
   2. Then, go to the OT passage that has been quoted and do the same thing.
      a. What is the author saying and what is the context? Fit the two together to be able to understand the application of your life to God’s will.

II. RESPECT FOR CONTEXT

A. A text without a context is pretext.
   1. Often we are so concerned about relevance in our day that we pay no attention to literal and historical context being quoted.
   2. We show our high skills in emotionalism but low skills in historical context.
B. Jesus clearly taught that the Old Testament refers to Him, so we can understand the Old Testament in the shadow of the cross.

1. John 5:39
   a. He said that the Scriptures bear witness of Him and teach about Him.

2. Luke 24:25, 44
   a. He explained things concerning Himself in the Scriptures, and that all things spoken of Him must be fulfilled.

C. Be careful of assigning new meaning to Old Testament texts

1. Deuteronomy 25:4, 1 Corinthians 9:9
   a. Paul, in discussing freedom as an apostle, refers back to Deuteronomy 25 which speaks of agricultural treatment. Is he assigning new meaning?

   b. Paul is not denying that God is concerned about oxen. He is not assigning new meaning, but he has noticed that even in Deuteronomy 24, 25 the emphasis is on the needs of people (husbands, wives, harvest, fathers, sons, servants, family).

   c. Muzzling the ox is not treating one’s ox fairly, just like it is wrong to not treat people fairly. God is not just concerned about oxen but about the just and fair treatment of people who might be oppressed or not treated fairly.
1. Jesus, John, and Paul each refer to Isaiah 6:9. Read the Scriptures and answer the following questions to see the continuity between Old Testament and New Testament, and to apply your life to the teaching. Isaiah 6:9 “Keep on hearing but do not understand, keep on seeing, but do not perceive.” In Isaiah, the Lord said this referring to how people would respond to those commissioned to prophetic ministry. What is the message God is giving regarding how people would respond?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________


Rather than explaining the text, Jesus is pointing out continuity between the rebellious people of Isaiah’s day and the rebellious people of His time on earth. He also tells us why we don’t understand and perceive. What gets in the way of our understanding and perceiving? ____________________________________________

What is evidence of rebellion in your life? ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________


________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

John refers to Isaiah 6:9 in John 12:37-43. John refers to both Jesus’ glory, and to the sin of the people. What were the people looking for that stopped them perceiving and understanding? ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

From John 12:43, what would be glory in your life that comes from man, and what would be glory that comes from God? ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________


When we don’t see our sin, or we want to see a physical miracle, or we fear man over God, or we don’t believe, we are guilty of not perceiving and not understanding. What must change in your own life so that you perceive and understand? ____________________________________________

Homework: “Unity of Old/New Testament”

Nail It: We do well to pay extra attention when an Old Testament passage is quoted in the New Testament. Such is the case with the warning, “Keep on hearing but do not understand, keep on seeing, but do not perceive.”
23. Studying The Bible

I. Bible study could be called reflective analysis. It is just an academic exercise of no eternal value unless it for the purpose of personal application: Translating the meaning a Biblical text had for its original hearers into the meaning it has for believers in a different time and culture.

1. The more we meditate upon the significance of the text studied in our lives, the better we will impress the truth upon our own heart and discover ways to apply it to our lives to this truth in our contemporary culture.

2. Good reflective analysis recognizes that God’s truth is to impact the total person – head, heart, and hand – and thus consider any theological study that does not end in personal application to be void of merit and dishonoring to God’s Word which is profitable for all of life (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

B. What about those passages where the teaching is not direct, how do we arrive at what God wants to correct in our lives?

1. When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, but take every word at its primary, literal meaning, unless the facts of its immediate context clearly indicate otherwise!

2. We must be conscious of our tendency to look for what we want to see. Do we desire encouragement, help, an answer for a situation, a ministry verse - more than desiring what God has said?

3. Knee jerk responses like, “I never saw this before”, or “The verse jumped out at me” should be carefully investigated and monitored.

4. The old song, “Every promise in the Book is mine” is not true – every promise is NOT mine. Beware of reading an application in to a passage that tells me what I want to say rather than what God wants to say.

C. Remember that there is always hope through response to God’s Word, not through gaining knowledge. (Deuteronomy 6; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:6-7)

1. What is the significance of this text in my life today? Has this truth been impressed upon my soul? Do I consider it precious?

2. What present situation of contemporary concern does this passage address?

3. How can I make a bridge from the ancient world to ours? How can I move this text from the “then and there” to the “here and now”? Don’t arrive at a spiritual principle until you’ve gone through the other principles first: literal, historical, grammatical and synthesis.

II. REMEMBER THE TWO BIG RULES.

A. Follow the Two Big Rules

1. Big Rule One: The natural meaning of a passage is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax, context, and historical situation (Grammatico – historical).
a. The ordinary (natural and literal) meaning of the language takes precedence. Clear passages take precedence over unclear passages. Clear statements or clear prohibitions take precedence over unclear statements or unclear prohibitions.

b. Grammatico-historical - “The meaning of a text is the author’s intended meaning and (that meaning) can be derived most accurately by observing the facts of history and the rules of grammar as they apply to the text being studied.” (Virkler, 73)

2. Big Rule Two: No part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture (Scripture interprets Scripture). Meaning and principles must be consistent with all other teachings of Scripture.

a. Does the applicable point or principle find reinforcement elsewhere in Scripture? Since Scripture is God-breathed and true in all of its parts, the unity of its teaching must be sought, and its supernatural elements recognized and understood.

i. Are there illustrations in historical narratives that echo the principle?

ii. Are there commands in epistles?

iii. How do the poetic and prophetic books deal with this issue?

iv. If a principle contradicts other Scripture, it is invalid. Scrap it.

B. Are there further helps regarding meaning of an unclear passage?

1. Questions must stress the importance of humble obedience to God’s Word and must not be asked to fit teaching into an idea, situation, presupposition or ministry need (James 1:22; Matt. 7:13-27).

2. How does the passage relate to God?

a. How does it fit into Creation (pre-fall) ordinances?

b. How does it fit into the unchanging character of God and His attributes?

c. How does it fit into God’s plan of redemption for mankind?

d. Is there continuity or discontinuity between our culture, and God’s plan and character that may mean cultural details should take a back seat to an enduring teaching, command, or principle?

i. Eph. 5; 1 Cor. 11; Col. 3:18 Some say that these texts which refer to women submitting are only for the culture in which they are written. When you ask the questions of a, b, and c what becomes clear?

3. Is the passage direct teaching?

a. If it is direct teaching, we need go no further.

b. If it is a cultural application, (such as women praying with heads covered), retain the overriding principle (such as that of submission that is taught pre-fall and loudly shouted throughout the epistles), and apply it in our culture.

c. If the style is parable, find the teaching of the story, with recognition of cultural details.

d. If a historical narrative, what is the end stress?

4. What is the original intended meaning of the author? If the plain sense of Scripture makes good sense, seek no other sense.

a. Determine the historical, physical and cultural settings. Historical context often helps to grasp literary context (poetic style of the ear in which the Song of Solomon was written).

b. If the ordinary meaning is unclear, determine the literary style of the language – is it figurative or allegorical?
C. **The question that the Christian cannot neglect.**

1. What should be the application of my life to the passage?

   a. Although the text has one intended meaning by the author, it may have many applications (such as situations which the writer could not have envisioned). Whatever is included in Scripture is there for a purpose.
Ask the 2 big rule questions in regarding the following Scriptures.

1. Big Rule One: What is the literal and clear meaning of the passage?
2. Big Rule Two: What does the rest of Scripture teach on the subject?

Romans 16:16
- greet one another with a holy kiss
- mandated behavior in that culture
- in our culture it’s a handshake or a hug
- we deal with homosexuality, concept of two men embracing is viewed that way – in some cultures its not that way and a handshake seems very impersonal
- can we plug in a “holy handshake”? or “Holy hug”?

John 13:
- Jesus washes disciple’s feet
- some churches continue this as an ordinance
- this was an act of hospitality, servants did it and it was a humble act
- should we do this to demonstrate humility?
- not mentioned as an ordinance, tied into culture of the time which Jesus did to teach a lesson on humility, lesson on need to daily cleanse from sin via confession, or lesson to serve –
- perhaps an occasional act with some shock value as we see Jesus doing it once.

1 Timothy 2:12, Eph. 5:22-6:4
- women not to teach men or usurp authority over men
- is this culturally bound or a transcultural principle?
- is slaves to masters culturally bound? Worker to boss
- transcultural principle on basis of order of creation, this is a mandate cross-culturally as is the submission of children to parents
I. METHODS OF APPLICATION

A. Ministers generally take one of three approaches: expositional, topical, or sermonizing.

1. Expositional preaching is a verse by verse approach, separating texts into manageable units, with interruptions for special occasions. The main focus is the passage, and explanation of the passage.

   a. Advantages of this method:
      i. The opportunity is in place to understand Biblical context as the text is explained.
      ii. This method is systematically centered on God’s revelation.
      iii. The whole counsel of God is addressed.
      iv. Has the most built in safeguards against the Bible being used as support for pastoral pet peeves.

   b. Weakness of this method:
      i. Danger is teaching without application of life.
      ii. Expositional preaching sometimes leads to irrelevant lectures on the meaning of Scripture without impact on daily life.

2. Topical Preaching is a category oriented method where a key word or topic is developed. The main focus is a theme, and development of the theme.

   a. Strengths of this method
      i. Topics chosen are most likely relevant to current culture and the lives of those in the congregation.

   b. Weakness of this method
      i. Themes can be developed based on truth, or based on culture.
      ii. Context used can be Scripture, or it can be culture.
      iii. Topical preaching sometimes leads to relevancy gaining more importance than God’s Word.

3. Sermonizing is where a contemporary issue or controversy

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Important questions:
1. What has God said?
2. What does the passage mean? How does it fit into God’s glorious redemption story?
3. How can I apply my life?
Applying Life to The Bible

directs the approach of the preacher. The main focus is an issue. This is the confrontational method.

a. Strengths of this method
   i. Relevant issues are answered.
   ii. There is contemporary content that is beneficial to every day life.
   iii. Sermonizing was often used by the Old Testament prophets and epistle writers.

b. Weakness of this method
   i. When the Bible is used as support to make a point.
   ii. The main context is cultural context.
   iii. Often there is emphasis on relevance over Scripture, with persuasive speech to do or quit doing something, but little focus on God’s revelation.
   iv. Danger is unbiblical tirades on personal hobby horses.

II. SEEKING BEHAVIOR RESPONSE

A. The ultimate purpose of Scripture is changing people’s lives.

1. The Word of God was written to thoroughly equip every person to live a life that is growing in godliness.
   a. The Bible is the authority of God to His people. We must teach people to obey the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

2. To think that application is automatic is to stop it from happening.
   a. People will not automatically see what they need to do to change their lives.
   b. There is personal responsibility of the hearer to apply.
   c. There is personal responsibility of the preacher to tell how.

3. How would I analyze my audience? Who am I teaching (my kids, my SS class, my friend, etc)?
   a. I must know where they hurt, know their blind-spots, and know what doctrines are rejected (for conviction).
   b. What is the age group – there’s a big difference between nine or ninety.
   d. Are they new Christians? Long time Christians? Not Christians?
   e. Is the teaching new so that I must handle it more carefully with more illustration so that it becomes understandable? (Ecclesiastes 12:9-11).

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Romans 15:4-6

“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
2 Timothy 2:19
B. The application equation: Holy Spirit revelation plus relevance plus response = application.

1. The Holy Spirit originally inspired Scripture, and His ministry is ongoing as He teaches through Scripture and causes change in people.
   a. Scripture is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).
   b. Preachers sent with Holy Spirit to preach (1 Peter 1:12).
   c. Gospel came in power and Holy Spirit and full conviction (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

2. Believers living in obedience to God’s Word are commanded to warn and admonish (Acts 20:31, Romans 15:14, 1 Corinthians 4:14, Colossians 1:28, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14, 2 Thess. 3:15).
   a. We must speak in relevant and concrete ways, not abstract.

3. Listeners have a responsibility to hear, attend and obey (respond).
   a. Only one type of hearer bears fruit (Matthew 13:19-23).
   b. Scripture works effectively (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
   c. Let the word of God dwell richly (Colossians 3:16).
   d. Word did not profit because not united (Hebrews 4:2).
   f. In humility receive the Word implanted not just as hearers but also doers (James 1:21-27).

C. Four steps in application of lives to Scripture

1. Cognition (2 Peter 3:18)
   a. We must know what the passage says.
   b. We must be taught, not just knowledge, but wisdom.

2. Conviction (John 16:8-10)
   a. We must reflect on the passage, making the connection between the passage and the reality of sin in our lives (2 Timothy 3:16).

3. Correction (1 Peter 1:13-19)
   a. Correction follows confession that change is necessary.
   b. It is not always the case that we need more knowledge. Often we just need to be reminded of what we already know. (Romans 15:15)
   c. Knowledge, wisdom, decision, action (Colossians 1:9-10)

4. Change (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
   a. We must train to make the correction in day to day life through disciplined action (2 Timothy 2:19).
   b. Observable evidence of change (2 Corinthians 7:11)
You’ll find that there are many Bible study books and ideas available for reading and studying the Bible. If you’re using something that works well for you, that’s great. However, a lot of people never get into an ongoing habit, and a lot of time goes by where they have nibbled at the Bible, but not really studied it. All the books about Scripture are no substitute for reading the Scriptures.

Try the following idea for reading through the Bible once a year. It loosely follows the outline given by John MacArthur in “How to Study the Bible”.

1. The Old Testament = 39 books

   Read through the Old Testament each year by setting aside 20 or so minutes per day to read the Old Testament. Choose a regular time and place, such as getting up 20 minutes earlier every morning, for your Old Testament reading.

   The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, which is a very simple and concrete language. It is not like Greek, which is full of theoretical, conceptual and philosophical language with a lot of abstraction. Thus, as you read it year after year, it will make a lot more sense each time you read it. When something doesn’t make sense to you, just put a notation in the margin. You’ll find that as you read and reread Genesis to Malachi, you’ll have gained an understanding that leads to answers to some of the things you made a notation about.

2. The New Testament = embodies and engulfs the Old Testament

   Handle the New Testament in a different manner. It requires greater diligence in study than the Old Testament, because the original Greek language is much more complex (harder to understand), and there are a lot more concepts and abstractions than narrative stories and descriptions. Set aside a half an hour for New Testament study each day. This way, you’ll be reading twice per day.

   First of all, study a short book (start with 1 John). Read it every day for thirty days. Each day apply your life to what you learn from it. Read it the first day, then on the second day read it again. Read it again on the third day of the month. When you’re saying to yourself, “This is getting old, I get this,” just push through and keep reading it every day until the month is over. When you can identify major themes for each chapter, write them down and look at them before you read it. After the month, you will have really good comprehension of this book, almost a visual perception, and you’ll be able to remember what is in each chapter by thinking of the major theme.
For the second month, choose a longer book to study (Gospel of John). It has 21 chapters, so divide it into sections. Read the first seven chapters the first month (just like you did 1 John), and the second seven chapters the third month, and the third seven chapters the third month. By the end of ninety days, you’ll have mastered the content of John, and have memorized the major theme of each chapter.

After John, go to Philippians for a short book, then Matthew for a longer book. Then Colossians for a short book; then Mark for a longer book. In approximately two and a half years, you’ll have finished the New Testament. Because you learn better by repetition, you’ll be able to remember it a lot better than if you just read through. You must go over it again, and again, and again.

3. Apply your life to the Bible

If you believe the Bible is the authoritative, living and sufficient Word of God, it will come alive in your life as you apply your life to it. As you read, use the principles that have been taught in this study to interpret what you are reading, avoiding errors of interpretation. You’ll also avoid superficial interpretation that doesn’t get to the real meaning of the text.

Remember, the purpose for studying the Bible is not knowledge, but rather to know God. To know God is to learn humility. To know and love God is to obey His Word.

4. Meditate on the Bible

Don’t be in a hurry, meditate on what you read. Deliberately turn your thoughts to what you’ve read. According to John MacArthur, “You ought to have God’s Word running around in your mind all the time.” If you continually read through the Old Testament and read a book of the New Testament thirty times in a row, it will be running through your mind. This constant meditation will take all the rich and sometimes difficult parts of God’s Word, and shape it into a more complete understanding. God wants His Word to be filling our minds constantly (Deuteronomy 6:8-9). We must meditate on it over and over and over and over again.

It’s better to read only a verse or two and meditate on it all day, than to read many chapters and check off the accomplishment of a task. Ladies who are working at home, especially young moms, can keep their Bible open on the kitchen counter all day with the text they have read. Ladies who work outside the home can also keep the text they have read visible, perhaps by writing verses on a card if the open Bible is not possible.

When you read the Bible with the purpose of being able to teach it to others, you will learn it the best. Before attempting to teach the Bible to someone, you’ll want to become clear in understanding what it says, and be sure that you are applying your own life to it. The greatest motivation for studying the Bible is recognizing our responsibility to accurately live it and teach it to others.
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