



HOAW Newsletter

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 ESV

November 2020

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

Getting A Grip #3: Interpretation

by Dr. Greg Bourgond

To get a better grip on the Bible we have been exploring a process that will give you the tools needed to properly observe, interpret, and apply the word in your life.

This newsletter will discuss the second stage called INTERPRETATION. Selecting passages with the goal of applying it to our lives without determining its actual meaning can lead to misapplication at best and misunderstanding altogether at worst.

I introduced the analogy of becoming Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs) as we explore biblical texts.

CSI agents first investigate a crime site and gather evidence. Once gathered the evidence is brought to the lab for interpretation. Tests are run and the evidence is processed. At

this point, investigation may conclude that certain expected evidence is missing requiring another trip to the crime site.

Once all the evidence is processed and evaluated and the significance of each piece of evidence is determined, investigators can begin to formulate conclusions about the crime.

In the case of studying Scripture, the passage in question must first be processed and evaluated using appropriate interpretative techniques and methods.

When interpreting a passage your objective is to determine what the passage meant by the original author at the time of its writing. Here the interpreter bombards the text with questions such as...

"What did these details mean to the people to whom they were given."

"Why did the author say this?"

"What is the major idea the author is seeking to communicate?"

Interpretation answers the following general questions.

What is the context?

What did it mean then?

What does it mean today?

PROCEDURE

- 1. Use a literal Bible (i.e., ESV, NRSV, NASV, NIV).**

Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative. The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not increase our knowledge.

There are several excellent online Bible Study resources available that contain everything you'll need to properly interpret Scripture.

- Logos Bible Software
- Accordance Bible Software
- Olive Tree Bible Software
- Wordsearch Bible
- Laridian Pocketbible
- Biblesoft (my favorite)

2. Read the verse or passage in context.

'Cherry picking' verses or passages without reading them in the context of the larger passage or chapter can lead to false conclusions.

For instance, reading Revelation 3:20 (I stand at the door and knock...) without considering the larger passage (Revelation 3:14-22) can lead to a wrong inference as to its true meaning.

3. Review cross-references.

One Bible resource explains the importance of cross-references this way.

"Martin Luther once wrote that "Scripture is its own expositor" and of course, he was right. The authors of the Westminster Confession wrote that "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture ... it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly." This speaks of the great value that Bibles with cross references have. A good set of cross-references, when used diligently and with intelligence, will make much commentary unnecessary. Bible cross references is how some Study Bibles base their notes upon. They see the verse and compare it with similar verses that can explain difficult passages. They are indispensable tools that the reader can use to broaden the meaning of verse that might be more difficult to understand if read alone."

4. Apply the Seven Basic Rules of Interpretation. (Adapted from Understand by Walter A. Henrichsen)

Rule 1: Interpret the Bible in light of its language, history, and culture.

Use the normal meaning of the words.

Be careful to note the type of language used (i.e., narration, poetry, prophesy) and figures of speech (i.e., hyperbole, metaphor, simile, analogy, etc.

When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement may be considered figurative. When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement may be considered figurative.

Rule 2: Allow Scripture to interpret Scripture.

Consider the whole counsel of God's word to shed light on the passage being analyzed. Consult cross-references.

This rule answers the question, "How does this relate to the rest of what the Bible says."

Rule 3: Individual verses of the Bible must be understood in the context of other verses in that passage.

Interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context. Interpret a passage in harmony with its context.

Rule 4: Each passage of Scripture has one interpretation.

There may be, however, more than one application.

Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture, not Scripture in the light of personal experience.

Rule 5: Do not build major doctrines or positions on isolated or unclear verses of the Bible.

Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command (i.e., John 3:34-35). A doctrine cannot be considered Biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures may say about it. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as Scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves into a higher unity.

Rule 6: In most cases, like the rest of the Bible, parables have one basic meaning.

A Parable is a short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson; one of the stories told by Jesus Christ and recorded in the Bible.

Rule 7: There are two guardrails along the highway of correct Bible interpretation: the Holy Spirit and the Christian community.

Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the Scriptures.

5. Use common Biblical resources.

- An exhaustive concordance.
- A Bible dictionary or encyclopedia.
- A Bible handbook.
- A Bible atlas.
- A topical Bible.
- A Bible introduction or survey.
- Bible customs and traditions.
- A good (and current) commentary.
- An 'Interlinear' Bible - This Bible includes the complete Hebrew and Greek texts with a direct English translation below each word.

6. Summarize findings.

Keeping a journal or a notebook where you can record your findings will be essential.

7. Derive timeless truths.

The goal of this last step is to arrive at an accurate understanding of the actual truth of the passage; to answer the question with assurance what the passage meant in its original setting and what it means for us today.

In summary, the keys to interpretation are the 5 C's...

- Content
- Context
- Comparison
- Culture
- Consultation

I encourage you to select one of the passages below (the same one you might have used to practice OBSERVATION) to practice the steps of interpretation.

Next month's newsletter will address the last step of Bible study, APPLICATION.

OBSERVATION PASSAGES:

1. Genesis 3:1-7
2. Psalm 1:1-6
3. Psalm 15:1-5
4. Psalm 139:1-18
5. Matthew 4:1-11
6. Matthew 5:1-12
7. John 4:46-54
8. John 14:23-27; 16:5-15
9. John 15:1-8
10. Romans 1:1-18
11. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
12. Galatians 5:16-26
13. Ephesians 4:1-16
14. Ephesians 4:17-24
15. Philippians 2:5-11
16. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
17. Titus 2:11-14
18. Hebrews 4:12
19. James 2:14-26

20. 1 John 2:15-17

OTHER NEWS



Heart of a Warrior Ministries offers four journeys you can take to become who God created you to be.

The Foundation (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

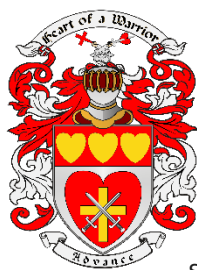
The Compass (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

The Map (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

The Guide (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

Go to our website for more details.
www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at HOAWMinistries.com.



Donations

Please consider giving to Heart of a Warrior Ministries. HOAW Ministries needs your financial support. Our ability to help men live God-honoring lives depends on the resources we can use to that end. Simply go to the donations tab on heartofawarrior.org. Thank you for being a subscriber.

Check out **The Store** on our website (www.heartofawarrior.org). There are downloadable resources you can use to lead a group through Phases I, II, or III, Foundations of a Warrior, and Bible Study Guidelines.

Websites for Men

Heart of a Warrior Ministries
www.Heartofawarrior.org

Legacy Minded Men
www.legacymindedmen.org

Church for Men
<http://churchformen.com/>

Resolute
<https://beresolute.org/>

Life Way Men
<https://blog.lifeway.com/leadingmen/>

Men's Fraternity
<http://www.mensfraternity.com/>

Man in the Mirror
<http://maninthemirror.org/>

Men with No Regrets
<http://www.menwithnoregrets.org/>

National Collision of Men's Ministries
<http://ncmm.org/>

Every Man's Battle
<https://newlife.com/emb/>

Iron Sharpens Iron
<http://ironsharpensiron.net/>

Ransomed Heart Ministries
<http://www.ransomedheart.com/>

Band of Brothers
www.bandofbrothers.org/

Man Up God's Way
<http://www.manupgodsway.org/>

Iron Works
<http://www.ironworksmen.com/>