

The Bible for Everyday

Objective: to learn how to use the Bible in our everyday life for guidance in decision-making and planning.

Review: Overview of “the Bible”

What is the “Bible”? How is it divided up? Is it reliable?

a. The Bible is made up of ___ books — ___ in the “Old Testament” and ___ in the “New Testament.” About ___ authors wrote these books over a period of about ___ years.

b. There are several categories into which these books fit. In the Old Testament, there are 5 categories. There are 5 books of ___; 12 books of ___ 5 books of ___ 5 books of ___ and 12 books of the ___ for a total of ___.

In the New Testament, there are 4 ___ 1 book of ___ 21 ___ and 1 book of ___ for a total of ___.

c. Is the Bible *historically* reliable? Please examine the following chart:

Book/Author	Date(s) Written	Earliest Copy	No. of Manuscripts*	Time between writing and manuscripts
New Testament	50-100 AD	Ca. 130 AD	Over 5,000	30-80 years
Herodotus: Histories	5 th cent BC	900 AD	8	1300 years
Homer: Iliad	900 BC	400 BC	643	500 years
Plato: Tetralogies	427-347 BC	900 AD	7	1200 years

*We do not have the original document (the “autograph”) of any of these ancient documents.

- What is the significance of this?

What is our aim in studying the Bible?

Read Luke 6:46; Romans 8:29; 15:4; Ephesians 4:11-15; I Corinthians 10:11; 11:1; Hebrews 4:12-13; James 1:21-25.

Two Requirements beyond reading the Bible

1. We must **interpret** what we read.

Interpretation: to ascertain the meaning of a particular portion of Scripture.

Hermeneutics: the science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures.

Exegesis: “explain, interpret,” from ex- “out” + *hegeisthai* “to lead, guide.”

2. We must **apply** what we have interpreted. Our main objective in this class will be to learn how to properly apply the Scriptures to the questions, decisions and

Interpretation

Why must we “interpret” the Bible? Isn’t that for scholars and preachers?

To interpret simply means to “understand as having a particular meaning or significance.” Of necessity, then, we interpret everything we read and hear.

Exercise: Interpret the following, determining its “meaning” and its “significance”:

O Jonathan Bing, O Bingathon Jon
Forgets where he’s going and thinks he has gone.
He wears his false teeth on the top of his head,
And always stands up when he’s sleeping in bed.

O Jonathan Bing has a curious way
Of trying to walk into yesterday;
“If I end with my breakfast and start with my tea,
I ought to be able to do,” says he.

O Jonathan Bing is a miser, they say,
For he likes to save trouble and put it away.
“If I never get up in the morning,” he said,

“I shall save all the trouble of going to bed!”
“O Jonathan Bing, what a way to behave!
And what do you do with the trouble you save?”
“I wrap it up neatly and send it by post
To my friends and relations who need it the
most.”

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Now, interpret the following: Galatians 1:6-9. What are some of the most important principles governing the interpretation of ANY written or spoken communication?

The Authority of Scripture

The degree to which we apply the Scriptures to daily life will be dependent upon the degree to which we believe the Scriptures are authoritative. Therefore, we want to briefly review our understanding the authority of the Bible. A more in-depth study of this is available; please see David Posey, if you are interested.

Basic Premises

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God and “profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16). We believe it is our guide for everything we do in life, not just religion (cf. II Pet. 1:3ff.).

We believe the entire Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit but the Old Testament is no longer in force as law and therefore not authoritative for us today (see Col. 2:14; Romans, Galatians and Hebrews). The Old Testament is profitable, however, for example and encouragement (I Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4).

We believe God and Christ have all *authority* (Mt. 28:18-20) and the New Testament is *authoritative* (emanating from the ultimate authority).

We believe that for an act to be *right* it must be *authorized*. In religion, this means that God must have given, in His word, a *positive* statement that authorizes us to do something (e.g., Eph. 5:19, *sing*). We have no right to practice anything for which there is no positive command, example or necessary inference (inescapable conclusion). See I Pet. 4:11. There is no authority granted through silence.

We believe that specific authority *excludes* everything in its class that is not specified and includes everything necessary to carry out the command. The more specific a command, the more exclusive it is. E.g., there is a difference between a command to “go into the world” (Mk. 16:15) and a command to “Go to Ninevah” (as to Jonah); the latter *excludes* going to any other place (the class of the command) but *includes* using any means of transportation to get there. Likewise, the command to “sing” (Eph. 5:19) excludes anything in the class (music) that is not singing and includes those things *necessary* to make singing possible. Therefore, songbooks and song leaders are *incidental* to the command to sing.

The Application of Scripture

“A text can never mean what it never meant.” If we remember that, and are careful to properly interpret a passage, then we are ready to make **application** of the text.

Exercise

Memorize II Pet. 1:3 (and 4 if you’re really good). To make it easier, let’s all use the same translation (ESV):

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Assignment: List some “everyday life issues” that you would like to discuss in the next 4-6 weeks. If you know of some passages that deal with the issue, write them down.

General Principles in the Application of a Text

1. "That was then, this is now." Make sure you understand the meaning of the passage to original audience.
2. Beware "*eisegesis*" – reading your perspective or beliefs into a passage instead of taking from the passage its intended meaning.
3. Observe the context: who is speaking? Who is being spoken to? What are the circumstances, or the life setting of the statement? What is the purpose of the book, paragraph or statement in question?
4. Beware of the tendency to *extend* the passage beyond its original meaning. The more specific a passage, the more specific our application should be. E.g.
5. When searching for answers to a particular problem, ask, "Does this passage really fit my situation?" Or, each time you read a passage or passages or hear them taught, ask "How can I apply this passage to the particulars of my life?" [Relationships, finances, recreation & entertainment, fellowship].
6. Before drawing a broad conclusion on a particular topic, be sure you have examined all of the relevant biblical information available on that issue. Remember that Bible study is, by its very nature, *inductive*, not *deductive*. Simply stated, inductive means that we gather the facts before we develop a premise (particular facts lead to a general conclusion). Deductive means we start with a premise and then use the facts to support it.

Note: There is one important difference in the use of inductive reasoning in Bible study when compared to the use of IR in other disciplines. In other studies, inductive reasoning is always "open-ended"; as long as there are new facts to discover, the "conclusion" is never conclusive. However, we believe that the Bible is complete and, therefore, we can draw conclusive principles once we have exhausted our study of a particular topic from Scripture. We can then teach or debate the topic from a deductive reasoning standpoint.

Exercise

The following passages have been misapplied because of ignorance or misunderstanding. Look at the passage and determine which of the rules above has been ignored or misused.

The entire Old Testament. The book of Proverbs. Mt. 7:1; 18:20; Mk. 16:17; Rom. 5:12...

Conclusion

Remember that our primary aim in studying the Bible is not to fulfill a command to "study the Bible" or to become great "Bible students"; it's not so we can win arguments or, as someone said once, "become smarter sinners." We study the Bible because the Bible is God's word to us; He is telling us what we need to know and how to please Him. It is often easier to understand Scripture than it is to apply it (or even accept it). It takes a humble heart, indeed, to imbibe God's word deeply and then say, with all your heart, "God said it, I will do it, no matter what the consequences may be."