



Week 10: Studying the Bible Logically

MV: *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2 Tim 2:15)*

God calls us to do our best, and that includes studying our Bibles. Laziness is not excuse; it's even a sin.

We are called to love God with all our minds (Matt 22:37)

There are consequences for not listening to God.

We all misunderstand scripture at some point. If we didn't, we'd all agree on everything.

ASK: Why do we misunderstand scripture?

- assumptions;
- blindly following others views without checking them out for ourselves;
- sinful desire to do our own thing.

1) CONTEXT IS KING!

Ship...a boat or a way to send something...which is it? Depends on context.

Too often we quote and read verses out of context.

When we read a Bible verse, we are taking a bite from a larger story (like an apple). The verse is connected to a chapter, book, and the entire Bible.

The more often you read the whole Bible, the better you will understand the whole story.

ASK: What is Interpretation?

ASK: What is Application?

"What does it mean to me?" is the wrong question. The Bible does not mean one thing to one person and another thing to another. That makes the focus of the Bible me/you.

The Bible means what God intends for it to mean.

Interpretation—What is the passage saying and what does it mean, taken in context, to a particular audience at that time; that audience was NOT us. It's what God meant originally. It's what He said and what He intended to communicate to them at that time.

Application—Take the meaning and apply it to our lives now, our life situation.

2) Find the Plain Meaning

"Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys." (Luke 12:33)

Sell all? Really? It just means we must be willing to, right? But that's not what it says.

We need to read scripture at face value. Some may have deeper meanings but some just **ARE**.

Some scripture is easy to read; some hard. Some at face value is easy; some is hard.

God wrote the Bible using human language that we use daily. He chose to communicate through a BOOK and He has the ability to do it clearly.

God spoke to humans. They understood Him and acted according to the plain meanings of His words.

3) Take the Bible Literally

"If the literal sense makes sense, seek no other sense."

Look for the plain meaning of the words of Scripture.

Context helps us know if it's literal, rhetorical question, figure of speech, etc.

Accepting the Bible as literal truth doesn't mean we interpret every passage literally. There are metaphors, parables, poems, prophecies, etc.

"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." (John 10:9)

ASK: Is Jesus a door? (Yes and no) Is he wood and frame? NO! It's a figure of speech to convey an idea.

Take scripture at face value, and when the context suggests the author is using a figure of speech, we will follow normal rules of language and interpret the passage accordingly.

There is room for discussion, but the bottom line is God's Word is truth.

4) Study the Grammatical Context

Human, language, human authors, human words and human grammar, God used them all

How are the words being used?

Who is doing the action?

What action is being performed?

How are the actor and action described?

Who or what is being acted upon?

5) Historical Context

Much of the OT has detailed historical accounts

Jeremiah 29:11 is often misquoted. It was written to Jews in captivity in Babylon who had to wait 70 years for rescue. It's not a blank check verse that good things will happen to us.

6) Let Go of Your Baggage

We assume God wants us to be happy, healthy, and fulfilled

Life experiences taint our reading ("Father" for instance)

Tainted by commitments and assumption of culture

7) Application

You are trying to be in obedience and fellowship with God

If we interpret correctly, but don't apply scripture, we fool ourselves (James 1:22)