
How to Prepare Sermons and Bible Studies

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Session I: Outlining Scripture

Outlining the Bible is the primary means to prepare your sermons, Bible studies that you are to teach. This is how you unwrap the precepts of Scripture!

This is your primary means to write your own sermons and Bible studies!

The Big Idea:

Outlining the Bible is the primary means to prepare you to teach the precepts of Scripture in a clear and logical way. This will enable you to 'exegete' what the Bible is saying. Exegeting is digging out from the passage the ideas represented. This prevents us from adding our own prejudices and ideas or taking away from what God is saying. You can do this to any form of text, whether it is a Bible passage or any other form of literature, from Shakespeare to a magazine article. This is the way a good Bible centered pastor prepares sermons or a Bible teacher prepares their lesson. This will be your primary means of producing quality Bible centered lessons, talks or even sermons.

Outlining the Bible is not very different from outlining any other form of writing. Thus there are many ways in which you can do it. The main purpose is to break down and isolate from the text the various ideas or categories it is representing. Thus each paragraph may have several ideas that relate or add to the main theme of the paragraph. So the task of outlining is to 'isolate' the ideas in a systematic and logical manner. And the goal is to represent and teach the passage in the way it is intended, in its context and power.

Where to begin:

To start out, just recall what you may have learned in those grammar lessons in school, which is to simply go through your passage and pull out the themes and ideas presented. First, look for a general theme, then the sub themes and ideas. Such as where each idea begins and then ends. Search for what are the principal themes and the logical order of each subjunctive idea, then

when you see another principal/primary theme, you place it in the next category or section.

A. How to do an Outline: (principal idea/ theme) (Formatting became distorted during conversion from Word to HTML. There are many ways to outline such as: A. 1. 2. 3. a. b. c. i. ii. iii. Follow the way you like best)

A. First make use of steps II & III (A) from 'Into Thy Word.' (Principal idea/theme)

(This is where you make use of 'Observation.' This is carefully going over the text to see what is going on, the "who, what, where, when, how, and why." This is how to pull out the facts through the nature of Scripture and how to avoid presumptions and fallacies, because God's Word speaks for itself.)

1. **Read the text in its context several times.** (Sub-themes and ideas)
 - a. Such as if you are studying the Book of John, begin with reading the whole book, then the chapter you are outlining at least three times in a good translation such as the NIV; NASB, or NKJV. (Additional Sub-themes)
 - i. You can start out by reading a paraphrase first for your overview then go to the good translation. (Even further sub-themes)
 - ii. **Make sure you are going into your relationship with God's Word in a meaningful manner** (see step I).
 - iii. **If you start too hastily, thinking you already know the passage, you will not gain the insights and depth because your haste will make waist.** (Further Sub-themes)
2. Even Billy Graham and Chuck Swindoll, and other great and experienced exegetes with many times more experience than what you and I may have, do it this way! (Sub-themes)
 - a. Never let your pride clog your vision and keep you in the dark from discovering all you can. (Further sub-themes)
 - i. **Write a summary for your passage in your own words.** If you are stuck, try reading it in various translations. Do not forget to check out a paraphrase such as the Living Bible, CEV, Phillips, Moffit, or the Message. (Even further sub-themes)

B. Then you may start to look for the principal theme and idea. (2nd main idea/principle idea/theme)

1. **Start with an introduction, it needs to state the main topic or idea of the outline.** This is the general principle/idea that represents the passage you are studying.
 - a. Then write a short description of that idea. (1st Idea)

- b. Make sure it is accurate to the text. (Sub-themes and ideas)
 - c. Make sure you write down the verses next to each idea.
2. The chapter and verses were added by the publisher and are not part of the original text or are inspired. So do not constrain yourself to them. You will find that they cut off at key ideas in mid thought that are still in 'thread,' that is still going on.

C. Then you list all of the various ideas/points in sequence. (3rd main idea/principle idea/theme)

(This is where you use 'Interpretation' (Steps III (B) & VI) after you finished the outline! This is taking what is said and finding out what does the text mean. How to interpret literally in the correct context.)

1. **This is where the supporting information and details go.** This is called your 'sub-topic;' these are commonly listed under the idea/topic with each piece of information listed separately.
2. Always, always go in the sequence of the text. Do not jump around!
 - a. Go verse to verse.
 - b. In your teaching you can call attention to other supporting verses from other parts of the Bible and use illustrations.
3. Never take out of God's Word what is not there, or read in our will as His.
4. **Each sub-topic describes the main ideas from the paragraph/passage.**
 - a. When supporting information is listed under a sub-topic, there is a sequence that follows a logical order, especially in the Epistles.
 - b. In the narrative passages, you will also find a logical order of events. However, Hebrew literature does sometimes jump points around. It is best just to stick to the text and in the opening, summary or conclusion draw attention to the general context.
 - c. By being aware of the different genres of the Bible (that is types of literature), you will be able to outline more effectively. See 'Appendix A' from "Into Thy Word."
5. **There are normally two ideas of information that should be listed.** If there is only one piece of information to support a sub-topic, traditionally that information is included in the sub-topic.
 - a. Do not be so concerned with your form that you neglect your principal duty, which is exegeting the text in a logical and systematic way.
 - b. Outlining, like any new activity, will take practice. Be persistent and do not get frustrated. It will take time and practice!
 - c. Being true to the Lord's Word and the Divine Author's intent is paramount!

D. Then you write a summary and the conclusion to your passage. (4th main idea/principle idea/theme)

(This is where you use 'Application' after you finished the outline (Steps V & VI)! This is taking the plain meaning and putting it to practical use. This is the, 'how shall I respond' to the Word. What sin to get rid of, what commands to yield too, the pitfalls to avoid, the actions to engage in, and the promises we are to keep.)

1. The summary should be done first. However, you can incorporate it in your teaching at the end.
 - a. Make sure you are following the text and not what you think the text say!
 - b. Then after the outline is done check out other sources such as commentaries, word studies and other Scriptures relating to your topic.
 - c. Do not skimp on the outline, this is where you develop your lesson!

- **What do you need to do to put these precepts into action?**
- **How would you following these precepts affect your church?**
- **What would happen if you did not follow these precepts?**

Session II: How To Prepare Bible Study Questions

This is your primary means to write your own Bible study questions!

This lesson is designed to prepare you to form your own inductive Bible study questions. The kind of questions that stimulate discussion and excite people to learn and grow in the Word and faith. As a leader, your task is to lead your students to the main streams of the passage that flow the precepts, ideas and truths. You cannot force them to drink the truths, but you can show them where they are and how to drink.

People learn best by discovering for themselves. Yet at the same time, they need proper instruction. Stimulating discussion along with good Bible teaching will be the synergistic factor to make disciples for His glory. If all you have is good teaching, then your students may not process the information or understand it in an in-depth way. If all you do is have a discussion, then your students will not receive proper Biblical instruction and may miss out on key insights and opportunities of application.

Thus a good Bible study will have the key components of quality instruction and discussion (of course do not forget fellowship). First, it is best to instruct then have a discussion. If you have a lot of people, break them down into small groups for the discussion with prepared leaders. Then come back as a whole with a time for questions and answers. Then close by stating or restating the application and restate the main points.

If you have the time and resources, give your students a handout with the main points from your outline and the questions. That way they have something tangible to take home and look back to.

Good well thought out questions are essential to a good Bible study. If you just have quick simple questions, then you will have a quick and simple discussion. If you have well thought out questions, you will have a good engaging discussion that will challenge people to take ownership of the text and grow in the faith.

Prelude: Before you can write quality questions.

1. **First do the outline.** The better job you do in your outline, the better questions you will have. The more effort and time you put in your study, the better results and the better opportunities people will have to learn and explore the Word. Then the greater glory to our Lord and Savior!

The outline or chart that you have made becomes the answers to the questions you are making. Then the flow of the study also follows your outline. So doing the outline cuts down your work and time significantly.

To Begin: After you have done your study, then:

2. **Reread your passage** and write down questions that come to you. Ask yourself what does God want me to learn, and what does God want my students to learn.

If you do your questions simultaneously when you do your outline, the quality may be lacking. It is always best to do these tasks separately. Outline first, then do your questions. If questions naturally occur to you while doing your study and preparation, then by all means write them down. Just try not to purposely do two things at once.

To do an effective job with your questions, you need to know whom you are teaching; their education, Bible savvy and learning levels. Teaching kids, HS students or adults makes a big difference as does their attention span and commitment level. Thus you will have a simple study for new Christians and an in-depth study for seasoned committed Christians.

You need to make sure your questions are simple and clear. If you have a deep question, state it, then recite it more simply by breaking it down into bite size chunks.

3. **Form your opening questions.** What do I need to do to get my students to discuss? You may start off with an off topic, 'get to know you' question such as what flavor of ice cream do you like or can you roll your tongue? Something funny or a story or illustration to stimulate openness and discussion. Traditionally these are called 'ice breakers' because they break the ice for the fishing line of discussion.

Do not spend too much time here, the point is to start and stimulate discussion. Some groups, usually older adults, feel this is a waste of time, if so skip it.

4. **Observational Questions.** What are the facts that I need to know? After the icebreaker question, use your 'surface' questions that cover the facts. This is where you use the observation step III from 'Into Thy Word.' You can also use your Bible chart and/or outline. These questions mostly come from your initial observations. Use the who, what, where, when, how, and why.

Go over your outline or Chart from the steps of 'Into Thy Word.' What are the points and facts than can be turned into questions?

5. The six big Q's we must always ask!

1. WHO: Who are the people? Who did it? Who can do it? Who is it talking about?

2. WHAT: What is it saying? What is it talking about? What is happening? What did they do?
3. WHERE: Where are they going? Where did it happen? Where will it take place?
4. WHEN: When did it happen? When will it happen? When can it happen?
5. HOW: How did it happen? How can it happen? How was something done?
6. WHY: Why did he say that? Why did he do that? Why did they go there?

This leads into the interpretation.

Ask which one or more of these apply. Additional question insights can be found in the book, 'Into Thy Word.'

Such as, "Who are the players, what are they doing, where are they at, what happened, how did they do that, why did they say that..."

Your task is to get your students to observe the passage and dig out what is there, to learn for themselves. To allow them to see the big picture in its context, what is going on.

Such as, "Why do you think Paul made such a big deal about being an apostle?" What does 'servant' mean to you? If verse 16 to 17 is a solution, what is the problem? (From Romans 1)

- Have them restate the passage in their own words or describe scenes and/or events.
 - Get them to see the passage as if it is their story as if they are there living in the time and experiencing what is going on. You can do this by turning out the lights and reading the passage in a paraphrase, asking the students to place themselves there. We do this naturally when we watch a TV show or a movie.
6. **Ask contrasting questions.** Such as, "what are the differences between the two brothers in the parable of the Prodigal Son?"
- Make sure your questions go in some logical order. It is best to start with an opening, then surface 'observational' questions, then dig deeper into the why, with 'interpretation', and end with an 'application.'
 - The goal of your questions is for people to engage in discussion. Discussion helps people understand and take ownership of the text.
 - Always have an 'open Bible' study. That is your study requires people to read, dig into, and use the Bible as the primary principal tool.

I'm always dumbfounded when I hear of Bible studies where the Bible is not even opened! It would be like a lawyer studying law and never reading the

Constitution. Wait, that is how some do study law. As a lawyer friend told me, "I never have nor have I known anyone who has read the Constitution, we just study about it." And that is how we have "separation of church and state in the U.S. Because people are not wise enough to know better that it is not in the Constitution! Just think of all the heresies floating around, probably from those no Bible, Bible studies!

7. **Interpretive Questions:** What is the meaning I need to take to heart? As the leader your task is to get your students to analyze the points, to find the implications from the ideas and truths presented; then to get them to think them through. This is the task of finding the reasons behind the composition and what is going on in the text, the WHY. To lead them to find the truth and take ownership of the truths from the passage. This is a necessity, because you have to make a commitment before you can make an application hold: See steps III (B), IV, and V of 'Into Thy Word'

- **What does the text mean?** Again use your outline and the work you did in the interpretive steps.

Such as, "Why would Paul, who was born and raised a Jew and a highly educated Jewish leader, write verse 14? How would you rewrite verse 14 for your school, work, or community?"

- **What are the main truths?** You can have students look things up in Bible dictionaries, word studies, and commentaries to find the key ideas presented and then to reason them out. The plot, the arguments, spiritual principles, you ask is to figure it all out.

Do not be afraid if you do not know an answer to a question. There is no shame in not knowing. Even seasoned Bible scholars get stumped. I saw my mentor, Dr. Walter Martin from 'The Bible Answer Man' radio program, get stumped occasionally. So just say you will find out and get back to them. Ask a pastor, look it up in a resource book, or seek it from one of the web based Bible answer sites.

- **What are the reasons?** Help them come up with their own opinions, yet make sure they stay true to the text as well.

Such as, "How would you explain verse 16-17 in your own words without using any Christian jargon?"

- How do I model the character of Christ?

Such as, "What impresses you about Paul's personality and commitment?"

What are the connections to other parts of the Bible? Check out the passages in the margins of the Bible to see other passages with the same truths.

8. **Application Questions.** What is the action that I'm called to do? Once you discover the main truths, the application questions should flow naturally. These are the questions that you give to your students so they can apply the ideas and truths of Scripture to their lives. You need to think through what are their spiritual needs, where they need to grow, and the developmental level of their faith. If you cannot do that, then have several simple questions prepared for new Christians to deep thoughts to stimulate seasoned Bible students: Use step VI from 'Into Thy Word'

- You can form these questions from your outline or chart. Take your main points and ideas and systemically find ways to apply them. Be sincere and creative. **Remember it is God's Word, not our free choice buffet.**
- Try to make your application clear and reasonable. Sometimes 'baby steps' are needed, as big changes require time and commitment. Be encouraging, thoughtful, and provide some form of accountability.
- Keep your application short and to the point. Do not try to have too many questions or it can be overwhelming to your students. You do not always have to have the application just at the end, sprinkle them out if you would like, but make sure you repeat them at the end of the study. Quality is better than quantity!
- What are the changes in behavior, commitment, attitude, relationships, actions, etc. that need to take place? What are you going to do about it?

Such as, "What call or task do you sense Christ is calling you to?" "How can this passage help you to change your goals?" "In the laundry list of sins, is there one you need to reconcile, that is to repent from?"

- You might need to take a personal inventory of yourself of what changes you need to make before you ask others to.
9. **Make sure you spend adequate time in prayer! Prayer is the key to God's door!**

- Be in prayer during your personal study.
- Pray before people arrive.
- Open with prayer.
- Have a prayer time in small groups for personal requests.
- Close in prayer.
- Be open to pray for people after the study.

- Keep your students in prayer during the week.
 - Have others pray for you and your students.
 - Be aware not to break confidentiality or fuel gossip!!!
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- **What do you need to do to put these precepts into action?**
 - **How would you following these precepts affect your church?**
 - **What would happen if you did not follow these precepts?**

Session III: Leading Bible Studies

How to incorporate an “Inductive type” of study into your home or church Bible study

The main premise of Bible study is to lead your students into a deeper faith and understanding of God through His Word. What we must **not** do is distract people from their growth and maturity. One of the more sorrowful ways to distract people from God’s truth is to allow pride to lead the study. Pride will cause people to pool their ignorance because they neither want to dig out the truth nor allow themselves to be properly instructed. This leads them to come up with misleading ideas that push people away from the truth!

Our endeavor at *Into Thy Word* is to open people’s minds and wills to the wonder and insights of Scripture that have been almost lost to us. The Puritans were brand new to the Bible and had a *wanderlust* for it. Thus, they had to escape the persecution in England to be able to read the new Bible in English (they used the “Geneva” translation and not the KJV), which had not been available or even allowed. They lived in a very oppressed religious system where the worship was hidden behind a veil and in a language (Latin) that they could not understand. It would be like going to a church today and not be allowed to read the Bible--and the pastor does the worship service in the back room in an unknown and strange language, out of your sight and hearing. Thus, the longing to know God would be squelched by the people in leadership using their pride and power trips to control and “lord it” over others. By doing this, they set themselves up, to a degree, as gods. As attention and recognition is drawn away from God through control and manipulation, pride allows the leader to teach whatever they desire without concern for the truth of the Word. Pride, as well as apathy, allows the attendee and student to be led by people who are callous and who disregard truth.

So, the Puritans escaped to the New World to start a new life where they could exercise their faith and get into His Word. There they produced some of the most enduring and marvelous works of American literature ever conceived, such as “Pilgrims Progress,” and the works of Jonathan Edwards, to name a few. We have lost the wonder and excitement that they had. The Puritans dug and dug because they had the will, the excitement, and the education to do so. Too often today, we just pop in a tape and refuse to learn or dig for ourselves. Often, we allow others to “lord it” over us in their pride, so we miss the road God has for us! We must rekindle our love affair for the Word and the truth of our Savior, Jesus Christ! Do not allow selfish reasons or personal agendas to be the basis for leading Bible studies. Rather, allow the truth to prevail! Remember, pride goes before destruction!

Pride skews the road God has for us. In an Inductive Bible Study format where the teacher has a heart for God’s truth, and lets the Holy Spirit guide them

into the truth of what the Word is saying, pride is squelched, and learning begins. In this way, the student's as well as the leader's relationship with God grows and matures. Truth is learned and truth is spread. A church then becomes built on what He has shown us in His Most precious Word rather than being built on the presumptions and the pride of the people. As students get into the Word for themselves, they will be dynamically changed by the power of God as He works through His Word. Bible study becomes more real and powerful as our sanctification (Growth in Christ) matures. Inductive Bible study gives God the opportunity to draw us, His children, deeper into relationship with Him, because it allows us to surrender our will over to His through His Word. Therefore, the barriers that separate us are broken down!

Since the popular outbreak of home Bible studies in the 70s, two things have happened. One is that people are studying the Word more! This is great, for it is one of the main reasons why the church is to exist and one of the main things the church has neglected for so long. However, we have a second outbreak that has occurred, and that is the rise of false doctrines. Out of these studies and other lay approaches to Bible study, a reading in of doctrine that just is not there has replaced sound logical reasoning and teaching. Presumptions, pride, and ignorance have taken a foothold into the Church and Christian thinking, pushing away sound Biblical truth. Some people have an insatiable appetite to make themselves known, and have found that a good way to do so in Christian circles is come up with a new teaching. Not convinced? Just watch some of the TV (or go to equip.org) preachers and take careful note of what they are teaching, then track them over a period of time and you will clearly see how much changing of truth occurs and how new things appear! This is a very sad and pathetic aspect of our human nature. We must fight against it and clothe ourselves in the firm foundation of His truth, not ours. His Truth is unchanging and true. Ours is always changing and untrue and will lead us way off the road of life.

The Inductive Bible Study method was developed to try to curtail these false teachings. Many people over the last three decades have contributed to this method, which traces its principles to Augustine, Aquinas, and the Reformers. By training people to get to the plain truth of the text, we do not read into it what is not there or take out what is there. And, we can do this by honestly observing the text, then asking questions and interpreting those observations, comparing them to other Bible passages, accepting God's truth and then applying what we learn into our lives so that it impacts others.

The *Into Thy Word* method is designed to allow you to read the Bible and get much more out of it than you normally could by just reading it. The outline is found on the *How to study the Bible* channel, and the full course is in the book, "Into Thy Word." More information is available on our Website channel, *Preparing Bible Studies*. Here we teach you how to outline the text and then prepare your

own inductive Bible study questions, the kind of questions that stimulate discussion and excite people to learn and grow in the Word and faith.

As a leader, your task is to lead your students to the mainstreams, of the passage that follow the precepts, ideas and truths of our Lord. These are the fresh streams of truth; flows to a world that chooses to live in a desert. So you lead the student who lives in that desert yet thinks they do not need water or thinks they have enough already. You are to lift up the cross, the Person of Christ, and what He has done. You are also to show others what you have learned and still be growing yourself, to show the wonder and truth of life that affects all of our being, that of who we are, why we are, and what we should do. The truth that created the *oasis* you live by, the truth of Christ and the following streams of His character. You cannot force one to drink the truths, but you can show him where they are and how to drink.

People learn best by discovering for themselves. Yet, at the same time, they need proper instruction. Stimulating discussion along with good Bible teaching will be the synergistic factor to make disciples for His glory. If all you have is good teaching, then your students may not process the information or understand it in an in-depth way. Nor, will they be inclined to take ownership of it and apply it to their lives. If all you do is have a discussion then a pooling of ignorance will occur, and your students will not receive proper Biblical instruction, possibly missing key insights and opportunities of application.

One advantage of Inductive Bible study is that no other book or study guide is really needed, once you know the steps. To begin, I suggest you use my "cheat sheet" and buy my book. (I need the money! Oh yeah, you will gain much more out of it too!) No other study material is needed. You may find a concordance helpful to find the location of all the passages that fit what you are studying, because comparing Scripture to Scripture is essential! By the way, this Inductive Bible Study technique can be used for any work of literature, topic, or study!

Thus, a good Bible study will have the key components of quality instruction and discussion. Of course, do not forget fellowship. First, it is best to have prayer and worship, then do the inductive steps, then have a discussion of those steps. The leader can then instruct on the key points of the passage. If you have a lot of people, break them down into small groups for the discussion with prepared leaders. Then, come back as a whole, with a time for questions and answers. Then, close by stating the main points of the passage and restating the application. You can also have people from each group share what they learned and the application they came up with, then choose by vote or have the leader just choose one with which to emphasize and challenge the whole group.

If you have the time and resources, give your students a handout containing the main points from your outline and the questions, just as I do with

the Online Bible Studies. That way, they have something tangible to take home and study. Yours does not need to be as comprehensive as mine is. A simple, logical outline will do. We have examples for you on the *Online Bible Study* channel.

Good, well thought out questions are essential to a good Bible study. If you just have quick simple questions, then you will have a quick and simple discussion. If you have well-thought-out questions, you will have a good engaging discussion that will challenge people to take ownership of the text and grow in the faith.

How to do this:

There are many ways to lead a good Bible study. These are mere suggestions, a guide on how you may lead an Inductive Bible Study. There are no right or wrong ways to do Inductive Bible studies. The suggestions are merely tools to help you gain more insight and information from God's Word in your personal Bible studies as well as for others who are listening to your teaching. What I will do here is give you some suggestions from my limited 20 years of experience, education, and the results from researching and interviewing the top Bible teachers. You then can tailor these ideas and customize your own format to fit the needs/age level of your students, your structure of time, and your environment.

Follow the steps from the articles on "How to Outline Scripture," and "How to Prepare Bible Study Questions." Then:

1. **Be prepared** and follow the first step of "Into Thy Word!" You cannot lead where you have not been! Thus, the love of the Word and the right attitude will be essential and contagious. This will make a great leader and a great study if applied, or a boring study if ignored. Know the inductive process. Do your own homework of studying the text for yourself first. After you do your own work, check yourself against good commentaries, such as the NIV Bible Commentary from Zondervan, or The IVP Background Commentary, or my favorite, the Reformation Study Bible. Good, trustworthy Bible teachers are also great resources.
 - a. **ATTITUDE is crucial!!!!** (Gal. 2:20)
 - b. **REMEMBER TO ALWAYS: BEGIN and END YOUR STUDY IN PRAYER.** And, in the meantime, be in prayer.
 - c. **DIRECT YOUR WILL AND SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY!!!**
 - d. **BE OPEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

2. **Use a good format.** (1 1/2 hour study is usually the norm, but you can modify it to be more or less for a Sunday school class or retreat) There is no real best way, because each group is different in age, education, and

walk of life...so be open to make changes, and be flexible. What usually works well is to:

- a. Begin the study in **prayer**. (2 to 5 Min) Consider having someone lead worship also! (10 to 15+ min)
 - b. Have the passage **read** (2 to 5 min), maybe twice in different translations. You could use the NIV or NKJV, and then a paraphrase such as the NLT (although more of a translation than the previous Living Bible, it is still a loose translation and not suited for serious study, but it is very helpful to gain insights. I highly recommend reading the New Living Translation for your Devotions. Always study off a good translation NIV, NASB, NKJV and not a paraphrase. A paraphrase is for a general overview and to gain some insights that may be lost in translations that read “wooden,” that is difficult to understand in our normal day-to-day use of language. Since it is not a word for word translation, a paraphrase is not for serious study) Have handouts with the passage in the two translations. (Print them out with wide margins for note taking.) You can get this from any Bible study software or on our Website under Bible Study Aids. That way, they can follow along in the same translations and circle key words, (in the translation, not paraphrase) highlight verses and write down notes.
3. **The Inductive part** (15 to 20 min): If your group can do this, (few will have the time or inclination) assign the text a week in advance, and have people do the inductive study themselves before the Bible Study. If not, set aside 15 to 20 minutes for people to do the steps. If space is available, spread out. For this part, people can work alone or they can work in teams of two to three or in small groups. Have no more than five in a group. Pass out copies of the “cheat sheet” (which has the main inductive steps and questions) and the “chart” (to write down notes in a syntactic and organized way) from the “*Preparing Bible Studies*” channel, (they are in the book, too) and have them chart the passage. If you have time restraints, you may want the students to focus on the key steps and questions from the “cheat sheet” that apply to the passage you are studying. As you and the students get more familiar with Inductive Bible Study, this step will become easier and faster!
4. Other ideas: students can do an outline, or use colored pens to circle key words and other information from the “cheat sheet” steps that apply to their passage. You can photocopy the passage for them if some do not want to mark in their Bibles.
- a. Make sure your passage is not too long or too short for your time restraints.
 - b. For youth, children, or older folks, pass out colored pens to circle in their Bible what they observe--key words as well as their questions.

Then, have a discussion on what it means, and discuss how they can apply it. (The book has an excellent 15 week curriculum designed for High School youth and can be used for adults too!) As the students advance, you can teach them how to outline the text too!

- c. Then come together as a group and **discuss** (10 to 20 minutes+) what they have discovered. Use an opening statement such as “what did you discover with step...” then add your prepared questions to the discussion as they fit in. Try to have more questions prepared than what you may need. It is better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. If there are too many people, break down in small groups with prepared leaders. If you are new to this, it will take time for you to get used to it. Be honest with your students. Most people will allow you to stumble and they may get more out of it as they see you grow too! Remember, **He** is in charge, not you!
5. **Teaching** (10-15 min.): Here, the leader can instruct on the key points of the passage, and field questions. It is best to be prepared and have an outline to work from and to share. Remember it is God’s most precious Word you are teaching, so be enthusiastic, and have a right attitude. Do not be afraid and think you have to be able to answer all the questions people might ask. Even the great ones are sometimes stumped, or just cannot think of the answer “off the top of their heads.” (For me, the answer usually comes as I’m driving home!) If you are not sure, tell them you will research it and get back to them next week. Pride will cause you to answer a question without knowing the correct answer, and that will cause people to have the wrong answer and then spread it to others!
 6. Save the **application** (5 min) for last. Brainstorm as a group the top one or two applications that the people came up with from the small groups or individual studies, or what you as the leader came up with, then discuss how you can apply them. Make a commitment to do it and then in the following week spend 5 minutes discussing how it went or what was in the way of the application. **This is where the “rubber meets the road” and what helps create the maturity and growth we all need!**
 7. **Close in prayer** (5 min). At least once a month spend 20+ minutes in-group or small group prayer. (See prayer suggestions in our Prayer channel.)

Ideas for time constraint studies--such as Sunday school classes where you have less than an hour:

1. Have the students do the “inductive” part on their own before class, so class time is spent on discussion and teaching. This would be ideal if your

students will commit to it. Of course, there will be those who forget or just were not able. They can still interact--do not leave anyone out.

2. Condense the above steps and concentrate on just one of the steps for the passage. Choose a "meaty" passage such as Romans 12, and spend a month in it. This could be done in four or five lessons, each one focusing on a step of the Inductive process. Examples could be: Week One, Observations; Week Two, Interpreting; Week Three, What does it mean to me; and Week Four, How to apply it.
3. Go over each step with the class in a fast paced manner (not too fast so it loses people), so the class will be more of an overview. Then, encourage people to dig out more on their own. During the class time, pause for interaction and ask questions. That way, it will be a lecture/discussion format. In addition, have five minutes of class time to ask them what they discovered on their own.
4. There are three basic parts to Inductive Bible Study. You may just want to try to focus on them, along with a quick overview and discussion:
 - a. OBSERVATION: What does it say?
 - b. INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?
 - c. APPLICATION: How does it apply to me?
5. **Key Word Studies:** Use **colors**; colored pens or highlighters work well. Colored pencils will work too. Pencils by "Bero!" seem to work the best, and they are found at art stores. Experiment, because some highlighters bleed through to the other side in most Bibles. This is why I recommend using photocopies. You can mark key words throughout the passage. The student will be able to visualize the ideas and relationships within God's Word and how they apply to them.

The key to making this work is being consistent by using the same colors in each of the steps. This will allow you to pick up Biblical truths, and enjoy your colorful work! Many people find this way very enlightening and beneficial. With this method you can identify common themes and follow the logical flow of the passage, especially in the Epistles. Colored pencils or highlighters or even a four-color pen will work. You can use the pen to make circles, underline, or even write little symbols that relate to the inductive step. For example, when I see a name for God, I mark it with a red cross. You can also use key words to answer the six "biggies," Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why. (Use the same color for each of these.) They are the words that are repeated the most often. Other words to mark are the names of key people in the story and any pronouns. Names of God (see article on the "Names of God," "Names of Jesus," and the "Names of Satan"), Jesus, and Holy Spirit can also be marked. You can mark time references, adjectives, nouns,

places, contrasts, comparisons, and any key phrases. When you see a transition in the subject, highlight it. In that way, you categorize, and it keeps your thoughts and what you learn in segments, which become easier to find later!

Kay Arthur, of *Precept Ministries*, suggests using colors for symbols such as yellow for the names of Jesus, green for promises, orange for salvation, triangle for Trinity, and heart for love. Each person can choose their own colors and style. This can be a lot of fun, especially for children, youth, women, and elderly groups. I have found that men's groups prefer a traditional Inductive approach. But, again, each group is different! Don't be afraid to experiment! And, do not forget to make notes in the margins!

The book "Into Thy Word," takes you through each Inductive step and has an excellent 15-week curriculum designed for high school youth. It can be used for adults too.

© 1990, Rev. 2002 Richard Krejcir Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org

The ultimate study guide tool for studying the Bible? It is the **will** to do it!

Many people write in, asking how and why I wrote the book, "Into Thy Word." Basically, it was to show how one can better study and understand the Word of God. It explains how to dig the meat out of it. (See the articles on "Why Inductive Bible Study" and others in the *How to Study the Bible* channel.) I have done this by incorporating what is called "exegetical tools," methods that pastors learn in seminary in order to prepare sermons. Then, I hone them into everyday language in a logical systematic way. This is how a doctor in literature might study Shakespeare, and then explain to their students, with passion and excitement, the truths and wonders of Shakespeare.

I then did a comprehensive research project of finding out how the best Bible teachers teach and gathered their insights. Why is Chuck Swindoll better than pastor John Blow down the street? I did this by interviewing dozens and dozens of the top Bible teachers in the world, including Billy Graham, R.C. Sproul, Charles Swindoll, Chuck Smith and even C. Spurgeon through his book, "Lectures to my Students", plus hundreds of great "regular" Bible teachers to find their methods and "tricks." I even interviewed *bad* Bible teachers to see their mistakes. I began doing the "How to study the Bible" seminars for others in 1988. (I actually started doing them in 1980 for youth groups and Young Life and Campus Crusade.) This research is ongoing as I am always researching and refining "Into Thy Word."

- **What do you need to do to put these precepts into action?**
- **How would you following these precepts affect your church?**
- **What would happen if you did not follow these precepts?**

HERMENEUTICS

Taught by Pastor John Paul Miller

INTRODUCTION TO HERMENEUTICS II Tim 2:15

I. WHY IS BIBLE INTERPRETATION IMPORTANT?

1. It is essential for understanding and teaching the Bible properly.
2. Bible interpretation is essential as a step beyond observation.
3. Bible interpretation is essential for applying the Bible properly.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION

III. PROBLEMS IN BIBLE INTERPRETATION

1. A time gap (chronological)
2. A space gap (geographical)
3. A customs gap (cultural)
4. A language gap (linguistic)
5. A writing gap (literary)
6. A spiritual gap (supernatural)

IV. DEFINITIONS IN HERMENEUTICS

Quote by Bernard Ramm: *The word hermeneutics is ultimately derived from Hermes the Greek god who brought the messages of the gods to the mortals, and the god of science, invention, eloquence, speech, writing, and art.*

Hermeneutics is the science and art of Biblical interpretation. It is a science because it is guided by rules within a system; and it is an art because the application of the rules is by skill. And not by mechanical imitation.

Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpreting the Bible. Another way to define hermeneutics is this: It is the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined.

DEFINITIONS OF HERMENEUTICS AND RELATED TERMS

HERMENEUTICS: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined.

EXEGESIS: The determination of the meaning of the biblical Text in its historical and literary contexts

EXPOSITION: The communication of the meaning of the text along with its relevance to present-day hearers.

HOMILETICS: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a preaching situation.

V. DIVISIONS OF HERMENEUTICS

The rules of interpretation are divided into four categories: General, Grammatical, Historical, and Theological.

1. General Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal with the overall subject of interpretation. They are universal in nature rather than being limited to special considerations, which are listed in the other three sections.

2. Grammatical Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal with the text itself. They lay down the ground rules for understanding the words and sentences in the passage under study.

3. Historical Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal with the background or context in which the books of the Bible were written. Political, economic, and cultural situations are important in considering the historical aspect of your study of the Word of God.

4. Theological Principles of Interpretation are principles that deal with the formation of Christian doctrine. They are, of necessity, "broad" rules, for doctrine must take into consideration all that the Bible says about a given subject.

VI. QUALIFICATIONS FOR INTERPRETATING THE BIBLE

1. No one can fully comprehend the meaning of the Bible unless he/she is regenerated (Born Again). The unsaved person is spiritually blind (2 Cor. 4:4) and dead (Eph 2:2). (1 Cor 2:14)
2. More than regeneration is necessary. Also reverence for and interest in God and His Word are essential to interpreting the Bible properly.
3. Other spiritual qualifications are a prayerful attitude and humility.
4. The Scriptures should also be approached with a willingness to obey them, a willingness to put into practice what has been learned in the Word.
5. The interpreter must also depend upon the Holy Spirit.
 - a. His role does not mean that one's interpretations are infallible. Inerrancy and infallibility are characteristics of the Bible's original manuscripts, but not of the Bible's interpreters.
 - b. The work of the Holy Spirit in interpretation does not mean that He gives some interpreters a "hidden" meaning divergent from the norm, literal meaning of the passage.
 - c. As already suggested, a Christian who is living in sin is susceptible to making inaccurate Bible interpretations because his heart and mind are not in harmony with the Holy Spirit.
 - d. The Holy Spirit guides into all truth (John 16:13). The word "guide" means "to lead the way or guide along the way or road."
 - e. The place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible means that He does not normally give sudden intuitive flashes of insight into the meaning of scripture. Many passages are readily understood, but the meaning of others may come to light only gradually as the result of careful study.
 - f. The Spirit's role in interpretation means that the Bible was given to be understood by all believers. Its interpretation is not in the hands of an elite few scholars.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

RULE ONE: Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.

Attitudes Towards the Bible

1. Rationalism: (a) Extreme form denies the possibility of any supernatural revelation. (b) Moderate form admit possibility of divine revelation, but human mind is final judge of revelation.
2. Romanism: The Bible is the product of the church, therefore the Bible is not the sole or final authority.
3. Mysticism: Experience is authoritative along with the Bible.
4. Neo-orthodoxy: The Bible is a fallible witness to the revelation of God.
5. Cults: The Bible and the writings of the particular cult leaders are equally authoritative.
6. Orthodoxy: The Bible alone is the ground of authority.

Different views of inspiration.

1. Natural; no supernatural element, the bible was written by men of great genius.
2. Mechanical.
3. Fallible Inspiration; the bible is inspired but not without error.
4. Conceptual; the concepts but not the words are inspired. 5. Inerrant, verbal, plenary inspiration.

RULE TWO: The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture.

1. Let the Bible be its own commentary.
2. The Bible's obscure passages are to be interpreted in light of clear passages.

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

RULE FOUR: Interpret personal experience in light of Scripture and not Scripture in light of personal experience.

RULE FIVE: Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command.

RULE SIX: The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not increase our knowledge.

RULE SEVEN: Each Christian has the right and responsibility to investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself.

RULE EIGHT: Church history is important but not decisive in the interpretation of Scripture.

GRAMMATICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

RULE ONE: Scripture has only one meaning and should be taken literally.

RULE TWO: Interpret words in harmony with their meaning in the times of the author.

RULE THREE: Interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context.

RULE FOUR: Interpret a passage in harmony with its context.

RULE FIVE: When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement may be considered figurative.

RULE SIX: When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement may be considered figurative.

RULE SEVEN: The principle parts and figures of a parable represent certain realities.

Consider only these principal parts and figures when drawing conclusions. I.
Mark 4:1-2

Dodd's definition is that a parable "at its simplest. . . is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to rouse it into active thought.

II. Rules for Interpretation of Parables

1. Determine the purpose of the parable.
2. Make sure you explain the different parts of the parable in accordance with the main design.
3. Don't try to make the parable 'walk on all fours'.
4. The parables were given to illustrate doctrine not to declare it.
5. Validate the main truth of the parable with direct teaching of Scripture.

RULE EIGHT: Interpret the words of the prophets in their usual, literal and historical sense, unless the context or manner in which they are fulfilled clearly

indicates they have a symbolic meaning. Their fulfillment may be in installments, each fulfillment being a pledge of that which is to follow.

HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

The historical principles deal with the historical setting of the text. To whom and by whom was the book written? Why was it written and what role did the historical setting play in shaping the message of the book? What are the customs and surroundings of the people? These are the kinds of questions you try to answer when considering the historical aspect of your study.

As you begin your study of a passage, imagine yourself to be a reporter searching for all the facts. Bombard the text with questions such as:

- * To whom was the letter (book) written?
- * What was the background of the writer?
- * What was the experience or occasion that gave rise to the message?
- * Who are the main characters in the book?

RULE ONE: Since Scripture originated in a historical context, it can be understood only in the light of biblical history.

RULE TWO: Though God's revelation in the Scriptures is progressive, both Old and New Testaments are essential parts of this revelation and form a unit.

RULE THREE: Historical facts or events become types of spiritual truths only if the Scriptures so designate them.

I. Is Typology Justified? Yes, Why?

1. The strong prophetic element in the Old Testament in its relationship with the New Testament.
2. Jesus' use of the Old Testament.
3. The New Testament references.

II. Must Types Be Designated As Such In The New Testament?

III. What Steps Should Be Followed in Interpreting Types?

1. Determine the literal sense of the type.

2. Note the specific point or points of correspondence or resemblance between the type and its antitype.
3. Note the specific areas of contrast or dissimilarity in order to avoid making those elements aspects of the type.
4. Note the direct assertions in the New Testament that verify the typological correspondence.
5. Do not prove doctrine from types unless there is clear New Testament authority.

IV. Which Types Are Valid?

To determine which types are valid in Scripture, we must ask the following questions:

1. Is there a definite correspondence or resemblance between the type and the antitype? Does the type exhibit the same truths, principles, and relationships as the corresponding New Testament reality?
2. Is the antitype in harmony with the historical setting of the type?
3. Is the type a prefiguring or foreshadowing of the antitype, or is it merely an example or illustration? Is there a forward focus in the type which looks ahead to something in the future?
4. Does the antitype heighten or "fulfill" the type, with the antitype being superior to the type?
5. Can divine design be observed in the relationship of the type and the antitype?
6. Does the New Testament in some way designate the type and the antitype?

Given these six criteria, which Old Testament persons, events, or things are types? I would suggest the following

17: TYPE SCRIPTURE ANTITYPE

Persons

1. Melchizedek Heb 7:3, 15-17 Christ's perpetual priesthood
2. Aaron Heb. 5:4-5 Christ's priestly ministry

Events

3. Passover feast 1 Cor. 5:7 Christ our sacrifice
4. Feast of Un- leavened Bread 1 Cor. 5:7-8 Believer's holy walk
5. Feast of First fruits 1 Cor. 15:20-23 Christ's resurrection a pledge of the believers resurrection
6. Feast of Pentecost Joel 2:28; The coming of the Holy Spirit Acts 2:1-47
7. Feast of Trumpets Matt. 24:21-23 Israel's re-gathering
8. Day of Atonement Zech 12:10; Israel's national Rom. 11:2-27; conversion by the blood of Heb. 9:19-28 Christ
9. Feast of Tabernacles John 7:2, 37-39 God's provision for man's need (with Israel in the kingdom)
10. Sabbath Things Col. 2:17; The Christian's spiritual Heb 4:3, 9, 11 rest Things
11. Tabernacle Heb 8:5, 9:23-24 Christ, the believer's access to God and basis of fellowship with God
12. Tabernacle curtain Heb 10:20 Christ, the believer's access to God
13. Burnt offering Lev. 1; Heb 10:5-7 Christ's offering Eph 5:2 of Himself as the perfect sacrifice
14. Grain offering Lev 2; Heb 10:8 Christ's offering of Himself as the perfect sacrifice of the highest quality
15. Fellowship offering Lev 3; Eph 2:14 Christ's offering of Col 1:20 Himself as the basis for fellowship with God
16. Sin offering Lev. 4:1-5:13; Christ's death for the Heb. 13:11-12 sinner in relation to the guilt of sin
17. Guilt offering Lev. 5:14-6:7; Heb. 10:12 Christ's death as an atonement for the injury of sin

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION INTRODUCTION:

Theology is the study of God and His relation to the world. The source book for this study is the Bible. Theology seeks to draw conclusions on various broad and important topics in the Bible. What is God like? What is the nature of man? What is a proper doctrine of salvation? These are the kinds of subjects with which

theology deals. Theological principles are those broad rules that deal with the formation of doctrine. For example, how can we tell if a doctrine is truly biblical?

RULE ONE: You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically.

RULE TWO: A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures say about it.

RULE THREE: 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.

A number of seeming contradictions or paradoxes exist in the Scriptures. "Seeming" because they really are not. They appear contradictory because the finite mind of man cannot comprehend the infinite mind of God.

Some familiar paradoxes to the human mind are:

1. The Trinity.
2. The dual nature of Christ.
3. The origin and existence of evil.
4. The sovereign election of God and responsibility of man.
5. The main burden of doctrinal teaching must rest on the literal interpretation of the Bible.
6. The main burden of our theology should rest on the teaching of the New Testament.
7. Exegesis is prior to any system of theology.
8. Don't extend our doctrines beyond the Scriptural evidence.
9. No doctrine should be constructed from an uncertain textual reading.

RULE FOUR: A teaching merely implied in Scripture may be considered biblical when a comparison of related passages supports it.

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Extra insights: Some Valuable NOTES on BIBLICAL PREACHING

BIBLICAL PREACHING By HADDON ROBINSON

People come to a sacred appointment on Sunday morning; bewildered by seductive voices, nursing wounds that life has inflicted upon them, and anxious about matters that do not matter, they come to listen for a clear word from God that speaks to their condition.

2 Timothy 4:2 - "Preach" means to "cry out, herald, or exhort". It should so stir a man that he pours out the message with passion and fervor.

A sermon should be a bullet and not buckshot; it is the explanation, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea that is drawn from the passage of Scripture and that can be expressed in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as a crystal, without vague, ambiguous words, in the most exact, memorable sentence possible that is winsome (sparkles) and compelling (grabs hold of the mind). Defining an idea is like packaging fog. It has a subject (what am I talking about?) and a complement (what am I saying about what I am talking about?)

In the sermon, each idea is either explained, proved, or applied.

Explanation: what does this mean? It may be a story to be told or a subject to be completed to clarify or amplify. It may be inductive (idea at the end, following self-discovery) or deductive (idea at the beginning). Three worlds are brought together: the ancient world, the modern world, and our particular world.

Validation: Is it true? State a proposition to be proved. Define important terms in language the audience understands, because a mist in the pulpit becomes a fog in the pew.

Application: So what? What difference does it make? Give the implications of the biblical principle to be applied.

A. W. Tozer said in "Of God and Men" (1960, pp. 26-27):

"There is scarcely anything so dull and meaningless as Bible doctrine taught for its own sake. Truth divorced from life is not truth in its Biblical sense, but something else and something less... Theological truth is useless until it is obeyed. The purpose behind all doctrine is to secure moral action."

Conclusion: Always write the conclusion with the purpose of the sermon in mind. The purpose states the reason why the author wrote this and what you expect to happen in the life of the hearer as a result of preaching this sermon. A sermon is not to be like a firecracker to be fired off for the noise it makes. It is a hunter's gun, and at every discharge he should look to see his game fall. Never be uncertain about where the sermon will land. Produce a feeling a finality and clarity. Use short words (one syllable) and short sentences. If a sermon seems deep, perhaps it's because it is muddy. Think in detailed pictures.

To nail a truth into the mind requires that it be hit several times. To illustrate a point, move from particular instances to generalized abstractions, and vice versa. Render truth believable by throwing light on the subject and making it vivid, clear, convincing, dramatic, and experiential. Help people to recall impressions of their past experiences and to visualize themselves being in a probable situation.

Manuscripting the sermon improves preaching, for writing makes a man exact in thought and in speech. Use words that are as brilliant as a sunrise, not as drab and worn as an anemic worm, words that have punch and sparkle. The delivery needs to sound like a lively face-to-face conversation with direct eye contact and wide deliberate gestures and expressive vigorous tone of voice (that varies in pitch (inflections on the scale), punch (volume from loud to a whisper), progress (contrasting rate of delivery), and pause (thoughtful silences that give an opportunity to think, feel, and respond, or to create suspense)) so that the speaker and listener feel in touch with each other.

Step behind the pulpit in an unhurried, confident manner, then start with a bang; be alert, friendly, and interesting. Capture and command attention and raise needs in the first 30 seconds with a familiar thought, a rhetorical question, humor, a story, or a startling fact or statistic. Make people sit up to listen. Grab them by the throat by surfacing felt needs quickly. Sermons catch fire when the flint of a person's problems, questions, and hurts strikes the steel of God's Word, causing a spark to ignite that burns in the mind. Listeners should realize that their pastor is talking to them about them. Maintain a sense of tension, the feeling that something more must be said if the message is to be complete.

Quoting from Aurelius Augustine of Hippo:

"The teacher of Holy Scripture must teach what is right and refute what is wrong. In doing this, he must conciliate the hostile, rouse the careless, and tell the ignorant about current events and trends for the future" ... so that his hearers become "friendly, attentive, and ready to learn."

"... the highest priority should be placed on clarity. What advantage is there in speech that does not lead to understanding? Therefore, good teachers avoid all

words that do not teach; instead, they must find words that are both pure and intelligible."

"There is an analogy between learning and eating: the very food without which it is impossible to live must be flavored to meet the tastes of the majority."

"To teach is a necessity, to delight is a beauty, to persuade is a triumph."

Extra insights: EXEGETICAL EXEMPLAR By Sinclair Ferguson

What, then, is demanded by what Paul describes as setting forth the truth

EXEGETICAL EXEMPLAR

G. Campbell Morgan once described a remarkable sermon on 2 Samuel 9:13: "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame in both his feet": "My brethren, we see here tonight, first; the doctrine of human depravity - Mephibosheth was lame. Second, the doctrine of total depravity - he was lame on both his feet. Thirdly, the doctrine of justification - he dwelt in Jerusalem. Fourthly, the doctrine of adoption - he sat at the king's table. Fifthly, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints he did eat at the king's table continually."

We may well smile at such a mixture of human ingenuity, systematic theology and hermeneutical confusion! Clever points, a wide range of doctrines, wonderful spiritual blessings - biblical truths, but not biblical exposition There is a fundamental transgression of this wise principle: "In raising doctrines from the text, his [the preacher's] care ought to be, first, that the matter be the truth of God. Secondly, that it be a truth contained in or grounded on that text, that the hearers may discern how God teacheth it from thence" (The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, 1645, emphasis added).

Our failures here are not harmless; they multiply in their impact over the long haul on those who hear us preach. This is because most Christians learn how to study the Bible by a process of osmosis. The principles filter through to them, not from books, but by example, by what they experience as they listen to the working models they see and hear.

Those who hear us preach ought to be able to go back to the Scriptures, Berean like (Acts 17:11), tracing the same truth we have brought out from them, and see that what has been preached is not only true in general, but truth drawn from the preaching portion we have used.

What, then, is demanded by what Paul describes as "setting forth the truth plainly" (2 Cor. 4:2)? We may need a mental "cold shower" to alert us to our weaknesses. These principles will help us:

1.Exposition of Scripture must exhibit Paul's motto for preachers: "Do your best (he verb is spoudazein, which suggests strenuous effort) to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

We must apply to our handling of Scripture the apostolic principle that in Christ we always "put off" and "put on" (Col. 3:1, 5, 11). We repent of our tendency to mishandle Scripture, and our minds are renewed by the Scriptures themselves to use them properly, discerning the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2 applies to preaching as well as "real life!").

2. Exposition of Scripture must never be replaced by either illustration or application.

Both of these are essential parts of good teaching and preaching. It should concern us if we find that preaching narratives appeals to us far less than preaching on doctrinal propositions. Nevertheless, the modern homiletical passion for stories and illustrations (not to mention feel-good funnies and jokes) must be unbiblical in character and ephemeral in its fruit. Apostolic preaching involved "setting forth the truth plainly" (2 Cor. 4:2). Our aim is to see the Emmaus Road experience duplicated and our hearers say, "My heart was strangely warmed as the Scriptures were opened today - now I see what these Scriptures mean."

3. Exposition of Scripture should include Scripture's application of itself.

Do we expound the meaning of a passage, then, for application, scrape around for personal experiences, moving stories, or modern psychological counsels to explain the "how to"? The basic instinct here is faulty. We shortchange our hearers by failing to show how the application of Scripture arises from and is usually given with the very passage we are expounding. The application does not always present itself in a surface, obvious way. But if we are not workmen, we are not really fit to be preachers.

4. Exposition of Scripture should always function with some basic controlling principles.

We preach Scripture in terms of the particular kind of literature from which we are preaching. First, we preach from each part of Scripture in terms of its place in the whole and its relationship to God's ongoing, progressive revelation. Second, we preach in such a way that we draw the line from our passage to Christ; and third, we preach so that every imperative is rooted in the indicatives of grace. In technical terms, our preaching is genre-sensitive, redemptive-historical, Christocentric and carries gospel-grace application. Every sermon!

5. Exposition of Scripture should never move too quickly from the objective to the subjective, from God to man, from grace to sin, from Christ to the sinner.

This is still a great contemporary weakness, even in Reformed preaching. We invest much energy and legitimate imaginative creativity in speaking about man,

sin, need. We are weak and poor in explaining, expounding, and exalting God, Christ, grace, glory. We are often too much in a hurry to get to application. Where can we go for help? Nowhere better than to Paul's preaching grid in 2 Tim. 3:16-4:5. Here he connects what Scripture is for and what preachers are to do with it. Since it is for teaching, rebuking, transforming, and training (2 Tim. 3:16), those must be the four things our preaching should exemplify and accomplish (2 Tim. 4:2). Go to it!

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