

I continue this week with the act of piety referred to as studying the scriptures and offer the following advice as found at www.biblestudytools.com in an article entitled: “3 Simple Steps for Studying the Bible” (edited to fit format). This is a continuation of last week’s lesson.

Disciple Life

The Wesleyan Way

Week # 22

Step 2: Interpretation

“Interpretation is discovering the meaning of a passage, the author’s main thought or idea. Answering the questions that arise during observation will help you in the process of interpretation. Five clues (called “the five C’s”) can help you determine the author’s main point(s):

- **Context.** You can answer 75 percent of your questions about a passage when you read the text. Reading the text involves looking at the near context (the verse immediately before and after) as well as the far context (the paragraph or the chapter that precedes and/or follows the passage you’re studying).
- **Cross-references.** Let Scripture interpret Scripture. That is, let other passages in the Bible shed light on the passage you are looking at. At the same time, be careful not to assume that the same word or phrase in two different passages means the same thing.
- **Culture.** The Bible was written long ago, so when we interpret it, we need to understand it from the writers’ cultural context.
- **Conclusion.** Having answered your questions for understanding by means of context, cross-reference, and culture, you can make a preliminary statement of the passage’s meaning. Remember that if your passage consists of more than one paragraph, the author may be presenting more than one thought or idea.
- **Consultation.** Reading books known as commentaries, which are written by Bible scholars, can help you interpret Scripture.



Start the Conversation:
Provoke One Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

As you study your Bible, is it harder for you to understand what is being said or to try and apply what is being said to your daily life?

Step 3: Application

Application is why we study the Bible. We want our lives to change; we want to be obedient to God and to grow more like Jesus Christ. After we have observed a passage and interpreted or understood it to the best of our ability, we must then apply its truth to our own life.

You’ll want to ask the following questions of every passage of Scripture you study:

- How does the truth revealed here affect my relationship with God?
- How does this truth affect my relationship with others?
- How does this truth affect me?
- How does this truth affect my response to the enemy, Satan?

The application step is not completed by simply answering these questions; the key is putting into practice what God has taught you in your study. Although at any given moment you cannot be consciously applying everything you’re learning in Bible study, you can be consciously applying something. And when you work on applying a truth to your life, God will bless your efforts by, as noted earlier, conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ.

Carry the cross  and follow me.
Luke 14:27, NRSV