

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTORY PRINCIPLES OF HERMENEUTICS

Step 1: Analysis of Biblical Text

- Read the text carefully. Look, look, look. Then look again! *The longer you look, the more you'll see.*
- Identify key words, figurative language, repetition, literary form, tone, key characters and symbols in the story. Identify the speaker and the audience. *Interact with the text.*
- Prioritize the literary and historical context. Never isolate a single verse! *Context is key to understanding the intended meaning...*



Step 2: Intended Meaning

- Find out what the Biblical text meant to *the people to whom it was originally written (the Biblical audience)*.
- Consider the Biblical culture. How is it different from ours? *(You may need to consult outside resources)*
- If your interpretation would not have made sense to the Biblical audience, it is *wrong*.



Step 3: Cross-Cultural Principle

- Cross the “principle bridge” from *their* culture to *our* culture. What *principle* underlies the text which is applicable in *every* culture?
- *The principle must be (1) found in the text, (2) include every key dynamic that the text includes, and (3) be consistent with the rest of the Bible.*
- If reading in the Old Testament, ask yourself how the passage is modified or fulfilled by New Testament revelation.



Step 4: Specific Application

- Make an application of the text that specifically describes how the Biblical principle can be lived out in our everyday lives. *Be careful! This too must be consistent with the rest of Scripture.*
- Do not elevate your application to the same level as the principle. There will always be someone with a stricter or looser application!
- *Pray and ask God to help you actualize the truth in your life.*

