

Sentences and Paragraphs - Class Outline

Hermeneutics Pt.4

4-12-2011

James 1:2-8

Command **who** **when**
Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

why **what**
3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

I Peter 1:3-5

_____ _____ _____
In His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope

_____ _____
through the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead and into an inheritance

_____ _____
that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for you,

_____ _____ _____
who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation

_____ _____
that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Step 3: Paragraph & Section Study

James 1:2-5

Colossians 3:1-17

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your flesh: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.
6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.
8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

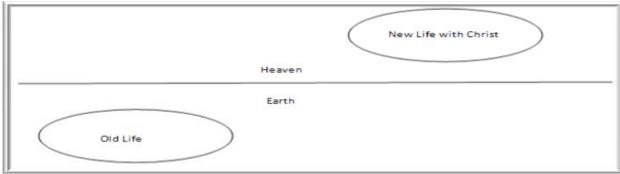
9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices
10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.
12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

- Set your mind on things above
- Your life is hidden with Christ
- You will appear with Christ
- Put to death what belongs to your flesh.

- Rid yourself of anger, rage, etc.
- Don't lie
- In Christ there is no Greek nor Jew
- Be loving

Making the connections:

Verses 1-3 call us to think on things above _____ of the fact that you have been raised with Christ.

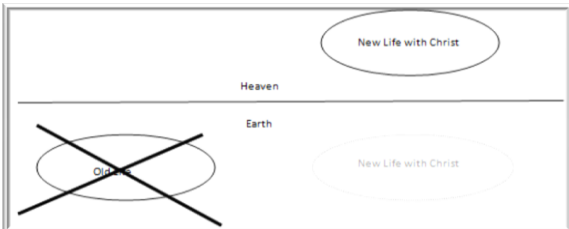


Verse 4 _____ the fact that while now your life in God is hidden and invisible, the time is coming when it will appear in the open and be clearly visible.



Verse 5 then calls us to do away with the old life that hinders you from setting your mind on things above by dragging your affections down to _____ things (things of the flesh).

Verses 6-7 offer two more _____ _____ to abandon those things – showing that they are inconsistent with someone so identified with God.



Verses 8-14 make the point that _____ your Creator is loving, you should strive for the virtues associated with love, and rid yourself of those things that are the opposite of love.

The summary (taking into consideration the connections):

1-3 Since your identity is with Christ, set your hearts & minds up there with Him, not down here on earthly things, because the old life is gone, and your new life is wrapped up completely in God. 4 Now it's hidden but when Christ returns it will be visible, 5 so do away with whatever ties you to this world (the desires of your flesh), 6 because first of all those are the things that bring God's wrath, and secondly 7 those are part of your old life. 8-14 so get rid of the unloving old self and clothe yourself with the loving new self which reflects your Creator.

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Introduction

Review Questions:

What does “semantic range” mean?

Why don’t translators just translate word for word?

How does one determine which of the possible meanings of a word is the intended meaning for a specific text?

Homework: Do a word study to determine the meaning of the word “easy” in Matthew 11:30

For my yoke is easy (*chrestos* - χρηστός) and my burden is light."

That Greek word is used only here and in the following 6 passages:

Lk.5:39 And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, `The old is *better* (*chrestos*).'"

Lk 6:35-36 ...the Most High...is *kind* (*chrestos*) to the ungrateful and wicked.

Ro 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his *kindness* (*chrestos*), tolerance and patience...

1Co 15:33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts *good* (*chrestos*) character."

Eph.4:3 Be *kind* (*chrestos*) and compassionate to one another

1Pe 2:3 you have tasted that the Lord is *good* (*chrestos*).

Do not use any other source than your Bible for this. Note how the word is used in those passages, determine a range of meaning from that, and then decided where the context of Matthew 11 intersects that range of meaning.

Sentences

You have this skill

This is once again an area where you have a great deal of skill, and if you applied that skill to interpreting the Bible you would be way ahead of a lot of Bible teachers. If I tell you, “Sit down on the green chair,” you would not conclude that the main point is the greenness of the chair. And yet how often in a Bible study or sermon do you hear someone go off on a word or phrase from a Bible verse in such a way that the main point of the sermon has nothing to do with the main point of the verse? When it comes to interpreting Scripture, some people seem to think that if you find three words in a passage, any correlation of those words at all is a valid interpretation. If I tell you I bought a really cheap radio for my car from Wal-Mart in Lafayette, and the next day after I installed it, it didn’t work and someone asks you, “What did Darrell say?” and you respond, “Oh, he was talking to me about the city of Lafayette” that would not be accurate.

Not “What is it about?” but “What does it say?”

When someone talks to you, you listen for meaning. Listen to God’s Word that same way. If I had a group of average Christians and told them to spend a few minutes reading a certain passage of Scripture, and then I asked for their analysis, most of them would probably say something like, “That passage is about ...”

“That verse is about justification.”

“That verse is about forgiving your brother.”

But we don’t talk that way about other communication. Imagine the phone rings at your house and your spouse answers it and talks for a half hour. At the end of the conversation your spouse is clearly affected by the call – crying or laughing or really serious – something that makes you curious about the call.

So you ask – “Who was it?”

“It was the pastor.”

“What did he say?”

“Well, he talked about sin and about money and about the police and jail, and 12 times he mentioned food.”

How would you respond to that?

“I didn’t ask what topics he talked about. I asked, What did he say?”

Now, is there ever a context in which you would be content just to know what was talked about? Yes. If Tracy went to lunch with a friend and I ask her, “What did you talk about?” and she says, “decorating,” I might respond with, “Oh. OK. So – what’s for dinner tonight?” In a situation like that I would be content just to know what was talked about without having to know what was actually said – why? Because I’m not interested in what was said. Unless it’s something Tracy needs my help on, or that we need to discuss – if it was just chit chat about decorating, then I’m not interested.

But that should never be the case with the Bible. If you ever find yourself content just to know what topics are being talked about in a passage without figuring out what the message is, that is a sign of lack of interest in the will of God.

Example: I attended a pastors’ prayer meeting where I heard the following prayer: “Lord we know that in Matthew 24 You said that when we see the armies gathered around Jerusalem, the time is near. And we need to be ready. We now see that happening, so help us to be ready.” At first blush that may sound about right. You may have a vague idea of Matthew 24 – the disciples asked Jesus when the end would come, and what the sign of that would be, and Jesus began by talking about armies and wars and rumors of wars... But what exactly did Jesus say about wars?

Matthew 24:6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.

Jesus did not say, “When you see the wars, get ready because that’s the sign.” He said the opposite. “When you hear of the wars, don’t be alarmed – that is not it.” What is the sign?

Matthew 24:30-31 At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Finding the core message

Discern the relationships between clauses

When you interpret a sentence, pay close attention to the verbs. The primary meaning revolves around the verbs. The verbs are what “happens” in a clause.

And from there take note of the relationship between clauses. Meaning is communicated in sentences by clauses and the relationships between clauses. For example, take these two clauses –

Darrell arrived at the party

The party was a disaster

Both those clauses, by themselves, convey meaning and are easily understood. But depending upon how they are related to each other in a sentence, there is further meaning. For example, The party was a disaster *because* Darrell arrived. That shows Darrell as the reason for the disaster. The party was a disaster even though Darrell arrived. That adds the meaning that Darrell's arrival was expected to have a good effect.

The party was a disaster after Darrell arrived. Or – The party was a disaster before Darrell arrived. That shows us the timing and sequential relationship of the two clauses.

If Darrell arrived, then the party was a disaster. There the speaker isn't saying anything about whether Darrell arrived or whether the party was a disaster – but rather is simply showing a necessary cause and effect relationship.

Analyzing sentences

Normally the way this is taught is by doing a whole semester on grammar. And we could do that. I could go through and teach you all the technical terms for the various aspects of syntax, the function of prepositions, the various types of clauses, etc. But if I did you would forget it all just as fast as you did in the 8th grade when you learned it the first time. And besides, the important part isn't the names of all those things – it's how to use them. And that you already know. So what I want to do is show you how to use what you already know in interpreting the Bible.

Exercise 1

Let's try it with

James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Command who when
Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
why what
3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

There is a command, a “who” a “when” and a “why”. So the message of the sentence is that these people should do a certain thing in a certain circumstance for a certain reason. What is it that you are supposed to do? (Consider it joy) When is it that you are supposed to do that? (Whenever you face trials) Why? (Because you know something)

What is it that you know? (Testing develops perseverance) Tell me what's wrong with this outline:

- I. We are commanded to consider trials joy
 - A. Who
 - B. When
 - C. Why
 - D. What

That outline is incorrect because the who, when, and why are all referring back to the command, but the what is not.

“my brothers” is the who that is commanded
“whenever you face trials...” is when we are commanded
“because you know...” is the why we are commanded

Interpreting paragraphs and longer sections is the same as interpreting sentences. In a sentence you study the relationship between clauses, and in a paragraph you study the relationships between sentences. And in longer sections you study the relationships between paragraphs.

Meaning is contained in the flow of thought. When we communicate, we don't do it with randomly selected ideas, but with related ideas linked together in a logical pattern. If one error is to ignore the way a sentence fits together, much more common still is the error of ignoring the way a paragraph fits together. Consider the following paragraph:

“Josh took great pains to follow that line. If it was after 10:00, there is no question that it would be over. The mountain was absolutely covered with snow. He could not make his appeal. Fifteen times he said, “Great job.” The crowd roared in approval.”

There is nothing wrong with any of those sentences. They are all complete sentences, and they all make sense by themselves. But the paragraph conveys no meaning, because there is no flow of thought between the sentences. That's the way many people interpret the Bible – especially when they first begin to study in depth.

James 1:2-5 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

You might study verses 2-4 and wax eloquent about trials. Then the next week you move on to verse 5, and unload a lot of brilliant insights about praying for wisdom. But what is the relationship between those two? Why does verse 5 follow verse 4? Most of the commentaries dismiss the question by saying something like, “You never need wisdom more than when you experience trials.” But it's not enough to just draw some kind of connection in your mind. It has to be the connection that was in the author's mind. With the exception of much of Proverbs, if you interpret a passage of Scripture, and there is no flow of thought between the sentences and paragraphs, you are misinterpreting. Always ask the question: “Why did he say this right after the previous verse, and just before the next verse?” If you don't know the connection from the preceding paragraph, you don't understand the passage (unless it's just one of those places where the writer makes an abrupt change of subject).

I picked up a book off my shelf and randomly opened it. There was a sentence that said, “We see the tragic results of such foolishness in the growing problem of juvenile crime.” What does that mean? What is the foolishness? Would it be a valid approach to page through that book and find another statement about foolishness, and then assume that's the foolishness he's talking about here? No. The meaning of that sentence is completely dependent upon the preceding sentence: “Many parents...shy away from all forms of discipline. We see the tragic results of such foolishness in the growing problem of juvenile crime.” The phrase “such foolishness” refers to one thing and one thing only. What is it? (failure to discipline). It is not enough to just draw any connection in your mind. For example, if you say, “Many parents shy away from discipline,” then do a huge word study on the word “shy” and then go on to say, “Being overly shy is a form of foolishness, which is why the writer introduces the concept of foolishness...” - that would be a misinterpretation. A big part of the problem is the verse and chapter divisions. If there were a chapter division between the above sentences, it would be very confusing. Keep in mind there were no chapter or verse divisions in the originals.

Exercise

Colossians 3:1-17 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your flesh: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

When you first read that, it sounds like disjointed thoughts. It almost sounds like that paragraph I read earlier that had good sentences, but that made no sense because the sentences didn't fit together.

Set your mind on things above
Your life is hidden with Christ
You will appear with Christ
Put to death what belongs to your flesh.
Rid yourself of anger, rage, etc.
Don't lie
In Christ there is no Greek nor Jew
Be loving

That is not a cohesive message. Those sound like a list of things that could have been taken from random places in the Bible. That list is not a summary of the message of Colossians 3:1-17. Let's see if we can make the connections:

Verses 1-3 call us to think on things above because of the fact that you have been raised with Christ.

Verse 4 contrasts the fact that while now your life in God is hidden and invisible, the time is coming when it will appear in the open and be clearly visible.

Verse 5 then calls us to do away with the old life that hinders you from setting your mind on things above by dragging your affections down to earthly things (things of the flesh).

Verses 6-7 offer two more reasons why to abandon those things – showing that they are inconsistent with someone so identified with God.

Verses 8-14 make the point that since your Creator is loving, you should strive for the virtues associated with love, and rid yourself of those things that are the opposite of love.

So while the above list sounded like a list of disjointed ideas, compare that with the summary:

1-3 Since your identity is with Christ, set your hearts and minds up there with Him, not down here on earthly things, because the old life is gone, and your new life is wrapped up completely in God. 4 Now it's hidden but when Christ returns it will be visible, 5 so do away with whatever ties you to this world (the desires of your flesh), 6 because first of all those are the things that bring God's wrath, and secondly 7 those are part of your old life, 8-14 so get rid of the unloving old self and clothe yourself with the loving new self which reflects your Creator.

That list I gave tells you what Colossians 3 talks about, but that summary I just gave tells you the message of Colossians 3. Once you have studied the words, sentences, paragraph and sections, you have an idea what the passage says and what it means by what it says. In other words, God has sent a message, and you have discovered what that message is.