

**How to Teach the Bible Part 1: Interpretation**  
**Selected Scriptures**

Establish the need: **Do you know how to teach the Bible? Do you see the responsibility of teaching the Bible?** Even if you will never be a pastor, you might be teaching the Bible in Sunday School, Bible studies, Children's ministry or as a husband or as a mother to children. **So how do you teach the Bible?**

Purpose: Today we shall begin part one of our series of how to teach the Bible focusing specifically with how to interpret the Bible so that we can be faithful to what God's Word says and teach it accurately.

- Step 1: Read the Word of God
- Step 2: Ask questions of the Word of God
- Step 3: Make observation of the Word of God
- Step 4: Use Good Resources
- Step 5: Pray to God for help in all the process

Some opening remarks

- There is many ways to present the truth of God's Word: Topical studies, Systematic Theology, Biblical counseling, etc.
- In this course we will focus on teaching the Bible in terms of Bible exposition; that is, we are studying and teaching a passage from the Bible verse by verse according to its context.
- The reason why we are focusing on Bible exposition is because all other ways of teaching the Word of God is based upon a careful exposition of the Bible first.
- There is a distinction between interpretation and application.
  - o Interpretation is the process of finding out what the Word of God says.
  - o Application is the process of drawing out implications from the Word of God.
- Another way of looking at it is the following:
  - o Interpretation is concern with what a passage from the Word of God mean to its original audience.
  - o Application is concern with what a passage from the Word of God has to do with today's context.
- We need to first have the right interpretation of the Word of God in order for us to properly apply the Word of God.
- Thus we begin part one on interpretation of the Bible before part two on the application of the Bible in terms of presenting its teaching.

I. Step 1: Read the Word of God

a. Proof

- i. *"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* (**Romans 15:4**)→If the Word of God is written for our instruction and it meant to give us hope, we must read it.
- ii. *"in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years."* (**Daniel 9:2**)
  - 1. In the context this is Daniel the prophet who was in exile.
  - 2. Daniel here is reading the Word of God specifically the Word of Jeremiah.
  - 3. If a Prophet of God himself would read the Word of God in the Scriptures even though God spoke through him, how much more should we who are not prophets read the Word of God!

b. Practice

- i. Read the Word of God on your own for your own devotions.
- ii. Read the Word of God that you will be teaching on; hear the Word of God for yourself, unfiltered.

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- II. Step 2: Ask questions of the Word of God
- a. Proof
    - i. If you are reading the Word of God we must realize we are reading to learn. And if we are reading to learn from it we would be asking questions, since we have much to learn.
  - b. Practice
    - i. Use the Observation and Questions Bible Study Sheet (Appendix A). Write down any immediate questions you might have.
    - ii. Realize the more questions the better, even the obvious ones that you need to confirm; sometimes it is from these questions that lead you to find gold from the Scriptures.
    - iii. Some helpful questions:
      1. What is the significance of this word?
      2. Is this a command, conditional statement or statement of fact?
      3. What does this word mean?
      4. Is there any significance to the names mentioned?
- III. Step 3: Make observation of the Word of God
- a. Proof
    - i. Jesus makes grammatical observations
      1. *“But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.”* (Luke 20:37-38)
        - a. Jesus noted that in **Exodus 3:6**, God is not the God of the dead but the living
        - b. He observed how God called himself the God of individuals who have already died
        - c. If we look at **Exodus 3:6**, we find that God says “I AM the God of Abraham, etc”
        - d. God did not say “I was”, but “I am”! Jesus observed that the tense of this verse to make his point.
      2. *“For David himself says in the book of Psalms, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, 43 Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’”* 44 *Therefore David calls Him ‘Lord,’ and how is He his son?”* (Luke 20:42-44)
        - a. After being challenged by the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus challenged them with Psalm 110:1 and hints from the text to suggests that the Son of David will be divine
        - b. Notice he observed the relationship between words
          - i. He noted David as the author
          - ii. He noted the word “Lord” is used to describe the Son of David
    - ii. Apostle Paul makes grammatical observations: *“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.”* (Galatians 3:16)→ Notice that Paul note whether seed was plural or singular.
  - b. Practice
    - i. Use the Observation and Questions Bible Study Sheet (Appendix A). Write down any immediate observations you might have.

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- ii. Some helpful questions that leads one to make more observation:
    - 1. What is the word there for?
    - 2. What part of speech is the word (noun, verb, participle, conjunction, etc) and why is it important to the sentence?
  - iii. As you start making more observation of the text you will be answering some of the questions you have. This lead to more observations to write down.
  - iv. Also intentionally studying to answer the questions will lead to more observations.
  - v.
- IV. Step 4: Use Good Resources
- a. Proof “*And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.*” (1 Corinthians 12:28)
    - i. Note that God gave teachers.
    - ii. Some of the teachers include living ones, local ones (in our church) but also dead and living ones who has written works on the Bible. Use them!
  - b. Practice
    - i. Talk to your pastor
    - ii. Be familiar with the types of resources
      - 1. Good commentaries.
        - a. Free ones: <https://www.studylight.org>.
        - b. Purchase commentaries
          - i. It is worth it in light of Proverbs 23:23.
          - ii. Consult your pastor on good ones.
      - 2. Good Bible dictionaries, Bible Handbook and Bible Encyclopedia (Example: International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)
      - 3. Other references: Atlas, Specialize books, theological journal articles, etc.
    - iii. Use them critically: Test it always to the Word of God.
- V. Step 5: Pray to God for help in all the process
- a. Proof
    - i. “*Blessed are You, O Lord; Teach me Your statutes*” (Psalm 119:12)
      - 1. This is from a Psalm that is on the Word of God.
      - 2. Note here this is a prayer to God asking God Himself to teach the Psalmist the Word of God.
    - ii. “*Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decree.*” (Psalm 119:135)→Note again that you can pray (ask God) that God will teach you the Word of God!
  - b. Practice
    - i. Do you pray to God for understanding of the Word of God?
    - ii. Do you pray during the whole process of your study?

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**Appendix 1: Observation and Questions Bible Study Sheet**

Passage:

Type of Literary Form:

(Note: If you don't know look up level two of <http://bit.ly/TCACBibleInterpretation>)

Verse:

Questions:

Observations:

Verse:

Questions:

Observations:

Verse:

Questions:

Observations:

Verse:

Questions:

Observations: