

# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BIBLE

## Session Four — The Next Level

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Take the language in its normal sense, accepting it at face value, unless doing so does not make sense or something in the text indicates it should be taken figuratively.

The **three-step process** for getting the most out of your Bible: (1) observation; (2) interpretation; and (3) application. This lesson focuses on the next level, putting it all together with some additional guidance on how to get the most out of your Bible.

**Observation** — answers the question, “What do I see?” Here we are looking to at the words used (focusing on what they mean), the structure of the passage (including grammar and syntax), the genre, and context. Clues are things emphasized, repeated, related, alike or unlike, or true to life.

**Interpretation** — answers the question, “What does it mean?” As we interpret, we focus on genre (e.g., poetry, parable), context (e.g., literary, historical, cultural), content (especially figures of speech), comparison to other passages, and we may employ helps (e.g., a commentary, Bible atlas, dictionary).

**Application** — answers the question, “How shall I live?” To do this, we must know what the Bible says, relate it to every area of our lives, mediate on it, and put it into continuous practice (not just falling back on the Bible when a trial arises).

But how can we take it to the next level?

**Hebrews 5:12** For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

THE NEXT LEVEL is all about taking our Bible study beyond the basics as we comprehend THE BIG PICTURE, by the which I mean moving to a point that our understanding is such that we could, in a one-on-one conversation with another person, teach them in our own words and of our own conviction. This step answers the question, “How do I articulate God’s truth to others?” We do this best when we see the big picture. We need this not only because we should be able to teach others (see Hebrews 5:12) but also because we get the most out of our Bibles when we learn it in such a way that we can teach it with confidence. There are **eight** helpful things we can do to move our Bible study to the next level:

1. Read the Bible in its entirety and read a book several times through before honing in on a specific passage therein. Figure out the main argument of the book and use it as an anchor for your exegesis.
2. Become a note taker. A great tool for this is a wide-margin Bible.
3. Look for “connection points” within a passage, chapter, book, and the entire Bible. “Connection points” are those truths and concepts that appear frequently throughout the book or the entire Bible as a sort of continuous thread, for instance, the holiness of God or the concept of spiritual “harlotry.”
4. Know the book of beginnings — Genesis. This not only gives us a theology of origins but tells us why we need everything that follows.
5. Know the covenants in the Bible: the covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:8-13), the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3, 15:18-21, 17:1-8, 22:15-18), the Mosaic Covenant (Exod. 19-24; Deut. 28), the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-17), and the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). The Bible is “woven around” these promises of God.
6. Learn to outline a passage or book of the Bible.
7. Learn to state in your own words the main point of a passage or an entire book.
8. Have Bible conversations with other believers.

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## Outline of the Song of Songs

1. INTRODUCTION (1:1)
2. WEDDING DAY (1:2-2: 7)
  - a. Wedding night anticipation (1:2-4)
  - b. Resentment of Shulamite's brothers (1:5-6)
  - c. Searching for Solomon (1:7-8)
  - d. Praise for Shulamite's beauty (1:9-11)
  - e. Wedding night anticipation (1:12-14)
  - f. Praise for Shulamite's beauty (1:15)
  - g. The season for love (1:16-17)
  - h. A common Shulamite (2:1)
  - i. An uncommon Shulamite (2:2)
  - j. An uncommon Solomon (2:3)
  - k. Wedding night anticipation (2:4-6)
  - l. **First charge to the daughters** (2:7)
3. COURTSHIP (2:8-3: 5)
  - a. The seasons change (2:8-14)
  - b. Shulamite's invitation to Solomon (2:15-17)
  - c. Searching for Solomon (3:1-4)
  - d. **Second charge to the daughters** (3: 5)
4. MARITAL UNION (3: 6-5:1)
  - a. Narrator announces Solomon (3:6-11)
  - b. Solomon's answer to Shulamite's invitation (4:1-7)
  - c. Solomon's invitation to Shulamite (4:8-15)
  - d. Marriage consummated (4:16-5:1)
5. MARITAL JITTERS (5:2-6: 9)
  - a. Searching for Solomon (5:2-8)
  - b. Shulamite defends her uncommon Solomon (5:9-16)
  - c. Solomon enters the garden (6:1-3)
  - d. Praise for Shulamite's beauty (6:4-9)
6. MARRIED LIFE EMBRACED (6:10-8: 4)
  - a. Narrator announces Shulamite (6:10)
  - b. Shulamite enters the garden (6:11-12)
  - c. Daughter seeks Shulamite's return (6:13A)
  - d. Solomon expresses their union (6:13B-7: 9A)
  - e. Shulamite expresses their union (7:9B-8: 3)
  - f. **Third charge to the daughters** (8:4)
7. CONCLUSION (8:5-14)
  - a. Narrator announces the couple (8:5A)
  - b. Praise for their love (8:5-7)
  - c. Appreciation for Shulamite's brothers (8:8-12)
  - d. Solomon's invitation (8:13)
  - e. Shulamite's invitation (8:14)

**Main Point:** God exalts and blesses physical romance only within marriage and exhorts us not to engage in physical romance before the proper time.

## OUTLINE OF JONAH

**Purpose:** God uses what transpired in the life of the prophet Jonah, whose name means dove, the national symbol of Israel, to help Israel see its own wicked heart and need to turn to God as it sees the response to God's limited revelation in the sailors and the Ninevites contrasted to the response of Jonah to God's substantial revelation.

1. JONAH vs. PAGAN SAILORS (ch. 1)
  - a. God commands Jonah to preach (1:1-2)
  - b. Jonah disobeys God and runs (1:3)
  - c. God pursues Jonah (1:4)
  - d. Pagan sailors fear God (1:5-8)
  - e. Jonah talks the talk (1:9)
  - f. Jonah would rather die than repent (1:10-12)
  - g. Pagan sailors show compassion on Jonah (1:13)
  - h. Pagan sailors pray to God (1:14-15)
  - i. Pagan sailors sacrifice to God (1:16)
  - j. God intervenes for Jonah (1:17)
2. JONAH vs. FISH (ch. 2)
  - a. Jonah prays because of his affliction (2:1-4)
  - b. Jonah hits bottom but no repentance (2:5-7)
  - c. Jonah talks the talk (2:8)
  - d. Jonah makes a vow (2:9)
  - e. God intervenes for Jonah (2:10)
3. JONAH vs. NINEVEH (ch. 3)
  - a. Jonah heralds the destruction of Nineveh (3:1-4)
  - b. Every man, woman and beast repents and mourns the evil and violence of Nineveh (3:5-9)
  - c. God intervenes for Nineveh (3:10)
4. JONAH vs. GOD (ch. 4)
  - a. Angry Jonah wants to die (4:1-3)
  - b. God interrogates Jonah (4:4)
  - c. Jonah loves his gourd (4:5-6)
  - d. God takes Jonah's gourd (4:7)
  - e. Angry Jonah wants to die (4:8)
  - f. God intervenes for Jonah (4:9-11)

**Main Point:** Jonah picture Israel, the prodigal nation who despite substantial revelation, and opportunity to turn to God, refuses to do so, because of its hardness of heart.