

**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:

**How to Teach the Bible Part 2: Teaching Outlines**  
**Selected Scriptures**

Establish the need: After you study the passage how do you transfer what you learned to those you are teaching?

Purpose: Today we shall begin part two of our series of how to teach the Bible focusing specifically with how to interpret the Bible so that we would be better equipped to teach.

- I. Find the main idea of the passage
  - a. Proof: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)
    - i. Recall we need to handle God’s Word carefully and accurately.
    - ii. As an application of that, that means we must preach the main idea of a passage if we are going to reflect the overall accuracy of handling the Word of God.
    - iii. Andrew Naselli states: “But in the end, what we preach is the point and argument of the biblical text, as informed by this backdrop, but not replaced by it.”<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Practice
    - i. Read the whole passage you are teaching from. Then write down in one sentence what you think the main idea of the passage is.
    - ii. The question you are trying to answer here is: “What does this text say?”
    - iii. Even as you are studying the passage, you study it in mind with trying to find out what the passage is about.
    - iv. After all your studies is over write it down in one sentence what the passage is about.
    - v. Sometimes you have to cut or add the amount of verses you are going to teach from in order to zoom in the one main idea that is being taught in the Scriptures as it is faithful to what Scripture is teaching.
  - c. Example
    - i. Read Roman 1:18-32.
      1. Question: What is the main idea of this passage?
      2. Why would you say it is the main idea of the passage?
    - ii. Say you originally planned to teach on Matthew 18:21-19:12.
      1. Question: What is the main idea of this passage?
      2. As you look at the passage more carefully you realize you have to split the amount of text you are teaching since Matthew 18:21-35 is about forgiveness while Matthew 19:1-12 is about divorce.
- II. Tracing the Argument of the Passage
  - a. Point
    - i. After seeing what the main idea of the passage is about, next we must trace the argument of the passage.
    - ii. Know this: The passage you are reading is not a list of unrelated sentences. Each sentence is related to things before it and after it.
    - iii. It is thus our job to investigate and discover how God is explaining, defending or applying the main point.
  - b. Practice
    - i. Pay attention to connection words: “Connectives such as but, therefore, and because can be hugely important to understanding what an author is arguing.”<sup>2</sup>
    - ii. Look at how each propositions relate to one another.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 122.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 123.

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1. By proposition we mean it is a claim that “asserts or states something.”<sup>3</sup>
2. We identify each clause here and ask how does it relate to other clause and how does it help to make the main point of the passage.
- iii. The following are some (not all) of the kinds of logical relationships between propositions<sup>4</sup>
  1. Coordinate relationships
    - a. Series:
      - i. Definition: “Each proposition makes its independent contribution to a whole.”<sup>5</sup>
      - ii. Connectives: “And, likewise, moreover, neither . . . nor”
      - iii. Example: “Rebecca is a girl and Abigail is a girl”
    - b. Progression:
      - i. Definition: “Each proposition progresses toward a climax, step by step.”<sup>6</sup>
      - ii. Connectives: “Then, an, moreover, furthermore, neither . . . nor”
      - iii. Example: “I came, I saw, I conquer”
    - c. Alternative:
      - i. Definition: “The propositions express alternative possibilities arising from a situation.”<sup>7</sup>
      - ii. Connectives: “or, but, while, on the one hand . . . on the other hand”
      - iii. Example: “Absent from the body, present with the Lord”
    - d. Situation-Response:
      - i. Definition: “One proposition states a situation and the other a response”<sup>8</sup>
      - ii. Connectives: “and”
      - iii. Example: “*Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed*” (1 Corinthians 15:11)
  2. Support by restatements
    - a. Action-Means:
      - i. Definition: “One proposition states an action, and the other indicates the means by which it occurs.”<sup>9</sup>
      - ii. Connectives: Adverbial participles and infinitives.
      - iii. Example: “*but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men* (Philippians 2:7)
    - b. Comparison:
      - i. Definition: “One proposition states an action, and the other clarifies that action by showing what it is like”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 124.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 124-129.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 125.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 125.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 125.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 125.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 126.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 126.

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- ii. Connectives: As, just as, even as, like.
    - iii. Example: “*Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 11:1)
  - c. Contrast
    - i. Definition: “The propositions contrast: one is negative, and the other is positive.”<sup>11</sup>
    - ii. Connectives: But, not.
    - iii. Example: “*We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor*” (1 Corinthians 4:10)
  - d. Idea-Explanation
    - i. Definition: “One proposition states an idea, and other explains it.”<sup>12</sup>
    - ii. Connectives: That is, in other words.
    - iii. Example: “*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh...*” (Romans 7:18a)
  - e. Question-Answer
3. Support by distinct statements
- a. Ground
    - i. Definition: “One proposition makes a statement, and the other gives the ground for it by supporting it with an argument or reason.”<sup>13</sup>
    - ii. Connectives: For, because, since.
  - b. Inference
    - i. Definition: “One proposition makes a statement, and the other draws an inference from it (An inference is a conclusion that one reaches on the basis of evidence and reasoning.”<sup>14</sup>
    - ii. Connectives: Therefore, consequently, accordingly.
4. Support by contrary statements
- c. Example
- i. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.
    - 1. Question: What is the main idea of this passage?
    - 2. Write out the proposition from the verse that is the main idea.
    - 3. The rest of the propositions in the passage than is supporting propositions. How do they support the main idea?

### III. Outline the passage

- a. Point
  - i. After tracing the argument and relationships between propositions note how this will prepare us outline the passage.
  - ii. Each point is not different than the main idea; it is instead to support the main idea.
- b. Practice
  - i. Break down all the verses into logical sections using the previous point of making observations of how passages relate.
  - ii. Realize sometimes this takes a longer time than most people realize.
- c. Example

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<sup>11</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 126.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 126.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 127.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Naselli, *How To Understand And Apply the New Testament* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing), 127.

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- i. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. In light of the main idea of this passage, write down an outline for the passage breaking down where each point covers which verses.
- IV. Outline the passage to apply
  - a. Point
    - i. You don't want your sermon or message to merely be a data dump. You want to preach God's Word to apply it!
  - b. Practice
    - i. Now that you have an outline of the passage you need to make the outline to apply to the listeners.
    - ii. You first do this by improving out the main point sentence you wrote of the passage
      1. Modify it to apply by writing it in terms of "You, we."
      2. Write the sentence now with a "so that..." or "in order that..." which answers the question "so what?"
    - iii. Likewise now your sermon points are made to apply too
      1. Modify it to apply by writing it in terms of "You, we."
      2. When you can make each point retain some wordings from the main point to show how each point in your message support the main point.
    - iv. After each sermon points is re-worded, reword your main idea sentence to reflect how many points you have from the passage.
    - v. Again realize sometimes this takes a longer time than most people realize.
  - c. Example
    - i. From our previous example of 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 in light of the main idea of this passage, your outline for the passage now convert them as outlines to apply.
- V. The "4 Ps" of each point
  - a. Practice
    - i. Each point should contain at minimum three Ps and if possible four Ps.
    - ii. These points are:
      1. Point
      2. Proof
      3. Picture
      4. Practice
    - iii. Your "Point" is a statement of the point supporting the main idea of your sermon.
    - iv. Proof is where this idea is taught in the passage.
    - v. Picture is to illustrate the sermon's point. Illustration makes it memorable. There are two reasons to illustrate:
      1. Illustrate to apply.
      2. Illustrate to explain.
    - vi. Practice is discussion of how does this apply to our lives.
      1. It is helpful to talk about what one can do today.
      2. It is also helpful to have application questions to shepherd the heart since the heart is the motivation for why we do what we do.



**Appendix 2: The Structure of a Sermon**

Passage:

Purpose:

So that....

- I. Point
  - a. Passage: "A" (A)
  - b. Proof
    - i. A
  - c. Picture: A
  - d. Practice
    - i. A

- II. Point
  - a. Passage: "A" (A)
  - b. Proof
    - i. A
  - c. Picture: A
  - d. Practice
    - i. A

- III. Point
  - a. Passage: "A" (A)
  - b. Proof
    - i. A
  - c. Picture: A
  - d. Practice
    - i. A