

How To Do A Bible Study: Part 2

Greetings and Recap

Hey, good evening. Thanks for joining us again in our CEP, Christian Education Program on how to do a Bible study. Last week, I shared with you how important this skill really is useful for evangelism, and for discipleship, both for your family and for friends, and even in a church with the brothers and sisters in Christ. And I share with you that there are four major principles. And let's do a quick recap, before we dive into content. Alright, so the four principles are number one, content, and I shared about how important it is to be accurate and faithful to what God intends His Word to communicate, and they are important principles to obey, to follow, and there are resources I would love to share with you. Secondly, I shared about the importance of clarity. A good Bible study teacher clarifies. He's not there to confuse. He's not there to impress. He is there to make things clear and understandable for people. But more than that, we must aim also for connection. We don't just make things clear. We need to help them understand how they can apply these truths in their life. So that's where connection comes. And number four, I think a good Bible study teacher embodies the truth that he talks about, and that is in a realm of conviction. Does he really believe what he teaches? Does he really obey what He teaches? I think that's point number four.

Content

Now, like I said, these points 2, 3, 4 will be dealt with in our last session today and the next week we will be looking at just content. So, content asks the question, what is the meaning of? This word, this phrase, this sentence, this paragraph, this portion, this chapter, and this Bible, this book and this Bible. Or if you would look at it another way, content means I want to understand what the Bible is about, so that I can understand what this book of Genesis or Matthew or Romans is about. And then I can understand what that chapter within that book is about. And within that chapter, I want to understand what this portion is about, what this paragraph is about, what the sentence, what this phrase and what this word is about.

So, this is the purpose of content, we want to ask, what is the meaning of these things? So, for example, we want to ask, what is the meaning of the serpent in Genesis, chapter three? Now the serpent was more crafty, what is the serpent? Who is the serpent? We need to find out because if you do not find out you do not understand this text, you do not understand this statement, and you won't understand this portion, you won't understand this chapter, you won't understand the book. And then we need to understand the meaning perhaps have another verse like Deuteronomy 19:21. This text says, "Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" Does this mean that God is saying to a Christian, that we should take revenge? If someone punches me on this side, I will punch him on the other side? Does this justify vengeance? Is this what the Bible says? Is this the meaning? Principles of Bible study seeks to answer that question. How about

this, "Love is patient and kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4). Now sounds very easy. But have you thought about what really is kindness? Have you thought about what does it mean to be kind? Is this just a feeling? What does this look like in our lives? So, you see, you can't really understand the Bible, if you don't understand some of the meanings of words and phrases, and sentences. Alright, so that's what we are going to do in content. We want to answer the question, what is the meaning here? Why this? What is God trying to communicate? So content is about being faithful to what God wants to communicate. And in order to be able to get to the meaning and to understand what God is saying. There are four principles for content. Alright, I know there are four principles of Bible study. But imagine content just branch out with another four principles.

1. Correct word meaning

And they are number one correct word meaning, you can't understand the Bible if you don't understand the meaning of the words of the Bible, right? So, we need to understand and get to the correct word meaning.

2. Context

Number two, we need to understand the principle of context. Context is the situation. It's the surrounding verses around this one verse or one word you want to figure out, what's the setting? What's the surrounding? What's the environment of this text, because this text can look or can convey something very different, in different contexts. Let me say this, if I were to say, "I love you", you would have to ask me, what's the context you said that? Is it to my wife? Is it to my kids? Is it to friends? Because I love you will mean very different things, in different contexts. So, to understand the Bible, we need to know context, the surrounding, the situation, the circumstance.

3. Comparison

And then number three, we need to understand the principle of comparison. You see, the Bible is one book written by one author, God and His Spirit. So, if we have a problem with one text here, maybe God has something to say about that somewhere further, may not be in the context, maybe somewhere further, but comparing Scripture with Scripture, we get to understand something better, we need to understand comparison.

4. Connection

And then number four, is connection. What is connection? Connection is, how does this one verse connect to the main idea of this portion, or this chapter? And how does this chapter connect to the main idea of this book? And how does this book connect to the main idea of the Bible? So, we need to know the connection? What's the theme? What's the main idea? And how does this verse, this word, this phrase, contribute to the main idea? And when you have all these principles put together, I think you'll be able to get good content, faithful, accurate understanding of the Bible. Now that's quite a lot to swallow, I understand. So today, we're not going to deal with all four, we are just going to deal with two.

Correct Word Meaning

We're going to deal first of all with correct word meaning. Now this is important because the Bible is serious about every word. Jesus says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word" (Matthew

4:4). In fact, he gets even more precise, he says that “I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a jot will pass from the law” (Matthew 5:18). In other words, the Bible is precise, down to the level of the word, and down to the level of the letters of the alphabet that form the word. And Iota is the simplest, shortest, easiest to write letter of the Hebrew or the Greek alphabet. So it's like I, you know, English alphabet series, just one stroke. That's it. Iota. A dot is a smaller stroke in writing the letters. So, Jesus is saying, “My Word, or God's Word is so precise, not down just to the word, but also to the letter and to the stroke”. So it makes sense that we must be very accurate about the meaning of words, I have an example for you to consider here. And that's the word that we mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:4, about the word, 'kind'. What is kind? We think about it as being nice. We think about it as being someone who is very gentle, very loving. But actually, if you think into the word, 'kind', in the Greek, because you know that a lot of the Bible is, is written in Greek in the New Testament, and written in Hebrew in the Old Testament. So, in the Greek, the word kind is very interesting. Let me show you what it means.

All right, so let's find out how we can understand the meaning of the word from the internet. My favorite friend is Google. And I introduced you to this one website, you go to the search, I don't even remember the name, but I just typed BLB. And it stands for really Blue Letter Bible. It's a website that I've used. And I say, it's easy to use. So just click on it. BLB goes to this website, and we're looking at a word in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, isn't it, we are trying to find out the meaning of love. So, this is first Corinthians 13. And you see all these verses here, and we're looking at verse four. So, what I do is just, I can type on the tools. And you will see that the words are now represented in their Greek versions. So, we are trying to find out the word kind, what's the meaning, I just click here. And I've learned that when I looked through this, now a lot of things you don't understand, that's fine. But you see something that the word kind is from this phrase, to show yourself useful. So, love is kind is not just a feeling. Love is kind means that we are to be a useful person to the other. We are there to benefit the other. We are there to be a blessing to the other. That's what love is. Love seeks to be a blessing to the other. See, you get this insight, because you now get to understand the meaning of the word and the meaning of the word can be available to you on a simple website like this. All right, let me give you one more.

Let's go to Romans chapter 12. And we look at verse 13. For example, “Distributing to the necessity of saints given to hospitality”. Now this sounds easy, we are to share. If brothers and sisters in Christ have needs, and we are to be hospitable, but I want you to know that it is so much better. When you understand the words itself. Let's go to the word distributing. Our English version is distributing. But when you click on this, it tells you the original Greek word is the word *Koinonia*. And actually, the meaning is to share, to commune, to be a partaker. So if I go back now to this verse, it says, distributing to the necessity of saints. It is not so accurate because it means to share in the necessity of saints. That's what it means. And I think to share in the necessity of saints is more than just giving to them. It also involves understanding them, feeling together with them, suffering together with them. That's what it means, it's so much more than just giving. Of course, the goal and the result might be that we give a lot of what happens before that is captured in the word *Koinonia*, to share, to fellowship, to commune, and not just giving. All right, you get that it's so fun.

And then maybe the same verse, Let me just go to the word, hospitality. And we all know the word hospitality in hotels and restaurants. But you know, the hospitality of the Bible really means to love

strangers. *Philonexia*, it means to love strangers. We are to be a people who love strangers, we don't just love people we know but we love strangers. We love people who do not know us. In fact, the Bible says, to love even our enemies. Now, not only do we get the word hospitality here, but I want you to see the word given, it seems to be unimpressive or ordinary word. But when you go to the word given, it is the word to pursue, or it is even translated as to persecute, to press. So, the idea here is, don't just do hospitality once in a while, but be someone who chases us after hospitality, who is always looking for opportunities to love strangers, to meet their needs to serve them and to give to them.

Now, don't you think it's important to read the Bible and strive to understand the words. Now, I'm not saying we can do that all the time. But as and when we can, it is so helpful in our Bible studies. So, I hope this is helpful for you, a simple demonstration, from which website? Actually, you can have many websites like this, but I'll just show you one, which is free, it's Blue Letter Bible. And all you need to do is to keep BLB search it and it's right here. Alright, that's it.

So, I hope that this is a demonstration of what it means to get to the correct word meaning, all right, there are resources available, I've shared with you one resource, and it's free, you can use it anytime. And when you hit difficult words, maybe a resource like this would be useful for you. All right. So, whilst I give you the principle, I give you the resource, it takes a lifetime to dig out every word in the Bible, if you're interested to.

Context

Okay, so that's the first point, correct word meaning. The second principle to get into the right content is like I said, the context you need to know the situation, the reason, the setting as to why this statement is given. So let me give you an example. The Bible says in Psalm 14:1, "There is no God". Oh, that's strange. God saying that there is no God. Hmm. You see, you can make the Bible say anything you want, if you do not give the right context. If you were to read the Bible more carefully, in Psalm 14:1, it actually says, "The fool says in his heart, there is no God". Ah, the context has now made this clear. Get that? So, if you want to understand the Bible, not only must you understand the words, you've got to know the context. So read before this verse, read after this verse, read a bit more, get the situation, the circumstance, the setting correct, and he will help you tremendously in understanding a verse.

So, I set an example earlier about this, "Your eye shall not pity, it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." It seems to teach that we should take revenge. When someone offends me, I should take personal vengeance. But the key to understanding this is context. This is not written in the context of taking personal revenge. This is written in a setting for judges in the nation of Israel, Deuteronomy 19, and verses 18 and 19. You can see that this is the principle for the rulers for the judges of Israel to apportion punishment for people who commit crime and sin. So, it is not a justification for personal vengeance. It's a principle for meeting our appropriate judgment as a nation. So please don't twist the context to say, I have right to take revenge on my terrible enemy. Oh, no, it is saying that this is the principle that judges need to mete out: give appropriate levels of punishment to different levels of crime. Let me give you one more example. And a very common one, "For where two or three are gathered in my name. there am I among them" (Matthew 18:20). You know what people say that this verse is teaching. They say this is a justification for prayer meeting. Get to prayer meeting

because when two or three are gathered, God will be in our midst, Jesus will be in our midst. So, we pray with greater confidence. Now, I am sure that God honors prayer meetings. I'm sure that the early church gathered for prayer, they believed in the power of congregational prayer. But I don't think this is a verse that teaches about the special presence of Christ in prayer meeting. Why? Because the context is not a prayer meeting, the context of Matthew 18, is about church discipline. It said in verse 17, and 18, "And if he refuses to listen, even to the church", when the elders are gathered to say that he has sin, he refuses to repent, then the Bible says, "let him be to you as a Gentile and the tax collector" (Matthew 18:17), let him be excommunicated. And this might be disputed by the person himself, he says, "Who are you to excommunicate him". And Jesus says, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18), I'm giving you this vested authority, "where two or three are gathered in my name" (Matthew 18:20). In other words, please understand the context. This is not a verse to justify prayer meeting as if God is only going to be there in special presence when you get it in two or three. But he's saying, I am guaranteeing you, I'm giving you the authority to exercise church discipline. It is as if I am with you, when you make those decisions as a church. Context is very important. Otherwise, you would end up with the wrong conclusions.

Conclusion and prayer

So, I hope you understand that in order to understand the Bible, study the Bible well, you need to get the correct word meaning you need to get the right context. Next week, we're going to look at comparison and connection. Right after this. We have our zoom session, Q&A. If you have questions, I would love to meet you there. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you again for this time, we could study your word and to study how we can study your word. Please help us to be equipped with very simple but important principles that we might apply them for our lives. Bless your people. Thank you for their hunger to learn your word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you see you at our zoom session right after this.