

Seven tips for getting context

1. (Paragraph): Watch for transition (linking) words.
 2. (Chapter): Read before and after your passage.
 3. (Chapter): Locate your passage in an argument or sequence if there is any.
 4. (Chapter): Ask yourself, “What would be lost if your chapter disappeared from the book?”
 5. (Chapter): Pay attention to how the book is structured—especially important for Job, Ecclesiastes, Revelation—also important for Exodus, Daniel, Malachi, Matthew.
 6. (Book): Read an introduction to the book.
 7. (Bible): Read a good overview of biblical theology
 - a. Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*
 - b. Roy Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*
 - c. Roy Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*
 - d. Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*
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How To Study the Bible Remaining Schedule

Section III: Interpretive Tools

- a. Purpose and Context
- b. Linking Words and Repetition
- c. Using Extrabiblical Resources / Difficult and Familiar Passages

Equipping Class How to Study the Bible Class 8: Purpose and Context



“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5.13 ESV)

I. The Author’s Purpose

Explicit and Clear Purpose

John 20:30–31

I John 5:13

Implicit or More Ambiguous Purpose

Four questions for NT epistles and OT prophets

1. Who is writing to whom?
2. What is the situation of the author and reader?
3. Are there any problems or issues that are being addressed?
4. Are there any repeated themes or a single idea holding the book together?

Class exercise: 2 Timothy 1:9–10

How does knowing the purpose affect the meaning?

How does this new insight help us apply this passage?

What about other genres? narratives?

II. Context

Novel vs. encyclopedia

Systematic Theology vs. Biblical Theology

Verses, chapters, and books are all connected.

We should ask how this passage fits into what comes before and after.

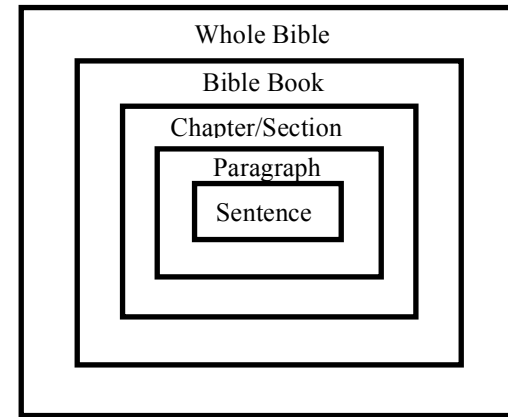


Figure 1: Levels of context¹

Class exercise: John 3.16

Sentence:

Paragraph:

Chapter:

Book:

Bible:

¹ Taken from Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sach, *Digging Deeper: Tools to Unearth the Bible's Treasure* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 37.