

## Through the Bible

### Part 4: Interpretation and Illumination

Hermeneutics: The study of the methodological principles of \_\_\_\_\_.

Biblical Hermeneutics is the study about how to...

Why is Biblical Hermeneutics important to a Christian? (2 Timothy 2:15)

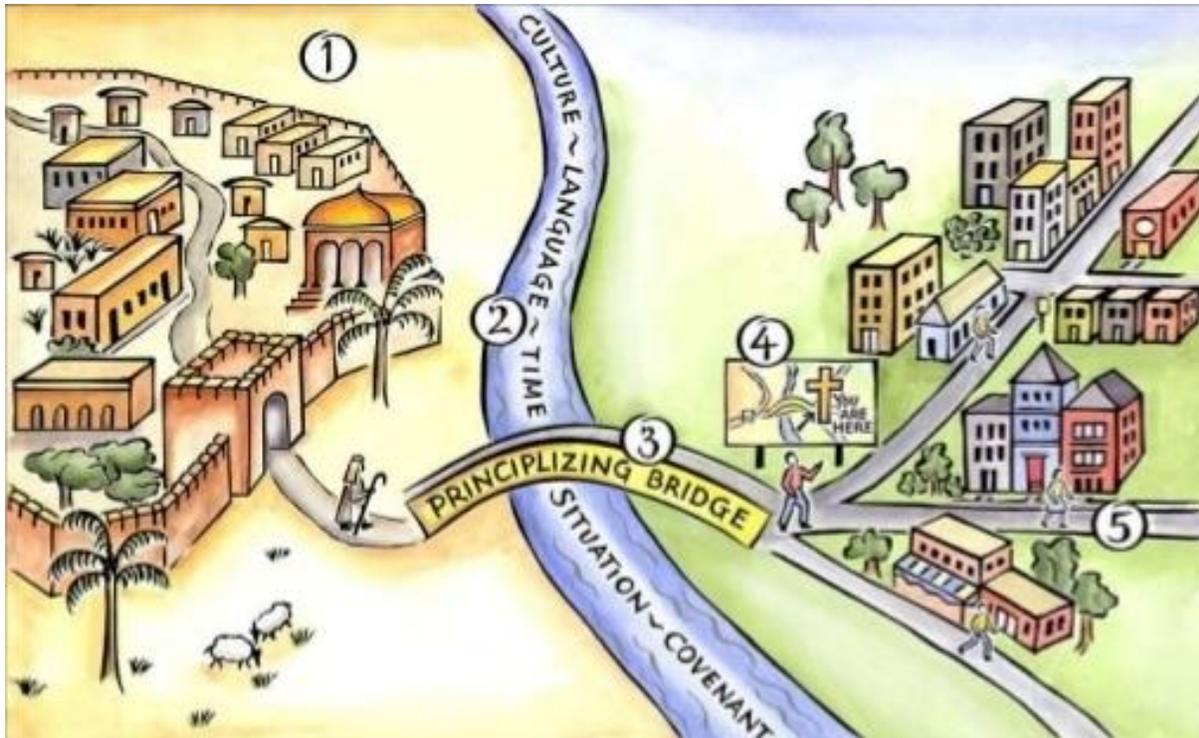
When you hear a teaching or preaching? What is important for you to see for connection? What makes a bible lesson good for you?

#### **Take the Interpretive Journey: Meditate (Joshua 1:8; Psalm1:1,2)**

Meditation means “the act of focusing one’s thoughts: to ponder, think on, muse.” Meditation consists of reflective thinking or contemplation, usually on a specific subject to discern its meaning or significance or a plan of action.

Biblical meditation involves becoming detached from the controlling and hindering influences of the world and attached to the living God through Christ that we might, through faith and transformed values, experience the sufficiency of the Savior and reach out to a hurting world in need of the living Christ. (Isaiah 55:8,9)

The word “theology” comes from two Greek words that combined mean “the study of God.” Christian theology is simply an attempt to understand God as He is revealed in the Bible. Can we ever understand God? Why or why not?



### **Step 1: Grasping the Text in Their Town**

1. Question: What did the text mean to the biblical audiences?
2. Read the text carefully and make observations.
3. Know the context: Study the historical and literary context.
4. Understand the type of literature (proverb, parable, psalm, epistle) What does the word epistle mean?
5. Who are the characters of the text? (Remember there are no main characters.) Look at all characters. Don't miss God's presence (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
6. Synthesize the meaning of the passage for the biblical audience.

### **Step 2: Measuring the Width of the River to Cross**

1. Question: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?
2. Focus on the unique differences and similarities found in a specific text.
3. What are areas of commonality for us and the bible audience?
4. Account for: culture, language situation, time and covenant

### **Step 3: Crossing the Principlizing Bridge**

1. Question: What is the theological principle in this text?
2. Similarities and Differences between biblical and modern audiences.
3. A theological principle should:
  - a. Be reflected in the text.
  - b. Be timeless and not tied to a specific situation.
  - c. Not be culturally bound.

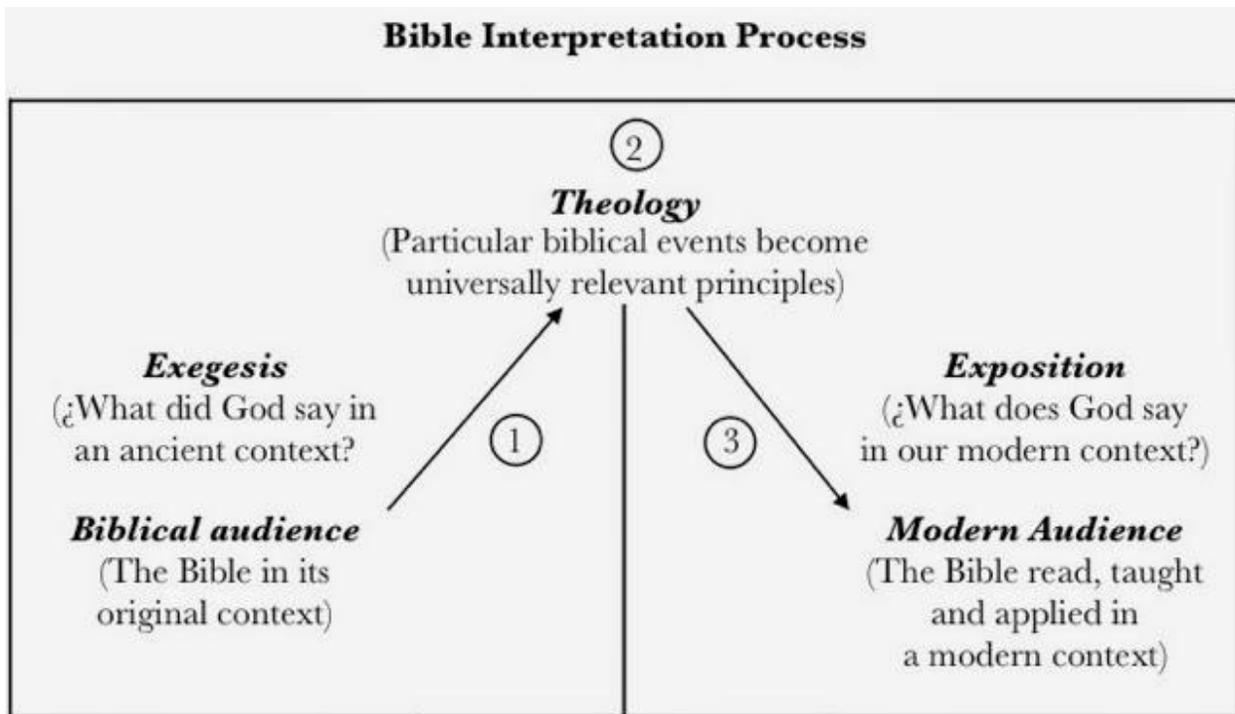
- d. Correspond to the teaching of the rest of Scripture.
- e. Be relevant to both the biblical and contemporary audience.

**Step 4: Consult the Biblical Map Question**

1. Question: How does the theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?
2. How does this scripture relate to the surrounding text and the Bible itself?
3. Placement of Scripture: Old Testament vs. New Testament (relationship of the two)

**Step 5: Grasping the Text in our Town Question**

1. Question: How should individual Christians today live out the theological principle?
2. Application: It has been said that “a passage has one interpretation but many applications.” The meaning of the passage can be applied for several areas.
3. Remember to search our heart first. (Psalm 139:23,24)
4. How does this truth apply to my life in four spheres: in my personal life, in my family, at work, in my church, and in my neighborhood?
5. In view of this truth, what specific changes should I make in my life? How can I practice the truth? (Romans 12:2)



**Resources for Biblical Interpretation**

1. The Holy Spirit (John 14:26)
2. Study Bible – for providing helpful explanations on scripture. Obtain version written for wide audience. Remember not a devotional bible.
3. Concordance – for finding words or topics elsewhere in scripture
4. Bible Dictionary – For Background information on geography, history, culture, etc.

5. Bible Commentary – Explain bible verse by verse.



**HAZARDS**

1. **Selfish hopes** – The bible must never be limited to selfish or personal pursuits like simply feeling good about ourselves or supporting our own personal agenda. How are we using and interpreting the Bible? Be careful if you hear a teaching or preaching that is directed to you does not mean that it is being used for selfish gain. Maybe, God is trying to tell you something. Be careful to listen and do God’s word. (James 1:19-27) Don’t be on the defensive. If so, maybe there is an underlying issue to be resolved in YOU!
2. **Expectation of instant results** – We want instant gratification. We want all areas to be under control and just because something is taught once we want an immediate change or response. God is interested in the process, the daily regimen of waling with Him. PLEASE BE PATIENT. Enjoy the ride.
3. **OUR Interpretation** – We have our preconceived, preformed ideas from our backgrounds. We are each the product of tradition and human tradition can neutralize the impact of the Word on our hearts. Open your eyes to search the text its grammar, history, context, and meaning. Observe the facts of the text and make connection. (Mark 7:6-13)

