

Sermon Study Guide

Pastor: Dr. Henry Schorr

Date: Jan 30/31'16

THE MAIN THING:

A thorough, faithful and systematic approach must be taken when interpreting the Bible.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group (choose two questions)*

1. When have you been very involved in looking carefully at something (e.g. a letter, an art piece)? Why did it have meaning for you?
2. How comfortable are you with your ability to study Scripture? Share a time when you were excited about the Scriptures?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Read John 7:17; 1 Cor 2:14; 1 Tim 4:7, 8; 1 John 2:27.
How do these verses define prerequisites for the study of God's Word?
2. Choose one of the following passages to practice the study format that Pastor Henry suggested:
Matt 18:10-14; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 10:38-42; John 11:38-44.
 - a) Make sure that each participant has a copy of the same translation (for the purpose of this study, print copies of the passage)
 - b) Observe: each participant will read the passage quietly and mark their observations using: Who? Where? What? Why? When? How?
Ask the group share their observations after five minutes.

Pastor Henry stated: 'The goal of interpretation is to understand what the author was trying to say to his original readers.'

- c) Interpret (as a group): What does it mean? What is it saying? (Use a map and study helps to give more contextual information that might be necessary.) How does this passage fit in with the surrounding passages?
- d) Apply/Take action: What is God saying to me? What does He want me to do about what He is saying?

PURSUE MISSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community as you live out your calling*

1. What are the implications for our use of Scripture by interpreting 2 Tim 2:15 along with John 13:17 and James 1:22?
2. What 'key' do you need to improve upon?
3. How has this study given you a hunger for God's Word?
4. Invite each participant to study one of the other passages and share next week in three minutes their observations and actions.

THE WORD (NIV)

John 7:17 Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

1 Timothy 4:7,8 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. ⁸ For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

1 John 2:27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

John 13:17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Sermon Study Summary

Prior to the Reformation, church leaders were reluctant to give lay people access to the Bible for fear of misinterpretation. These concerns were justified. Even today we see how individuals may misconstrue a passage that is in disharmony with the message of God's Word. To avoid such pitfalls we ought to remember Paul's instructions in 2 Timothy 2:15 to be a people who "correctly handle the word of truth" which literally means to "cut it straight" or "to be precise," since our responsibility is to convey the Word of God and not edit it.

To this end, there are several prerequisites to effective study of the Bible.

The first prerequisite - Do I know and trust the author of the Bible? Unless you believe in the message of the bible, what you find within will be incoherent or nonsensical. Only through the help of the Holy Spirit can we find enlightenment and understanding of the Scriptures.

The second prerequisite - Do I believe the Bible is God's Word? If we don't believe that the Bible has any truth, then we can't expect to find revelation or wisdom within it.

Thirdly, we have the prerequisite - Is my heart and life right with God and others? Unless our hearts and minds are open to what God is trying to commune with us, we will remain resistant to what God is trying to reveal to us through Scripture.

Once we have prepared ourselves to delve into God's Word, we must take care to approach any study of the Bible through what is known as the 'Inductive Study method.' It is composed of three aspects: observe, interpret, apply / take action.

When we first observe a passage in the Bible we first need to take note of every detail; look for comparisons and contrasts; discern whether it is relating to a historical, poetic, prophetic, for teaching; and ask the six 'W' questions - who, what, where, when, why, and how.

After we have observed the passage we move onto interpretation. Where observation asks, "What does it say?" interpretation asks, "What does it mean?" The goal of any interpretation is to understand what the author was trying to say to his original readers or audience. The bigger question here, though, is "What is God saying to me? We need to ultimately search for what truth is God is communicating to us through the study of Scripture.

The last step of application is imperative because the in depth study of the Bible is meaningless unless it translates into a transformation of ourselves and how we interact and treat others on a daily basis. God does not call us to inaction but to real change in ourselves and our world.

Furthermore, as we approach interpretation of Scripture we must be conscious to interpret biblical passages in the context in which it was written - to interpret a passage as literal when it should be figurative, and vice versa, will lead to an understanding of Scripture that is in disharmony with the overall message of the Bible. We must also avoid giving over-significance to obscure passages which can lead to deriving interpretations that advance personal interests rather than God's interest. Unless the Bible is studied with this thorough and systematic approach, the central message of God's Word will become twisted and altered. Yet when we interpret the Bible correctly, the interpretations Scripture yields good fruit that brings us closer to a greater understanding of God and His Will.