



Interpretation

Interpretation

Determining what
the passage means.



Interpretation



Interpretation

is the **2nd stage** in studying the Bible. Interpretation is the active process of trying to *determine* **message** and **meaning**.

Message

Meaning

Message

LAST WEEK!

Meaning

THIS WEEK!

Interpretation



Interpreting the meaning is the discipline of determining the direct implication of what was said.

Meaning

Interpreting the overall meaning of a passage is the process of attempting to come as closely as possible to God's original, specific and direct implication of the passage.

Steps for Determining the Meaning



Step 1

Remind yourself of the context of the book, chapter & paragraph.



The first step
to discovering the
meaning is to keep
fresh in your mind the
overarching context of
the entire book, each
chapter and also
paragraph.



Before narrowing down the meaning, we have to remind ourselves of the overarching context and goal of the book and how that goal is broken down/divided among the chapters.

Our interpretation of the intent & implication of the passage must fall in line with the overarching context and message of the book and subsequent chapters.

Summary of Ephesians 4:

Paul challenges the believers to (1) **walk** in a manner that is worthy of their incredible position in Christ. He tells them that they will **walk more obediently** → (2) the more they collectively **understand** what has happened to them in Christ at salvation and → (3) when they are collectively unified under sound **doctrine**, which is aided by **appointed help**. (4) He concludes by laying out specific ways of walking worthily and unworthily.

Step 2

Review/Re-read summary paragraphs.



The second step
to discovering the
meaning is to keep
fresh in your mind the
overall purpose of the
book, by re-reading
your summaries.



The best way to remind ourselves of the overarching context and goal of the book and how that goal is broken down/divided among the chapters is to re-read our chapter and paragraph summaries.

Paragraph 1: Verses 1-6

Paul challenges the believers to walk in a manner that is worthy of their incredible position in Christ. Paul emphasizes that though there are many different believers there is one hope and faith, in one Lord and in one God and Father for all who believe.

Paragraph 2: Verses 7-16

Paul tells the believers that God gave them specific gifts and people to help them in their walk and growth. These people are to use their gifts to unify the body of believers in their knowledge of the Son of God, so that they will be able to withstand the schemes and mentality of the world.

Paragraph 3: Verses 17-19

Paul tells the believers that they should not walk the way that they used to, as unbelievers. The minds of the unbeliever are still darkened with sin and ignorance.

Paragraph 4: Verses 20-24

Paul tells the believers that they should walk according to the new knowledge they have about Christ, according to the truth. They are to put off their old way of living and put on their new way of life which is holy and pure.

Paragraph 5: Verses 25-32

Paul lays out specific ways that the believers can put off their old way of life and how they can put on their new way of life. He lists many negative deeds that are to cease and many positive deeds that are to be pursued.

Step 3

Review/Re-read the book,
focusing on doctrinal truths.



The third step
to discovering the
meaning is to do a
general re-read of the
book and identify any
and all doctrinal
truths/themes
/statements.



Our goal now is to get laser focused by moving out from these more general summaries of the book and into a more **specific understanding** of the direct intent and implication of the book.

God's intent and desire is can typically be discovered in statements of truth. A statement may be found in a single sentence or argued over several verses or even paragraphs.

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord,
urge you to walk in a manner worthy of
the calling to which you have been
called, ² with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another
in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of
the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Sample Doctrinal Truths/Statements:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called

Believers are to walk in a manner worthy of the calling of God.

Sample Doctrinal Truths/Statements:

walk in a manner worthy...² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity

Humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance and love are indicators of walking worthily.

Sample Doctrinal Truths/Statements:

walk in a manner worthy...² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity

Some of the fruits of walking worthily are humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance and love.

Sample Doctrinal Truths/Statements:

walk in a manner worthy...² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity

When a believer is walking worthily they will regularly display humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance and love.

You can already see that by focusing on these truths, we are not only clearly identifying the ***INTENTION*** of the passage, but also the ***IMPLICATION...***

which leads to ***APPLICATION.***

Step 4

List doctrinal themes and issues
in clear/concise statements.



The fourth step
to discovering the
meaning is to
translate the intention
and purpose of the
book, chapters and
paragraphs into clear
doctrinal statements.



¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Sample Doctrinal Truths/Statements:

¹⁷ you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life

Believers should not live the way that they used to live, or the way that the world currently lives. Believers are to put away that life style.

Sample Doctrinal Truths/Statements:

²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Believers should put on their new way of life which is centered on the nature of God, which is righteous and holy.

Sample Doctrinal Truths/Statements:

²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Believers are to live in righteousness and holiness which occurs when they are renewed in the spirit of their minds.

Step 5

Arrange doctrinal statements
into a sequential order.



The fifth step
to discovering the
meaning is to begin to
arrange/categorize
these statements into
a sequential,
linear order.



The Bible not only reveals God's intent and desire, but it also reveals God's *method* for achieving his desire/intent. And that method is usually strewn before, during, after doctrinal statements.

There are many truths/applications in the life of a believer that are simultaneous and on going, but there are just as many that occur in a sequential order. Meaning, certain things must occur before other things, or they will not or can not happen.

After we've identified all the major theological doctrines/truths within the passage we need to discover their order. Meaning **“In what sequence should these occur in the life of the believer?”**

**Or “In what order do they need to
be heard, understood, believed
and applied?”**

Sample Doctrinal Order:

to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

Putting off the old self comes first,
and/or simultaneously
and 'continually' with putting on the
new self.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

Renewing the mind comes before
putting on the new self.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

Putting away falsehoods precursors
the ability to speak truth with your
neighbor.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

Doing honest work and saving enough money to live and also give comes before being able to share with others.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Sample Doctrinal Order:

The believer must understand their forgiveness in Christ before being fully able or prepared to forgive others.

Step 6

Arrange doctrinal statements
into theological categories.



The sixth step
to discovering the
meaning is to begin to
arrange/categorize
these statements into
theological categories
or groups.



One of the main goals of Bible study is to get our thinking correct about God, about Christ, about Sin, about Satan, about Man, about Woman, about work, money etc.

As we study various books of the Bible we must begin to keep track of clear doctrinal statements about each of those groups or categories.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

⁶ one **God and Father** of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

God is the Father and ruler of all and he is over all.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of **God** in true righteousness and holiness.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

God is truly & utterly
righteous and holy.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as **God** in Christ forgave you.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

God is the one who forgives the believer, which is made possible through Christ.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in **Christ** forgave you.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

It is by being in Christ/through Christ that the believer is able to be forgiven by God.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into **Christ**,

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

Jesus Christ is the head of each believer and the church.

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of **the Son of God**, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of **Christ**

Sample Doctrinal Categories:

Jesus Christ is the model and maturing into his likeness is the goal for all believers.

Step 7

Contemplate how you would communicate these truths to a teenager.



The seventh step
to discovering the
meaning is to begin to
contemplate how you
might go about
teaching these truths
to a teenager...



I have found over the years that if I am unable to clearly and effectively communicate these doctrinal truths, and why they are so, to a teenager, or child... then I haven't clearly understand their message, meaning, intent or implication clearly enough myself.

Likewise, I have found that if I am able to clearly and effectively communicate these doctrinal truths, and why they are so, to a teenager, or child... then I have begun to clearly understand their message, meaning, intent or implication myself.

Contemplating how you may go about explaining and teaching these truths to children and youth is a great way to confirm whether or not you yourself fully grasp them.

And finally, truly understanding the passage and grasping the truths and concepts within are a prerequisite for real and lasting application!!