

Week 8 Bible Study: Introduction to Interpretation, Meaning

Interpretation is determining what the passage means.

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

Interpreting the meaning is the discipline of determining the direct _____ 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.

7 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 _____ 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.

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.

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 _____ 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.

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

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.

Sample: 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.

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 _____ 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: 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. → Putting off the old self comes first, and/or simultaneously and 'continually' with putting on the new self. Renewing the mind comes before putting on the new self.

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: ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. → God is the Father and ruler of all and he is over all.

Sample: ²⁴ put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. → God is truly & utterly righteous and holy.

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!!

