
UNDERSTANDING & TEACHING THE BIBLE

Why do we have the Bible?

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A. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

Two basic questions

What was God's original intention in this passage?

What's the relevance to my world?

Three guiding principles

1. Simplicity

2. History

3. Harmony

B. FOUR BUILDING BLOCKS OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

1. Context

- Where does this passage come within the flow of salvation history?
- What is the specific historical context of this passage?

2. Genre

3. Structure

The meaning of a Bible passage is nearly always tied to its structure

- Identify the units of thought or flow of ideas
- Change of scene
- Change of characters
- Change of subject
- Linking words
- Repetition

4. Content

- setting
- characters
- dialogue
- illustrations
- key words and ideas
- figures of speech

C. APPLICATION

Two dangers in Bible study

- Jumping into application too fast without understanding what the text is saying.
- Not getting into application quickly enough.

Two tests for application

- So what?
- Yes but how?

Three golden rules

1. A text cannot mean what it could not mean to its original readers
2. When we face similar circumstances to the original readers, God's word to us is the same as it was to them
3. When we don't face similar circumstances, we should look for the general principle underlying God's specific word to them. We can then apply the principle to comparable specific situations today