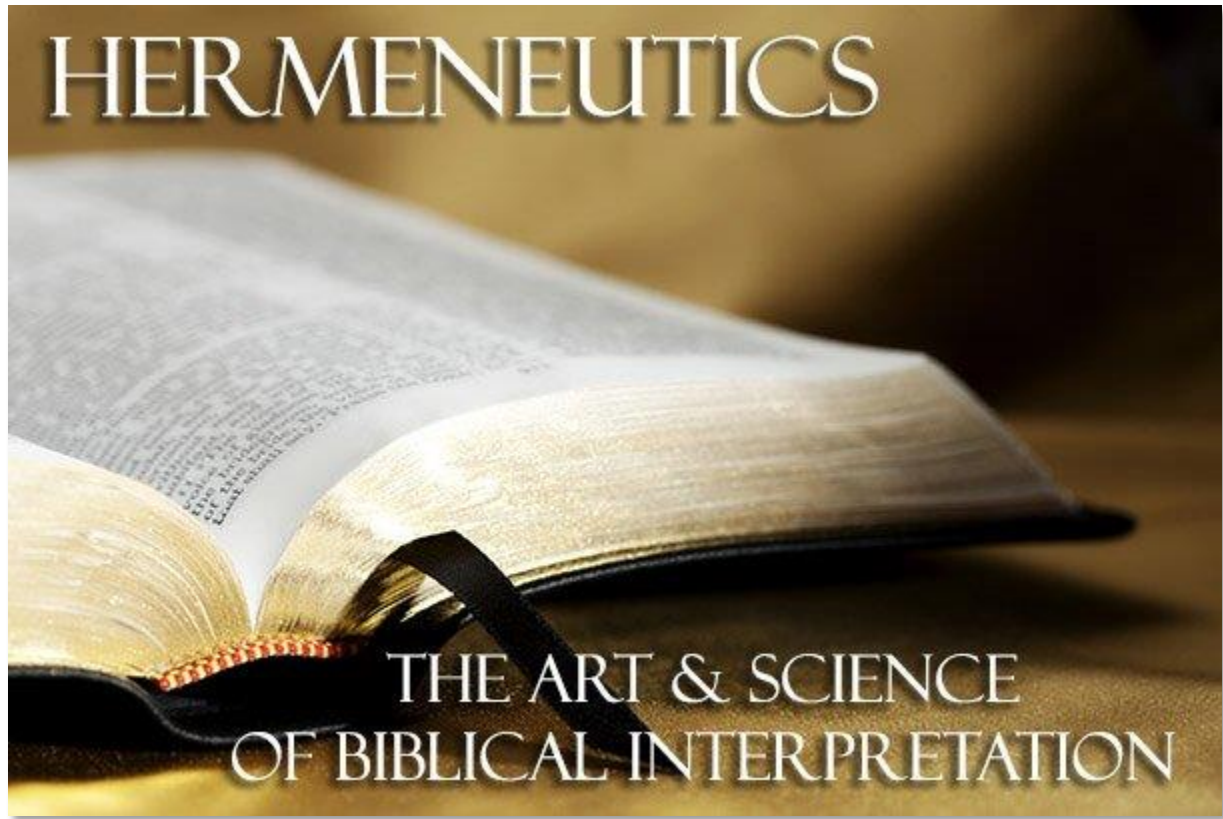


A Discipleship Class of Faith Baptist Church

Kaiserslautern, Germany



written and taught by

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Faith Baptist Church

Hermeneutics

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Hermeneutics

Evening Schedule – 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

1. Review the Lesson from the previous week
2. Instruction for the Week
3. Practice Application of the Week's Lesson
4. Assignment for Application of the Week's Lesson
5. Small Group Prayer

Lesson Calendar

1. Introduction to Hermeneutics (7.3.2019)
2. Observation: Part 1 – Verse (7.10.2019)
3. Observation: Part 2 – Paragraph (7.17.2019)
4. Observation: Part 3 – Book (7.24.2019)
5. Interpretation: Part 1 (7.31.2019)
6. Interpretation: Part 2 (8.4.2019)
7. Application (8.11.2019)
8. Conclusion (8.19.2019)



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Hermeneutics

Introduction – Lesson 1

1. Why Have We Gathered Here?

- a. 1 Timothy 1:5-7 *“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.”*
- b. Ephesians 4:11-13 *“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”*

2. Our Doctrinal Statement on the Scriptures:

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, Who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

3. Introduction: What is Hermeneutics and Why Do We Need It?

I. Defining Terms

- A. The word, Hermeneutics, comes from the Greek Word “Hermeneus”
- B. Classical Mythology – \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Hermeneus - \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Hermeneutics means \_\_\_\_\_



II. The Need for Hermeneutics:<sup>1</sup>

A. So that we have a clear understanding of the Word of God

B. So, why is it that the meaning is not so clear at times? What are our options?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

III. Why is this so crucial?

A. Theologically - EX: Jesus “begotten” means created after the Father existed (Heresy of Arianism). EX: the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in Matthew 3 means that He was adopted by the Father (Heresy of Adoptionism).

B. Church Life – The way the people of God live is directed either by their obedience to the Word of God, or by their disobedience of it.

C. The Danger of Moralism – If the supremacy of Scripture is not understood, and its true meaning applied to people’s lives, then they live according to their own decisions about what the Bible means, looking for application before they understand its true meaning. This will have deadly, eternal consequences.

IV. Over the course of our time together, I will seek to convince you of some things:

A. The Bible is About God → Three Questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Context is the Greatest Indicator of Meaning

C. Good Bible Interpreters Do Four Things:

1. Focus on the Text - \_\_\_\_\_
2. Approach the Bible Canonically - \_\_\_\_\_
3. Approach the Bible Confessionally - \_\_\_\_\_
4. Approach the Bible with Humility - \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this information is taken from Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Zondervan, 2003).



Assignment for Lesson 1: Write a few paragraphs that address your “pre-understanding” of the Word of God.

We will define “pre-understanding” as the underlying assumptions that you have about the Word of God. What you believe to be true of Scripture will have a great influence upon your interpretation of Scripture. This assignment, therefore, is to get you to examine what you believe about the Bible. Have this completed by next week.





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Hermeneutics - Lesson 2

I. Observation – Part 1: Verse

A. Review last week

B. Sample Questions: What do I see? What are the facts?

1. To whom did Henry Kissinger say, “When I look behind you, I don’t see another set of shoulders until Lincoln?”
2. What was the overnight low temperature last night?

C. Ten Strategies To First Rate Reading

1. Read \_\_\_\_\_ – Approach Scripture with mental intensity and probe below the surface.
2. Read Repeatedly – Read an entire book in one sitting, use different translations, read out loud, listen to Bible on CD, mp3, etc.
3. Read Patiently – Stay in the book for the long haul.
4. Read Selectively – Six lures: Who? What? Where? When? Why? Wherefore?
5. Read \_\_\_\_\_ – Turn Scripture into prayer.
6. Read Imaginatively – Rewrite the text in your own paraphrase, place yourself in the situation.
7. Read Meditatively – Learn to reflect on it. Think about it over a long period of time. This will be a key for application.
8. Read Purposefully – Look for the aim of the Author.
9. Read Acquisitively – Read Scripture not only to receive it, but to retain it; not just to perceive it but to possess it, to make it your own through personal active involvement.
10. Read \_\_\_\_\_ – View the parts in light of the whole, it is an integrated message; after taking it apart, put it back together into a meaningful whole.

D. Pick Apart A Verse

1. Start with the terms – What is the most important word in this verse? What does this word force me to discover?
2. Who are the people involved?

3. What is the main verb? It's tense? What is the basic sentence structure and flow of thought?
4. Watch for cause-effect relationships.
5. Define the key terms.
6. Note the importance of place and time. (historical and cultural)
7. Relate the verse to its immediate context and the book as a whole. (who wrote the book, where, circumstances, recipients, purpose)

II. Let's Practice with a Sample Verse – John 3:16

1. Start with the terms – What is the most important word in this verse? What does this word force me to discover?
2. Who are the people involved?
3. What is the main verb? What is the basic sentence structure and flow of thought?
4. Watch for cause-effect relationships.
5. Define the key terms.
6. Note the importance of place and time.
7. Relate the verse to its immediate context and the book as a whole.

This lesson was summarized from *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks

III. Assignment Lesson 2: Read and Observe I Peter 1:10-11 using your “Pick Apart a Verse” Strategy.

IV. Some good tools:

[www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net) (This is incredible Bible study software that is available for free download. It contains many Bible translations, commentaries, etc.)

Bible Dictionary, Topical Bible, Concordance, several translations, access to a good commentary, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Word Biblical Commentary, New American Commentary, Vine’s Theological Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words



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Hermeneutics - Lesson 3

I. Observation – Part 2: Paragraph

A. Review last week: 1 Peter 1:10-12

B. Working with a Paragraph

1. What kind of biblical literature is this? Look for cause-effect, purpose, results, conditions, and verbs.
2. What is the immediate context and the context of the book as a whole?
3. What is the historical and cultural context? Time and place?
4. Who are the people involved? Author, circumstances, recipients? Use a Bible Dictionary.
5. What are the key terms? Define key words.

C. Six Things To Look For

1. Things that are emphasized
2. Things that are repeated
3. Things that are related
4. Things that are alike
5. Things that are not alike
6. Things that are true to life

D. Let's Practice with a Sample Paragraph – Nehemiah 1:4-11

Working with a Paragraph

1. What kind of biblical literature is this? Look for cause-effect, purpose, results, conditions, and verbs.
2. What is the immediate context and the context of the book as a whole?



3. What is the historical and cultural context? Time and place?
  
4. Who are the people involved? Author, circumstances, recipients? Use a Bible Dictionary.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What are the key terms? Define key words.

Six Things To Look For

1. Things that are emphasized
  
  
  
  
  
2. Things that are repeated
  
  
  
  
  
3. Things that are related
  
  
  
  
  
4. Things that are alike
  
  
  
  
  
5. Things that are not alike

6. Things that are true to life

This lesson was summarized from *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks

- II. Assignment for Lesson 3: Read and Observe Titus 1:5-9 using your “Working with a Paragraph” Strategy and “Six Things to Look For.”



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Hermeneutics - Lesson 4

I. Observation – Part 3: Overview of a Book

A. Review last week: Titus 1:5-9

B. Getting The Big Picture

1. Read the entire book in one sitting. Do this two or more times. Use different translations to get a better feel for the book.
2. Evaluate each paragraph in the light of the other paragraphs. Use your “Ten Strategies to First Rate Reading” (*from Lesson 1*) and “Six Things to Look For” (*from Lesson 2*) to understand how the paragraphs fit together.
3. Create a chart (or outline for more detail) to show the overview. Keep it simple. Your purpose is to understand the big picture, the book as a whole. Look for key ideas, themes, people, etc.
4. As you visualize your chart or outline, ask, “What is this outline about? What are the relationships between the sections of the chart/outline? How do I use this information? Does this chart/outline help me understand what the Author is communicating?”
5. Revise your chart/outline as you learn more, gain understanding, and get corrected. Remember that your chart/outline is simply a tool. It is to help you understand, not the goal of the study. The goal of the study is to allow God’s Word to transform your life.

This lesson was summarized from *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks

B. Let’s Read Paul’s Letter to the Philippians

C. Let’s Examine a Sample Chart – of Paul’s letter to the Philippians (*on next page*)

## Chart of Philippians

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
1:1-2 Salutation	2:1-4 Unity and humility rather than conceit	3:1-4a Warning against the Judaizers	4:1 Stand firm
1:3-8 Thanksgiving for fellowship and sharing	2:5-11 Christ's example in humiliation and exaltation	3:4b-6 Paul's greater credentials	4:2-3 Plea for harmony
1:9-11 Prayer for their love and discernment	2:12-13 Responsibility and empowering from God	3:7-11 All loss to gain Jesus Christ	4:4-7 Exhortation to rejoice, be gentle, and pray for anxieties
1:12-14 His imprisonment advances the Gospel	2:14-18 Witness rather than complain and fight	3:12-14 Striving for more of Christ	4:8-9 Think and do the right things
1:15-18a Rejoices when his opponents preach the Gospel	2:19-24 Timothy commended for his genuine interest	3:15-16 Call to heed	4:10-13 Joy and contentment in their sharing and Christ's provision
1:18b-26 Will rejoice whether freed or executed	2:25-30 Epaphroditus commended for risking his life	3:17-21 Contrast between true and false teachers	4:14-19 Joy and contentment explained further
			4:20-23 Doxology and closing greetings

E. Let's Practice Making a Chart – of the book of Malachi

Chart of Malachi

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4

This lesson was summarized from *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks

Assignment for Lesson 4: – Create your own chart of the book of Jonah.

Chart of Jonah

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4

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Hermeneutics - Lesson 5

I. Interpretation – Part 1

- A. Review last week: Charting the Book of Jonah
- B. Reminder of our observing reading – How did you read the first love letter you ever received?
- C. Once we see what the text says, we are ready to ask, “What does it mean?” The better we understand the text the better we can apply it to our lives.
  - 1. A color blind person sees something differently and that is permissible. We cannot say the same about Scripture. Meaning is not subjective in Scripture. One of the most dangerous questions you can ask of someone is “What does this passage of Scripture mean to you?”
  - 2. What does this text mean to them (author and recipients) before what does this text mean to me.
- D. Interpretation – What does it mean? Meaning refers to the objective truth of God read out of the text not my subjective response to it, nor my subjective thoughts read into it. For example: \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Why interpret? We interpret to overcome barriers which prevent us from understanding.
  - 1. Language barriers – \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Cultural barriers – \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Literary barriers – \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Communication barriers – Sometimes we just can’t communicate the correct interpretation of the text.
  - 5. Misinterpretations - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- F. Hazards to Avoid
  - 1. Misreading the text - Money is the root of all evil. I Timothy 6:10
  - 2. Distorting the text – \_\_\_\_\_



3. Contradicting the text – \_\_\_\_\_

4. Subjectivism – \_\_\_\_\_

5. Relativism – \_\_\_\_\_

6. Overconfidence – \_\_\_\_\_

G. Literary Genres – What Type Of Literature Is It? (*see Handout*)

This lesson was summarized from *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks

Note: Even though the Bible has only one correct interpretation, we can find people who disagree about what the interpretation ought to be. Differences in interpretation are fine as long as we keep in mind that the conflict is not in the text, but in our limited understanding of the text. God is not confused about what He has said even if we are. We must handle Scripture with care (good methods of interpretation), dependence on the Holy Spirit, and with humility.

Assignment for Lesson 5: Do Observation and work towards the meaning (Interpretation) of Philippians 4:13.

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Hermeneutics - Lesson 6

I. Interpretation – Part 2

A. Review last week: Interpretation of Philippians 4:13

The text can never mean what it never meant!

B. The First Key to Interpretation – \_\_\_\_\_

This is what you have done in “Observation”. Use your 6 questions of selective reading, your skills in analyzing a section (or book), a paragraph, and a verse. What you observe will provide the content for what you interpret.

C. The Second Key to Interpretation – \_\_\_\_\_

Context refers to what goes before and what follows after; the setting in the text, as well as in theology, history, culture, and geography.

1. Literary Context – Where it sits in the text of Scripture, its place in the paragraph, in the section, in the book, in the Bible as a whole. E.g., John 3:16, Joshua 1:8
2. Historical Context – Where it fits in history. What else is taking place in history at this time? What are social, political, and technological influences?
3. Cultural Context – Where it fits in the culture which first received it. Culture determines forms of communication, ways of understanding. Surrounding cultures, education levels, agricultural society, views of men and women, family life, etc.
4. Geographic Context- Where it is taking place. What is terrain like? Where is this place? Where is the author located? The recipients? What is the city like?
5. Theological Context – Where it fits in the progressive nature of revelation. What did the author know about God and His plan? How did the people worship? How much Scripture was available?

D. The Third Key to Interpretation – \_\_\_\_\_

Comparing Scripture with Scripture will: (1) increase understanding and (2) guard against distortions. Scripture is the highest authority. Therefore, Scripture always validates Scripture. Scripture also validates the messenger. If someone preaches or teaches something contrary to the Word of God, the Word of God is always correct.

D. The Fourth Key to Interpretation – \_\_\_\_\_

1. Cultural context is as important as literary context in properly understanding a text. There were specific factors that led to the writing of the book, influenced the author, the audience, and the content of his writing.
2. Cultural context will also clear up many misunderstandings and clarify how to make application.

*Abraham's time and views of wealth; the right of the first-born son; Ruth; Psalm 23; Babylonian policies; pagan religions; Romans 14; Greco-Roman society and its views of religion, family, morality, social structure, etc.; even practices such as baptism seen in its cultural context.*

3. The cultural context helps you to know if a statement is timeless and, therefore, universally applicable, or if it is culturally conditioned and the principle needs to be understood for application.

E. The Fifth Key to Interpretation – \_\_\_\_\_

Consultation involves the use of secondary sources to shed light on a text and help you understand it better. Use these as tools to learn from someone more knowledgeable, but not becoming dependent on them and failing to do the work of observation yourself.

Avoid both the arrogance of “God will speak to me, I don’t need someone else” and being too dependent on secondary sources. Remember, they are tools, learn how to use them. Tools don’t do your work, but enable you to do it better; neither do you do the work without tools.

Essential Tools for Consultation:

- *Concordance* – One for your translation with the Strong’s numbering system.
- *Bible Dictionary* – New Bible Dictionary (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)
- *Word Study Dictionary* – Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words
- *Bible Handbook*
- *Atlas*
- *Bible Commentaries*

Figuring Out The Figurative - The literal interpretation of Scripture means taking the language in the normal sense that it intends. We accept it at face value in normal ways of communication. When Scripture intends something to be understood in the plain sense, it is to be interpreted as such. When it intends for you to take something as a figure of speech, interpret it as such.

What about when you’re not sure? When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense lest you end up with nonsense. What about when the plain sense does not make common sense?

## Ten Principles For Figurative Language

1. Use the literal sense unless there is some good reason not to.
2. Use the figurative sense when the passage tells you to do so.
3. Use the figurative sense if the literal meaning is impossible or absurd.
4. Use the figurative sense if a literal meaning would involve something immoral.
5. Use the Figurative sense if the expression is an obvious figure of speech.
6. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the context and scope of the passage.
7. Use the figurative if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the general character and style of the book.
8. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the plan and purpose of the author.
9. Use a figurative sense if the literal interpretation involves a contradiction of other Scripture.
10. Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation would involve a contradiction in doctrine.

### An Example of Figurative Language:

*As He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him. So He was saying, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? "It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES." (Luke 13:17-19)*

What is the subject of this image or figure of which Jesus is speaking? \_\_\_\_\_

This lesson was summarized from *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks

Assignment for Lesson 6 – Do Observation and Interpretation on John 10:14-18



## Hempstead Bible Fellowship

### Hermeneutics - Lesson 7

#### I. Application

A. Review last week: Interpretation of John 10:14-18

B. Application – How Does It Work?

The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity. It was written to transform your life. The ultimate goal of Bible study is to allow the Bible to do something to you, allowing its truth to transform you. “Observation plus interpretation without application equals spiritual death.”

There is one correct \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible. There are many \_\_\_\_\_.

Understanding is not the goal, but the means to the larger end. Practicing biblical truth in day-to-day life is the goal. We study the Bible to know and love the Lord Who created and redeemed us so that we may live in holy obedience before Him.

#### Nine Questions To Ask

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to claim?
4. Is there a prayer to repeat?
5. Is there a command to obey?
6. Is there a condition to meet?
7. Is there a verse to memorize?
8. Is there an error to mark?
9. Is there a challenge to face?

#### Four Steps In Application

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - Take a spiritual inventory in your personal life, your family life, your church life, your community, and your work. Assets & Liabilities
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – The Word of God affects every area of your life. The Christian life is a new series of relationships:
  - A new relationship to God
  - A new relationship to yourself
  - A new relationship to other people
  - A new relationship to the enemy

The Word of God gives application in all of these relationships by:

- Exposing your sin
- Giving you God's promises
- Giving you God's commands
- Giving you examples to follow

3. \_\_\_\_\_ - This is not some strange mystical activity. It is intentional thinking and praying through the Scripture that you have been reading and asking the Holy Spirit to show you how it applies to your life, your relationships, your obedience, etc. We should invest time in dwelling on the Word of God in our hearts and minds.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

A. Learn to Recognize Principles from the Biblical Text - A principle is a succinct statement of a universal truth. Move from the specific to the general.

B. Two Types of Statements, Commands, Practices, and Principles:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - (This is a statement that is true no matter the culture in which you live.)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ - (This is a statement that is uniquely tied to the culture, but may also provide principles for godly living that apply to us today.)

How to recognize if the passage is trans-cultural or culturally conditioned:

Trans-cultural:

- A. Constancy across biblical cultures
- B. Universal setting for what is said
- C. Permanent factor is the basis for what is said
- D. Obvious principle behind the particular

(Application of trans-cultural commands, practices, and principles: *Be prescriptive, apply as is.*)

Culturally Conditioned: John 4:27

- A. Obvious textual material
- B. Variables in Scripture – place, power, communication, money, ethnicity, gender, generations, world-views, religion, art, history and time

(Application of culturally conditioned commands, practices, and examples requires “principlizing.”)

- Does the author state a general principle?
- Why was this specific command or instruction given?
- Does context reveal a general principle?

- In what ways can this principle be applied today? To an identical situation? To a comparable situation? To a different situation?

### Principles That Govern Principles

1. Principles should correlate with the general teaching of Scripture.  
(Ex: Proverbs 20:2, Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 reinforce the principle)
2. Principles should speak to the needs, interests, questions, and problems of real life today  
(Ex: In Nehemiah chapter 1, we read of the prophet laboring in prayer for his people. We might ask ourselves when the last time was that we labored in earnest prayer for God's people.)
3. Principles should indicate a course of action.  
(Ex: Ephesians chapter 5 describes God-honoring marriage. Such passages ought to move us to act like Jesus Christ toward our wives.)

Example: John 4:27 and 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

This lesson was summarized from *Living by the Book* by Howard G. and William D. Hendricks

Assignment Lesson 7: Take this passage through to application. 1 Corinthians 8:1-13



Appendix A

Biblical Literary Genres

With over 40 different authors, the Bible is made up of a variety of writing styles. A literary genre describes the type of literature that is similar in content, tone, or structure. For the study of Bible Interpretation, or Hermeneutics, literary genres help us know how to read and understand the text better.

For instance, a history book wouldn't be read and understood in the same way as poetry. By knowing the literary genre, you will be more prepared for Observation, Interpretation and Application.

*Note:* several literary genres may exist in each book of the Bible.

Literary Genre	Examples	Characteristics	Observation Tips
Legal	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This represents a treaty with Israel <i>after</i> God establishes their relationship and just prior to entering the Promised Land.</li> <li>- The treaty is the agreement of the blessings and punishments for loyal or disloyal behavior.</li> <li>- Numbering over 600 laws, there are three categories of Old Testament Law that God instructed Moses: 1) moral, 2) civil, and 3) ceremonial.</li> <li>- While the Old Testament Law is the Word of God, not all is a command to Christians.</li> <li>- Some laws, which Jesus repeated, have been renewed and are commands to Christians.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What does each law reveal about God's standards, and justice?</li> <li>- Which laws do the prophets and Jesus repeat?</li> <li>- How is the Old Testament Law used to lead people to Christ?</li> <li>- The Old Testament Law reminds us of our privileged status; the Law no longer dictates our behavior.</li> </ul>
Narrative / Historical / Biographical	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These are stories of what God did to and through people.</li> <li>- The stories may not have a moral or direct teaching as they record history whether good or bad.</li> <li>- The stories emphasize God's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read each story as a unit.</li> <li>- Understand the plot.</li> <li>- Study the character(s). Note that characters may be bad examples, but</li> </ul>

	1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts	nature and revelation and teach in a manner that no other literary genre can.  - God is the heroic protagonist!  - Some stories will be difficult to understand; we are not always told how and why God did things.	observing what not to do can be just as important as what to do.  - Compare the same story that may be narrated elsewhere in a different book.  - Because the stories are so true to life, they can help us understand our own lives.
<b>Literary Genre</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Observation Tips</b>
Poetry	Job, Psalm, Lamentations, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs	- Hebrew poetry is supposed to be sung. It is worshipful, intensely emotional, and appeals to the imagination.  - About 40% of the Old Testament is poetic.  - Lacking the traditional elements found in poetry, Hebrew poetry is essentially parallelism. Much of Hebrew poetry cannot be appreciated because of the loss of its subtleties through translation.	- Read poetry slowly and in short sections.  - Study the imagery.  - Look for literary devices.  - Look for a central theme.  - What is being said about God?  - What is being said about God's people?
Proverb / Wisdom	Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs	- These books are all poetic.  - There are two types of wisdom: practical and speculative. Practical wisdom refers to guidelines that will lead to a holy and happy life. Speculative wisdom refers to the deeper issues such as the meaning of life and the	- Observe this as you would poetry.  - Examine the metaphors and similes.  - Look for the behavior and their consequences.

		<p>existence of evil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The poetry teaches wisdom in a concise and compressed language.</li> </ul>	
Parables	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These short stories are loved for their simplicity and memorable morals.</li> <li>- They are the hallmark of Jesus' teachings.</li> <li>- These true to life stories, while recorded, may never have historically occurred.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the characters in the story.</li> <li>- Who heard Jesus' parables? How did each identify with the story?</li> <li>- Compare the different Gospel accounts of the same parables.</li> </ul>
<b>Literary Genre</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Observation Tips</b>
Exposition	Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, 1-2-3 John, Jude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These were expository letters written to either a friend or church usually in response to something brought up by the reader (except Philemon and possibly James and Romans).</li> <li>- While principally not a theological thesis, the letters exhort with a logical presentation of truth or doctrine for particular action to a church problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read the whole letter in one sitting.</li> <li>- What prompted the letter?</li> <li>- Who are the recipients of the letter?</li> <li>- What is the mood of the letter?</li> <li>- What does the letter exhort?</li> </ul>
Prophecy / Apocalyptic	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most prophecy dealt with the future of Israel and Judah and the nations surrounding them. These prophetic predictions were largely fulfilled. Some prophecies have yet to be fulfilled.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What's the main problem?</li> <li>- What images are used?</li> <li>- What does it say about God?</li> </ul>

	<p>Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Revelation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prophetic predictions are not its primary function. Instead it is to proclaim the words of the Lord for the sole purpose of bringing people back to Him. The prophet is the spokesman for God.</li> <li>- The message of the prophets is similar in content to when God spoke to Moses.</li> <li>- Prophets were analogous to "enforcers" of the covenant.</li> <li>- The tone of warning and judgment is ominous and there are many words directly from God.</li> <li>- These books are challenging to understand, but typically end with hope and restoration for God's people and promises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What happens?</li> <li>- Why did God include this in the Bible?</li> </ul>
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For more information on literary genres, read *The Literature of the Bible* by Leland Ryken.