

## INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is the means by which one answers the question, “What does it mean?” The goal of interpretation is to determine the *universal truth*, that which is not bound by time, culture, language, etc . . .

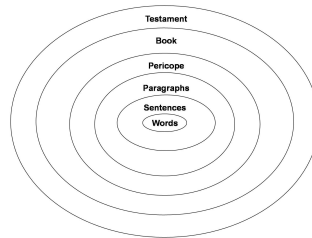
### *Exercises to Aid in Interpretation*

#### *Background*

Paying attention to historical and cultural context allows us to bridge the gap and more accurately determine the universal principle. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook*, edited by Danny Hays and Scott Duvall is helpful, along with other Bible Handbooks and introduction works.

#### *Context*

Many interpretive issues are easily solved by understanding the broader context of a verse or passage and how that passage fits into the context of the book, Testament and story of the Bible. It’s helpful to think of context in this progression:



#### *Cross Reference*

Use Scripture to interpret Scripture. While each book in the Bible is unique, the 66 books weave together to tell us one grand narrative of God and his people. Good study Bibles and Bible Dictionaries give us the tools needed to navigate Scripture and shed light on passages that require more than a cursory look to interpret correctly.

#### *Word Studies*

Most words have a broad range of meaning. Often the immediate context a word is used in gives enough clues regarding the meaning assigned a word. Sometimes, however, it is helpful to use a concordance to identify the use of a certain word then ask:

1. How is this word used in this book?
2. How else does this author use this word elsewhere?
3. How does the rest of the Bible use this word?

Douglas Moo reminds us of the cardinal rule of semantics: “never give a word more meaning than the context requires.”

#### *Validations*

1. Identify and clearly state the interpretive problem.
2. Choose a solid commentary that covers various views regarding the interpretive problem.
3. Clearly set forth the different views on the interpretive problem and present arguments for and against each view.
4. Present your view, including support for why you adopted this view and a response to any objections.