

# Living by the Book

## Interpretation

Observation...What does it \_\_\_\_\_

Interpretation...What does it \_\_\_\_\_

Observation may be the most important step for getting God's Word right. Interpretation may be the most important step in understanding God's Word.

### **About interpretation:**

- You must understand what it meant to the author and his audience before you decide what it means to you.
- You can't apply God's Word until you understand it.
- Interpretation takes time and a process (skills)
- Even with all that, you cannot expect to understand everything in God's Word

### **Five C's of Interpretation**

C \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

### **Content**

Observing is great, but what about the accuracy of what you're observing. Think about consistency of manuscripts, original languages, translations. Sometimes the meaning of English words changes over time.

#### **Exercise:**

(1) Read Matthew 6: 9-13 (the disciple's prayer) in the NIV, ASB, NASB and King James Version. Do you see any significant differences?

(2) How about the King James Versions of Matthew 6: 22, 2 Timothy 4:1, Hebrews 12:2? Does the language of other translations make the meaning clearer?

## Comparison

- The best interpreter of scripture is other scripture.
- Parts of the Bible take on more meaning in light of the whole.

### Exercise:

The following scriptures are all about understanding and using God's Word. At your tables, compare these passages and write down a list of how they overlap and how each emphasizes a different aspect of that pursuit. Use your recently acquired observational skills.

2 Peter 1: 20-21, 1 Cor. 2: 13-16, 2 Timothy 3: 16-17, 2 Timothy 2:15.

## Context

- What comes before and after any given passage?
- What is the flow of ideas that includes the passage? Even entire books in the Bible have context.
- Why did God inspire this author at this time with this message?

***EVERY MAJOR CULT IS BUILT ON A VIOLATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE OF SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION!!!!***

### Exercise:

Please remove all inhibition as we look at some passages together. They are the same verses we used above in the comparison section on the subject of understanding and using scripture.

2 Peter 1: 20-21, but let's read 1:16-2:4. What came before and after that reflects on the original passage we are studying? Does this help you see the passage differently or understand it better?

1 Cor. 2: 13-16, but let's read 2:6-3:2. Same questions as above

2 Timothy 3: 16-17, but let's read 3:13-4:5. Same questions as above

2 Timothy 2: 15, but let's read 2:11-18. Same questions as above

## Challenge for this week:

Think of some of your favorite passages that you may even know by heart and look them up this week and read the entire chapter of their location asking, *"How does this increase my understanding of the meaning of my verse?"*