

# LIFE CHANGE 4 - God Communicating With Us (2)

*How do I understand the Bible?*

1. How did reading your Bible go last week?
2. How did Prayer go last week?
3. Through your time with God, did he reveal anything to you about yourself, Himself, or life?

## Digging Deeper Into God's Word

Just as we make the analogy that Prayer is like breathing, the Bible makes the analogy that Bible study is like eating.

- *How does Peter describe Bible study in 1 Peter 2:2?*

As we grow physically from newborn infants into children and beyond, our need for food changes from basic milk to more substantial food.

- *How does that relate to Bible study as described in Hebrews 5:12-14?*

Serious Bible study is best described as **OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, and APPLICATION.**

**OBSERVATION** asks, "What does the passage say?"

Some key questions to ask are:

1. What are words you need defining?
2. What are words or themes that are repeating?
3. Can you retell the passage in your own words?
4. To whom was this Bible passage addressed?
5. What is the main subject (doctrine, theme)?
6. What is the immediate context (surrounding verses or chapters)?
7. What does other Scripture have to say on the theme or doctrine?
8. What surprised, confused or bothered you? Why?

**INTERPRETATION** asks, “What does the passage mean?”

Four Principles to Interpreting the Bible:

1. **The Literal Principle** - Scripture should be understood in its literal, normal, and natural sense. While the Bible does contain figures of speech and symbols, they were intended to convey literal truth.
2. **The Historical Principle** - Interpret Scripture in its historical context. We must ask what the text meant to the people to whom it was first written.
3. **The Grammatical Principle** - This requires that we understand the basic grammatical structure of each sentence. To whom do the pronouns refer? What is the tense of the main verb?
4. **The Synthesis Principle** - The Bible doesn't contradict itself. If we arrive at an interpretation of a passage that contradicts a truth taught elsewhere in the Bible, our interpretation cannot be correct. The Bible must be compared with itself to discover its whole meaning.

From this, you can arrive at the meaning of the text. Some questions to help with interpretation are:

1. What does the passage tell us about God?
2. What does the passage tell us about People?
3. What does the passage tell us about living to please God?

**APPLICATION** asks, “What does this passage mean to me?”

Application Questions:

1. What is the primary example to follow?
2. What error is there to avoid?
3. Is there a command to obey?
4. Is there a promise to claim?
5. How should this change my life? (make it personal)

## Time to try it!

Please read Matthew 18:15-20. Using Observation, Interpretation (including the Four Principles) and Application—answer the following questions:

1. What is the meaning in context? (objective)
2. Based on the context, how is the meaning of verse 20 different than you may have heard before?
3. How should this affect my life? Be specific! (subjective)

## NEXT STEPS:

1. Commit to reading the Bible by trying these Bible reading methods over the next few years.
  - Do a daily devotional
  - Read one “chunk” continuously for \_\_\_\_\_ days
  - Read one smaller book of the Bible for one month
  - Read one Proverb per day (Ex. On August 22 read Prov. 22)
  - Read OT passage in morning and NT passage in evening
  - Read through the Bible in one year (about 3 chapters daily) - Helpful devotionals (The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble or Everyday Gospel by Paul Tripp)
2. What challenges might you face in your walk with God? How can we pray for each other this week?

*HINT: There are hundreds of Bible Reading plans and devotionals on the YouVersion Bible app! You can also pick up one of our Bible reading devotionals at the Princetown Church resource center.*