

# EXPLORING THE BIBLE | 5 • INTERPRETATION

*SMALL GROUP STUDY* | EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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## **WEEK 5: Exploring the Bible | Interpretation**

- Share what study Bible you've been exploring. What did you think of it?

### **Play teaching video for Week 5.**

- [You Tube](#)
- [Vimeo](#)

### **Discussion Questions**

- Why is observation an essential first step in Bible study, and how does it contribute to interpretation and application?
- Our goal in biblical hermeneutics is to understand what God meant in the words of scripture. When you or I say or write something, we want to be understood. We don't want what we are trying to communicate to be misconstrued or twisted around to mean something we did not intend. Who is being disrespected when people carelessly or willfully mishandle scripture? Howso? And why do you think people do so? What are some consequences of that in society?
- Diana pointed out that our interpretation should line up with the major themes of the Bible. Name some of the major themes of Jesus' sermons. The same themes run through the New Testament letters.
- Discuss the importance of context in interpreting Scripture. How does understanding historical, cultural, and literary context enhance our understanding of a passage?
- How can we avoid taking verses out of context or adding to their meaning when interpreting Scripture?
- What does it mean to look for the single meaning of a passage, and why is it essential in interpretation? How can we avoid twisting verses to support a particular meaning or point of view?

- How does the interpretation of Philippians 1 discussed in the script align with the principles of interpretation? Can you identify examples of context, themes of the Bible, and avoiding contradictions in this interpretation?
- Share your own experiences of coming across passages in the Bible that you didn't understand. How did you approach understanding them, and what resources did you find helpful?
- Reflect on the different approaches mentioned by Greg, Shauni, Barry, and Carissa when encountering passages they didn't understand. Which approach resonates with you the most, and why?

### **Prayer Prompts**

- Ask God to help us apply the principles of interpretation to our personal Bible study.
- Pray that we would seek to understand the historical and cultural background of Scripture in order to interpret it accurately.
- Ask God to guide us in recognizing the broader themes of the Bible and how they relate to specific passages.

### **Going Deeper | Put into Practice**

- Diana listed some basic tips to guide us as we endeavor to interpret scripture.
  - Context is key. This includes understanding the historical and cultural background, as well as the literary context of the passage.
  - Don't take a verse out of context or add to its meaning, and do not base your convictions on obscure passages.
  - Let scripture interpret scripture by cross-referencing verses and keywords.
  - Consider how the passage fits into the themes of the Bible.
  - Scripture will not contradict itself, but there may be seemingly contradictory truths that require faith (and/or further explanation!).
  - Interpret scripture literally, looking for clear teaching. Recognize figures of speech.
  - Look for the single meaning of the passage. Don't twist verses to support a meaning or point of view that is not clearly taught.

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- Using the worksheet from last week. Go through the basic tips and write out what you think the interpretation is based on your research. Be prepared to share next week.
- Take some time this week and pick one or two verses. Read them in their context to gain a fuller understanding. Check out various translations. Use a study Bible for further insight and cross references. Keep the basic tips listed in this session in mind to guide you.
  - 1 John 4:16
  - Matthew 22:37-39
  - Romans 12:2
  - Galatians 5:22-23
  - Matthew 28:16-20
  - 1 John 1:3-4