

Learn the Tools to Study God's Word for Yourself!

# 6 Steps

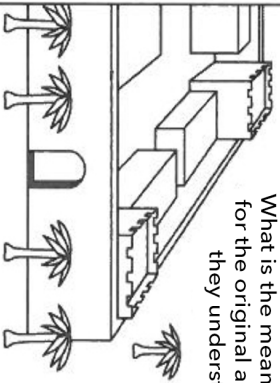
TO STUDY ANY PASSAGE OF THE BIBLE

## 1 GET YOUR BEARINGS

- Genre
- Timeline of Scripture

## 2 "THEM/THEN"

What is the meaning of the passage for the original audience? How did they understand the text?



## 3

### AUTHOR'S AIM

Author's Intended Meaning & Message to the Original Audience



### Timeless Truth Bridge\*

## 4 CROSS THE RIVER

What are the differences between the original audience and us? "Them/Then" vs. "Us/Now"

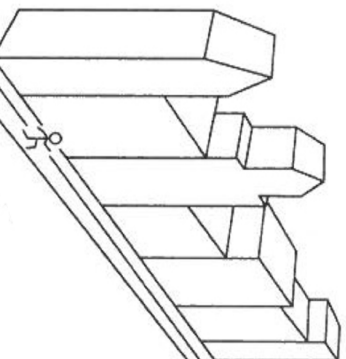
Culture  
Language

## 5

How does the gospel and Christ's work on the cross affect the meaning of this passage?

## 6 "US/NOW"

How does this truth impact my life? What action do I need to take?



\*Timeless Truth of the Passage:  
Write it out in 1-2 sentences using present tense verbs.

Time  
Situation  
Covenant

## #1 GET YOUR BEARINGS...

- What is the genre? Genre determines how we approach a passage.
- Where does this passage fall in the timeline of the Bible and in relation to the

### OBSERVATION: What does the text say?

Accurate interpretation begins prayer and observing the content and context of the text as written to the original audience, "them/then".

## #2 "THEM/THEN"

### Read Patiently, Prayerfully, & Repeatedly

- Be patient with the text and with yourself.
- Pray before, during, and after reading. When you're having trouble understanding a verse or passage stop and pray.
- Read the text repeatedly! Over and over and over and over...

### Read Purposefully

- Print out the text, doublespaced, and use it to mark up the text as you read.
- Note the **literary** and **historical context**, and answer the "Big 6" questions.
- Make a list of your observations from the text OR draw the passage, outline the passage, or make a chart to help record what you observe.

### Literary Context (*Words Around the Text*):

- Who is the author and what do we know about him? Who is he writing to?
- Look for repeated words and phrases.
- Look for things that are related/connected. Look for linking words (*but, and, therefore, so, so that*, etc).
- Look for things that are alike and unlike (simile and metaphors).
- Look for figurative language
- Use cross references (other related verses in the Bible) to see what further information/insight they give on the passage.

### Historical & Geographical Context (*World Around the Text*):

- Look for and make notes on key people, places, events, and times.
- Look for an make note of cultural or geographical references (*A Bible Dictionary, Bible Atlas or a Bible Encyclopedia will be helpful.*)

### Big 6" Questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?

Who are the people in the text? What is happening in the text? What are the events taking place? What is the point being made? When did the events in the passage take place? Where is this taking place? Why is this included? Why does this person say that? etc.

### Read Telescopically

- How do the parts relate to the whole of the passage? As you look at each paragraph, note how it relates to the sections that come before and after it.
- How does each paragraph fit within the chapter?
- How do paragraphs relate to one another? Look for repeated themes and ideas in chapters and the whole book.
- How does this book fit into the Old or New Testament, and into the whole story of the Bible?

## INTERPRETATION: What does the text mean?

Interpretation is important because our understanding of the passage, "what it means to me", is not always the same as the divinely-inspired, human author's intent. We are looking for the author's intended meaning for the original audience. Our observations from reading purposefully and telescopically help us to see the author's intended meaning for the original audience.

## #3 AUTHOR'S AIM

From your observations, what do you think was the author's intended message or main point of the text for the original audience? Summarize the message of the passage for the original audience in a few sentences.

### Read Thoughtfully

- Look for the aim of the author.
- Grasp and summarize the main idea of the paragraph.
- Keep a list of any unanswered or unresolved problems in the text.

Once we determine the author's original message intended for the original audience, we can then take steps to find the meaning for "us/now".

## #4 CROSS THE RIVER "Them-Then" and "Us-Now"

- Compare the biblical audience and their culture with our time/culture today.
- Make list of differences and similarities.
- What parts of the text apply only to the biblical audience in their time?
- Note any differences in language or terms used, in the situation, in cultural differences and in the covenant.

## #5 OVER THE TIMELESS TRUTH BRIDGE & THROUGH THE CROSS

- When considering the original meaning and the differences from the river, how does the gospel make a difference to the meaning of this passage?
- Is there a particular point of the gospel that impacts the meaning of the text for "us/now"? (*Jesus' Incarnation, Life and Teachings, Death and Resurrection, Ascension or Second Coming*)
- What is the timeless truth of the passage that applies to all people across time?
- Try to summarize the timeless truth of the passage in one or two sentences.

## APPLICATION: How do I apply this Bible passage to my life?

## #6 "US/NOW"

What does this timeless truth mean for my life?

- Do I really believe what I have learned about who God is? If so, how does that change the way I view God, myself, others, and the world?
- Does how I think about God day to day fit with the picture of Him I have just read?
- Is there anything I want to change in my life in view of this? What action will I take today?

### Read Meditatively

- Ponder, reflect, and think about the text throughout the day.
- There is a close connection between meditating on the truth of God's Word and applying it to our lives. (Josh. 1:8, Ps. 1:1-2, 119:97)