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2 Timothy 2:15
"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

HOMILETICS
"The Art of Preaching"

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Dear Student

Welcome to Faith Bible College
Our Vision is to Empower, Edify & Equip the Body of Christ in
The Word of Truth, So that we can be Leaders of Today
& Teachers for Tomorrow.

"Leaders are those whose aroma lingers long after they have completed the task and others who sniff it, wants to be like them"

"Leadership is not a title but a Function
& that Function pulls you to its Position
& the Position determines your Title"

Blessings & Graceful Studying
Professor Ronnie Moodley

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INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this lesson is to provide the learner with an understanding of the importance and the purpose of preaching in society today. It will answer the following questions:

- Where did preaching originate from? Is preaching found in the Bible?
- Whose responsible is it to preach?
- Why should preaching have a place in church life today?
- What should be the basis for all preaching?

THE STUDY OF HOMILEITICS

"Homiletics" is "the art of writing and preaching sermons"1. It comes from the Greek words, 'homilein', meaning to converse; and 'homilos' meaning assembly. It is that branch of theology concerned with preaching and sermons and the proper way in which to deliver them. It is the art of preaching.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Fifth Edition, 1936) states that "preach" originated with the Latin word "praedicare," "to proclaim", and defines it as:

- To proclaim tidings; specifically, to proclaim the gospel; deliver a sermon.
- To exhort; sermonize.
- To make known by announcing in a public place; to publish abroad."

THE GREEK WORDS TRANSLATED "PREACH."

The word "preach" is found in many places in the New Testament (KJV); however, it has been translated from several different Greek words. For example, in 1 Cor. 1:17, the phrase "preach the Gospel" comes from (euangelidzo); while in 1:18 we see the phrase "the preaching of the cross", which is (ho logos gar ho tou staurou). The Greek verb (keiruso) was commonly used in ancient times to refer to public proclamation or public teaching, and there are many New Testament verses where it is found. A complete listing can be found in a Greek concordance. The noun (keirux) refers to the "proclaimer; publisher; messenger" who is making the proclamation. Thus, 1 Tim. 2:7, "Whereunto I (Paul) am ordained a preacher (keirux), and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." (See also 2 Tim. 1:11). In 2 Pet. 2:5, Abraham is called a "preacher (keirux) of righteousness". The word (keirux) was used in several ways in ancient times. The (keirux) was a "publisher", or "herald", in the sense that he would broadcast important news to townspeople.

1 Collins Dictionary

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The person making official proclamations or announcements to the public was called (keirux), a sort of town cryer. A man assigned to carry messages between enemies on a battlefield was also called (keirux). The message of the (keirux) is the (keirugma). The (keirugma) is what was given to the (keirux) to proclaim.

In the Bible, the (keirux) is the preacher, the (keirugma) is his message, and (keiruso), a verb, is the act of preaching.

THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND FOR PREACHING

Throughout the Bible, the exposition of God's Word is central to the life of God's people. Here are some examples:

- When God gave His Law to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, He also gave them teachers, the priests, who were to teach the Word of God to them (Leviticus 10:11). The Law of course was perfect, but God knew that His people were not. Therefore He gave them teachers to explain the Law and to exhort the people to obedience.

- In Nehemiah 8, after the wall of Jerusalem was completed, all the people gathered to hear Ezra the scribe read from the Book of the Law. "They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read" (Nehemiah 8:8). In other words, Ezra preached!

- Jesus understood that one of the main purposes of his own ministry was to preach. He said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43). Isaiah prophesied about Jesus being anointed to "bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to announce that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, he will give beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair. For the Lord has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory. They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities long ago destroyed. They will revive them, though they have been empty for many generations." (Isaiah 61:1-4)

- When Jesus called the twelve apostles to Himself, He said that the purpose of this calling was so that "he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14). Matthew 10:5-7 "Jesus sent the twelve disciples out with these instructions: "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but only to the people of Israel—

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God's lost sheep. Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

- Paul insists that the gospel will only be spread through preaching. "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?" (Romans 10:14).

- Paul tells Timothy: "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the Word!" (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

WHO SHOULD PRECH?

EVERY BELEIVER IS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Jesus gave a commission to everyone to go and preach the Gospel of Christ. Matthew 28:19 "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." He spoke of the believer becoming a witness of His Gospel and going and telling others about the Gospel of Christ. Acts 1:8 "But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." It therefore is the responsibility of every believer to be engaged in preaching and telling the Gospel of Christ. However this preaching referred to in these two verses is an informal means of talking.

THE APPOINTMENT OF SPECIFIC PREACHERS

Neh. 8:1-8 "all the people assembled together as one person at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had given for Israel to obey. So on October 8 Ezra the priest brought the scroll of the law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand. He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand. All the people paid close attention to the Book of the Law. Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform that had been made for the occasion. To his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. To his left stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet. Then Ezra praised the Lord, the great God, and all the people chanted, "Amen! Amen!" as they lifted their hands toward heaven. Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Now the Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah—instructed the people who were

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standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage."

In the times of Nehemiah and Ezra, God raised up people who would be responsible in preaching, teaching and reading the Written Word of God to the people. This practice of the reading of the Law became part of the Jewish tradition and was done within the synagogue.

During the early Church God raised up the five fold ministry to carry the duty and the responsibility of teaching those who believed. Ephes. 4:11-13 "He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ." The five fold ministry was to serve the local church to equip the saints for ministry. We notice in 1 Thes. 2:9-10 that Paul and his companions worked to proclaim the Gospel to those who were in the Thessalonica Church. "Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that our expenses would not be a burden to anyone there as we preached God's Good News among you. You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were pure and honest and faultless toward all of you believers."

Paul told Timothy to pay heed to public reading, exhortation, and teaching:

- 1 Tim. 4:6 "If you explain this to the brothers and sisters, you will be doing your duty as a worthy servant of Christ Jesus, one who is fed by the message of faith and the true teaching you have followed."

- 1 Tim. 4:11 "Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them."

- 1 Tim. 4:13 "Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them."

- 1 Tim. 4:16 "Keep a close watch on yourself and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right, and God will save you and those who hear you."

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THE VALUE OF PREACHING

1 Cor. 1:18-25 "I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognize this message as the very power of God. As the Scriptures say, "I will destroy human wisdom and discard their most brilliant ideas." So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made them all look foolish and has shown their wisdom to be useless nonsense. Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never find him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save all who believe. God's way seems foolish to the Jews because they want a sign from heaven to prove it is true. And it is foolish to the Greeks because they believe only what agrees with their own wisdom. So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended, and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the mighty power of God and the wonderful wisdom of God. This "foolish" plan of God is far wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is far stronger than the greatest of human strength."

Words are powerful! Proverbs 25:11 "Timely advice is as lovely as golden apples in a silver basket."

One of the great themes of the Bible is the connection between God's Word and life. When God gives life, he does so through the power of his Word. Even in the very beginning, God gave life to the universe by speaking. "Let there be light," he said, "and there was light," (Genesis 1:3).

In Ezekiel 37 we notice that when Ezekiel called the bones to life it was done through the spoken word: "So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. . . . I prophesized as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. (Ezekiel 37:7, 10). God's people are given life through the power of his Word.

Paul makes the same point in Romans 10, "Faith comes by hearing," he says (Romans 10:17). No one comes to faith in Christ simply by looking at the world and drawing their own conclusions. They come to believe in Christ when they hear the gospel message preached to them. This is the power of God's Word that brings God's people to life. Because of that, God's Word is central to the identity and mission of his people. Christianity is not primarily about spiritual experience or warm community or even acts of service—though all those things are important in their way. First and foremost, Christianity is about God's people hearing God's Word and responding to it in faith.

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THE GOAL OF PREACHING

To produce love: "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5)

To prevent apostasy: "In reminding the brethren of these things, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following" (1Timothy 4:6). The "things" to which refers relate to the warning at the beginning of an apostasy in the latter times (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

To bring conviction: In Acts 2, Peter accused his audience of killing the Son of God. As a result, these people were "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37).

To keep blameless: "Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach" (1Timothy 5:7). The purpose of preaching is to instruct the believer in things not only pertaining to their spiritual growth but also to their social responsibilities and their moral values.

To reconcile man with God: The importance of preaching is further emphasised when we realize that the act of proclaiming the Gospel to others becomes the means by which many are saved.

- Romans 10:17 "Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news—the Good News about Christ."

- 2 Cor. 5:20 "We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!"

- 1 Thes. 2:13 "And we will never stop thanking God that when we preached his message to you, you didn't think of the words we spoke as being just our own. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it was. And this word continues to work in you who believe."

Biblical preaching understands the human predicament that in Adam, all have sinned, that sin has separated everyone from God, that no one can justify himself before God, and that without Christ everyone is doomed to suffer the penalty of eternal torment and separation from God. Biblical preaching understands that in spite of sin, God loves the world and wants everyone freed from sin, that he therefore gave his son Jesus Christ to die on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of those who believe and obey him, and that believers may not only be saved from eternal torment and separation from God, but may also live eternally with God.

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To explain the Scriptures: In Acts 7, one-third of Stephen's sermon was from the Old Testament. His audience knew what the verses said, but he had to explain what they meant and how it applied to them. When Philip preached in Acts 8, he explained Isaiah 53. The eunuch wanted to know "of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" (Acts 8:34). After Artaxerxes released the Israelites, Ezra, a scribe and priest of God, read the "Book of the Law of Moses" to the people. With aid from the Levites, Ezra "helped the people to understand the law" (Neh. 8:7). "So they read distinctly from the book, in the law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading" (Neh. 9:8).

Present Christ as the only hope of the World: The first thing Paul did in every city he visited was to lift up Christ and set Him before men as their only hope. Paul told the Corinthians he "determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Salvation does not come by the preaching of politics or moral platitudes — our hope is in heaven.

To translate the Gospel into modern terms: To make the Gospel understandable and practical to modern man. The terms that were used in the times of Jesus and the Bible times are not always clearly understood by those who are not farmers etc. We live in a different world as when they were written. Therefore the responsibility of the preaching is to bring a clear understanding of the Bible.

To show the relevance of the Gospel to human situations: To show that the same teachings are applicable and very beneficial if we listen and obey them. The doctrines of God do not change – God's Words are sure and stand forever they do not change.

To persuade men to believe the Gospel and to live by it: The Gospel "beseeches" and "entreats" a person to make a decision in their lives to walk in obedience with the Word that is spoken.

To provide the hearer with a message that will be able to meet their needs for today. Luke 24:32 "They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts feel strangely warm as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?""

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WHAT IS TO BE PREACHED?

The Gospel! The gospel means the "good news" from God about God, about men, about life and about redemption. The sermon that is to be preached needs to be thoroughly biblical:

- So that it might be authoritative: Luke 4:36 "Amazed, the people exclaimed, "What authority and power this man's words possess! Even evil spirits obey him and flee at his command!" Matthew 7:29 "for he taught as one who had real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law."

- So that is might be powerful: Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—Jews first and also Gentiles." 1 Thes. 1:5 "For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know that the way we lived among you was further proof of the truth of our message."

- So that the truth can be preached: Psalm 119:160 "All your words are true; all your just laws will stand forever." Psalm 119:142 "Your justice is eternal, and your law is perfectly true." Psalm 119:151 "But you are near, O Lord, and all your commands are true." Psalm 33:4 "For the word of the Lord holds true, and everything he does is worthy of our trust."

- So that it can bring freedom to the hearer: John 8:31-32 "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you keep obeying my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- So that it can accomplish all that it has been sent forth to do: Isaiah 55:10-11 ""The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."

- So that it can be profitable for the hearer: 2 Tim. 3:15-17 "You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.

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- So that it might sanctify the hearer: John 17:17 "Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth." John 17:19 "And I give myself entirely to you so they also might be entirely yours." When it comes to the task of preaching, there is perhaps no better outline than that found in 2 Timothy 3:15-17 "You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do." Here we have it asserted that the whole Bible is "theopneustos", that is, God-breathed, and given so that it may lead to faith in Christ, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. This must be the primary purpose: for the hearers may consider the person and claims of Christ and respond to Him in faith, relying wholly upon Him for their eternal salvation. But it does not end here: every believer then must take heed of the Bible being preached because therein they have the means to be: instructed in the truth; reproved; corrected in their moral and intellectual failures; and finally trained in righteous living.

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PART ONE: INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this lesson is to ensure that the person who will be delivering the sermon teach first knows how to effectively interpret the bible. Unless they have an understanding of the dynamics of Bible study they will not be able to develop a sermon that will effectively speak to the needs of man and the solution of God for those needs. This session will answer the questions:

- What resources will I need to prepare my sermons?
- What questions should I be asking as I am reading the Bible?
- How many different methods are there in Bible study?
- Which method is the best method for study and sermon preparation?

THE BIBLICAL INTERPRETER

PERSONAL PREPARATION:

A personal relationship with Christ. In order to be a successful interpreter, you need to be someone who has experienced the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor 2:11 says "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

A positive persuasion concerning the Word of God. Do you believe that the Bible is the unique and inspired Word of God? The interpreter needs to believe without a doubt, that the Bible is the Word of God. There must never be a question mark put to any of the Scriptures that are discussed, studied or to be interpreted. (De 4:2, Pr 30:6). Admit the Word. Submit to the Word. Commit the Word to memory. Transmit the Word to others. The Bible needs to be believed as being:

- Divinely inspired (2 Tim 3:16, 1 Cor 14:37, 2 Peter 1:20-21))
- Infallible (Ps 119:128, Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18)
- Never aging
- Life transforming

A passion and a desire to know the Bible. Ps 119:72 says "And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved." (See also Jer 15:16). The Word of God is life and light to the believer, it should not be viewed as being dry and without substance.

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PRACTICAL PREPARATION:

Not only must the preacher and Bible interpreter make the necessary spiritual and personal preparations before effective Bible interpretation is done, but it is also necessary that tools and resources are readily available to the preacher. Tools are helpful in aiding Bible interpretation. For example:

Own a good Bible. Study Bibles are an important part in studying and good for Biblical interpretation. Examples of some good study Bibles are NIV Study Bible, Life Application Study Bible and the Thomson Chain Reference Study Bible. When selecting the Bible translations that you will be using in your sermons, keep in mind the following:

- The size of the print: It is easy to have a larger print to read from when you are preaching than a bible with a small print.

- The translation: Be careful to choose a translation that is easy to understand and one in which the congregation is familiar. New King James Version's are a popular Bible and are used by many people in the congregation and therefore when the preacher uses this Bible it is easy for most of the congregation to follow. This is not to say that no other translation should be used, but be careful when using paraphrase Bibles. Ensure that the Bible you are using is as close to its original meaning as possible (American Standard, KJV, NKJV).

Own tools that will aid in the interpretation. Tools that are helpful in study of the Bible are:

- Concordance: A concordance helps find references for a scripture in the Bible. It is an alphabetical index of words used in the Bible with a listing of verses where each word appears. A concordance is useful for, finding a scripture reference, conducting a word search and accomplishing a topic search. The following are good concordances: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, Cruden's Concordance and Young's Analytical Concordance

- Bible Dictionary: A Bible Dictionary defines words, topics, names and places in the Bible. They are used in helping with topical Bible studies and can provide information that is relevant for background of the scripture (for example the manners and customs of those times).

- Commentaries: These books are helpful in interpreting and understanding the Bible. They are a summary of the original language, ancient history and culture as well as the overall scope and message of the Bible.

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- Computer Resources: There are many Bible programs that are thorough and very speedy in providing you with information that may take hours to find in all the book resources that you have. Not all Bible Computer Software is expensive. "Esword" is a computer software that can be downloaded for free. 2

- Bible introductions: These books look at the background to each of the books found in the Bible. For example: Who wrote the book? When was it written? How does it relate to other books in the Bible?

It is definitely worthwhile for the preacher to have available to him/her as many resources as possible. Be diligent in building up your own resource library and storage system in which you can store information that you have studied and researched (filing cabinet, computer files).

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2 http://www.e-sword.net/downloads.html

THE APPROACH TO EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Effective Bible Study is a systematic and comprehensive program of scriptural study, which leads to a clearer understanding of God's Word, the Holy Bible. There is a vast difference between Bible study and Bible reading. Understanding the true meaning of what you have read is dependent upon effective Bible Study. It can only be accomplished when you keep in mind that the Bible is one complete work that begins with Genesis and ends with Revelation. The Testaments are not isolated from each other but are intertwined. They are parts of a single spiritual document, as are all the books of Scripture.

HOW CAN WE APPROACH THE BIBLE?

When reading a portion of scripture, there are five questions that we need to ask ourselves.

1. **OBSERVATION: WHAT IS BEING SAID?**

Choose a text or portion of scripture that you are interested in studying. Once you have made this selection, read through the passage several times over not being distracted by further study yet but allowing the words of the passage to sink into your spirit. There are three levels of observation that are to be done with the passage that you have selected:

A Flyover View:

This is the observation of the overall landscape of the text by reading it through in its entirety in one sitting. This means that as you read through you will become familiar with the text in general, the main headings of the text and the main verses in each new section.

For example, if you were to do a flyover view of Ephesians 2 you would firstly read the whole section through. Then you would look at the main headings of the chapter:

- "By grace through faith",
- "Brought near by His Blood",
- "Christ our peace" and
- "Christ our Cornerstone".

Secondly, you would look at the important verses in each section:

- verse 1 and 8,
- verse 13,
- verse 14, 16 and 18,
- verse 22

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A Ground View:

Once you have received a general understanding of the text by doing a flyover view, it is then necessary to focus on questioning the passage in more detail. For example:

- Who is involved in these verses? Is there a particular person or character that you are familiar with? Is God mentioned in the verse?
- What are the people doing in this passage? Is there anything significant from their actions that should be noted? Are they singing, praying, sinning?
- Where are they? Where are they going?
- What is the setting? What is the literary form of the text (narrative, poetic, letter)?
- What are the main ideas in the text?

If we were to look again at Ephesians 2 and answer these questions they would tell us more about the chapter:

- "You". Paul was speaking to the believers of Ephesus who had received Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Christ and God are both mentioned in these verses. This "you" also refers to us who are saved.
- No, there is no specific action of the people in this passage. Paul is addressing those who are saved and teaching them what Christ has done on their behalf.
- They are in Ephesus
- It is a letter
- The main themes of this chapter are the unconditional love and grace of God found in Christ who even though we were undeserving and unable to work for our salvation has brought us close to the Father and has brought us peace and made us to be His temple.

When going through this view, be careful that you do not loose yourself in too much detail. This type of observation is meant to help you identify the main themes which you will later study in more detail.

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Digging Deeper View:

The next time that you read through the passage after you have answered important questions of the ground view is to dig deeper into the passage of scripture and look for:

- Repeated phrases and words
- Peculiar words and phrases
- Comparisons and Contrasts
- Figurative Expressions
- Anything that seems strange that you do not completely understand
- Picture yourself in the scene.

If we were to refer back to our example – Ephesians 2, we would note:

- The repeated words and phrases of this chapter are "dead", "alive", "grace", "flesh"
- The contrasts are: dead and alive, grace and works, aliens and access,
- A figurative expression here would be "habitation of God in the Spirit"
- As a believer the same blessings that the Ephesian believers experienced is mine as well – I am loved, I am saved through grace, I have been made alive, I am His workmanship to do, I have been granted access to the Father, I am at peace with others and am being built up in Him.

2. INTERPRETATION: WHAT IS BEING MEANT BY THIS PORTION OF SCRIPTURE?

Psalm 119:34 "Give me understanding and I will obey your law; I will put it into practice with all my heart."

Once you have followed the three steps in observation, it is now time to regard the passage as though you were a detective looking for clues. Unless the passage is correctly understood no real application can be made. Here the Bible interpreter will be looking for a clearer understanding on:

- What the massage means?
- What the author was trying to say in the passage?
- What the theological significance of the portion of scripture is?

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- What is the context of the passage? When looking at a portion of scripture ensure that you understand the background to it. It may be necessary to look at reasons why the passage was written. What precedes the chapter or verse? What was the intent of the author?

- What is significant about the grammar that is used in the passage? What verbs are used? What is there significance?

- How does the interpretation balance with the rest of the Bible? Remember: always interpret the Bible with the Bible.

If we were to return to our example, we would note the following:

- The theme of the passage is that salvation is not works, but through grace. Therefore in reviewing it we note that we do not have to work for His love and His salvation – it is a gift we receive

- Context of the passage (v19-22): The grand Temple of Dianne was found in the city of Ephesus. It was so glamorous that Ephesus became a tourist city where people came to look at the temple. Paul however was speaking to the believers here to remember that Christ's temple is not a physical structure but it is being spiritually built by and on the foundation of Jesus. (See Romans 12:1-2, 1 Cor 6:19-20)

- The verbs used in this portion of scripture are: "made", "raised", "created". Notice that these verbs are not in the present tense nor are they dependent on an action that we need to take. They are accomplished in Christ not by ourselves. They are in the past tense therefore it has already been accomplished. We cannot "make" ourselves alive, we cannot "raise" ourselves from the dead and we cannot "create" our lives into His temple. It is, and has been accomplished in Christ.

Pitfalls in interpreting scripture:

- Misreading the text: It is for this reason that when making observations, the Bible interpreter should read through the portion of scripture several times before interpretation takes place.

- Distorting the text: Ensure that you do not try and make the text saying something that it does not say. Do not read into the text what you would like it to say.

- Contradicting the text: "Did God really say?"

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- Relativism: This is the belief in the changeable standards of the Bible. The belief that concepts such as right and wrong, good and evil, or truth and falsehood are not absolute but that they can change from culture to culture and situation to situation. The Bible does not change its meaning overtime and therefore we need to ensure that we keep to the original meaning of the passage.

3. CORRELATION: WHERE ELSE IS IT BEING SAID OR EXPLAINED?

When you are correlating the passage that you are reading, you bring the verses into the light of the truth that has been taught in the rest of the Bible. Therefore during this portion of study it would be important to do some cross-referencing to ensure that the interpretations that you have made are theologically correct. Look at the main themes that you have written down, do a brief topical study in other portions of writings (by the same author and by another author) and decide whether the theme is consistent with the whole Bible.

For example, if we were to look at two themes in this chapter we note that the interpretations that we have received through our study is consistent with the rest of the teachings in the Bible:

- Being saved by grace: Ephes. 2:8 "God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God." 2 Tim. 1:9 "It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan long before the world began—to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus." Romans 4:16 "So that's why faith is the key! God's promise is given to us as a free gift. And we are certain to receive it, whether or not we follow Jewish customs, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe."

- Being given access to the Father: Ephes. 2:13 "But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ." Hebrews 10:19-20 "And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. This is the new, life-giving way that Christ has opened up for us through the sacred curtain, by means of his death for us."

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4. APPLICATION: WHAT WILL I DO WITH WHAT IS BEING SAID

Once you have received an understanding of what the text is all about, it is then important to apply this truth to your life spiritually. Studying without application will not result in change and therefore application should be made.

Application is the step between knowing what the Bible says and doing what it says. Deut. 5:1 "Moses called all the people of Israel together and said, "Listen carefully to all the laws and regulations I am giving you today. Learn them and be sure to obey them!" There are three things that are necessary in application:

Listen: Proverbs 2:1 "My child, listen to me and treasure my instructions." Hebrews 2:1 "So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it." Luke 8:18 "So be sure to pay attention to what you hear. To those who are open to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But to those who are not listening, even what they think they have will be taken away from them."

Learn: When we listen to God, we will begin to learn and understand the reasons behind His words. In order to grow we need to understand His words. Proverbs 2:2-9 "Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and understanding. Search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure. Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of justice and protects those who are faithful to him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will know how to find the right course of action every time."

Obey: Most important we need to obey, put into action, what we have heard and learned from God. Obedience to Christ comes from love for Him. Psalm 119:2 "Happy are those who obey his decrees and search for him with all their hearts." Luke 11:28 "He replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." 1 John 2:3-5 "And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying his commandments. If someone says, "I belong to God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth. But those who obey God's word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him."

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Questions to ask that will help in application:

- Is there a command that needs to be obeyed?
- Is there an example that I should or should not follow?
- Is there a sin that I need to avoid?
- Is there something that I need to be thankful for?
- Is there a promise that I can call my own?
- Is there a blessing that I can enjoy?
- Is there a failure or a success that I can learn from?
- Is there a victory that I can win?
- Is there a new thought about God that I have learnt?
- Is there a prayer that I can repeat?

In our example we notice the following:

We need to walk in the good works that God has prepared for us (v10) Col. 1:10 "Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better."

Philip. 3:12 "I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be."

5. MEDITATION: HOW CAN I KEEP THIS IN MIND?

Deut. 6:6-9 "And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Col. 3:16 "Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts."

Meditation involves,

- Praying the truths over your life,
- Praising God for the benefits, promises and benefits,
- Memorizing scriptures

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THE DIFFERENT BIBLE STUDY METHODS

OBJECTIVE

In his book, Bible Study Methods, Rick Warren lists twelve different methods in studying the Bible. In this lesson we will be looking at each of these methods and will answer the following questions:

- What are the different methods in which I can study the Bible?
- How can each of these methods be done?
- Can more than one method be used in studying one particular portion of scripture?

1. DEVOTIONAL METHOD

This is the type of bible study method that is used during your quiet devotions with God. It is also the basis of all the other methods of Bible study discussed in this section.

STEPS TO FOLLOW:

- Pray for insight before you begin reading and interpreting the Scripture. The Bible says that it is the Holy Spirit who will lead us into all truth and therefore we need to ask Him to help us.

- Mediate on the verses that you have chosen to read. Meditation means taking a thought and thinking it through over and over in the mind like a cow would chew its cud. This can be done through visualizing the scene in your mind, rephrasing the verse into your own words and personalizing the passage to include words such as "I", "me" and "my".

- Write out the personal application of the verse. Knowledge of the Word of God requires action. Psalm 119:59-60 "I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your statutes. I will hurry, without lingering, to obey your commands." James 1:22 "And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself." When writing the personal application of the passage, remember that it needs to be personal, practical, possible and provable. It needs to be personal and therefore should be written in the first person using, "I", "me", "my" etc. It should be practical in that it should cause a particular action. It should be possible meaning that it should be something that you are able to accomplish. It should be provable and therefore you should set a follow up system to check your progress in seeing whether application is being made and how effective it is.

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- Memorize a key verse from your study

Example:

Proverbs 4:23-25 "Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do. Avoid all perverse talk; stay far from corrupt speech. Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you."

- Read through portion of scripture several times
- Look at key themes in the verses chosen: guarding your heart, being careful of what you say and looking straight ahead.
- Choose what it is that you would like to focus on in these verses – the mouth
- Find other scriptures that deal with this thought. Is this consistent with the rest of the Bible? Yes!

Your speech is a result of what is in your heart: Matthew 12:34-35 "You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. A good person produces good words from a good heart, and an evil person produces evil words from an evil heart."

Avoid using your mouth for "death" (Prov 18:21): Psalm 39:1 "I said to myself, "I will watch what I do and not sin in what I say. I will curb my tongue when the ungodly are around me." Psalm 141:3 "Take control of what I say, O Lord, and keep my lips sealed." Col. 3:8 "But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language."

- Choose a scripture to memorize that will help you to remember the truth learnt in the devotional. Usually this will be the scripture that you are studying however it can also be one of the references that you read whilst meditating on the thought.

ASSIGNMENT

Write out an example of a devotional bible study following the steps that are provided in this lesson. Complete the following questions when you have completed your study:

- Were you familiar with this type of Bible study?
- Did you learn anything new and have now applied it to your studying?
- Will this method of study aid in sermon preparation? Why or why not?

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2. CHAPTER SUMMARY METHOD

The purpose of the chapter summary method is to gain a general understanding of the contents of a chapter by reading it through at least five times, asking question and then summarizing the main points. The advantages of this method are:

- To gain a general understanding of the contents of chapters within the Book and how it relates to the rest of the Bible
- To quickly move through the Bible by not doing too intense private study on each chapter.
- To grasp a general view of the whole Bible

When using this method it is important that you use a Bible that is not a study Bible. The purpose of this is that your study does not merely regurgitate someone else's notes but that they are your own thoughts that have been gained by reading through the whole chapter on your own without stopping and then jotting down the main ideas that you have read.

STEPS TO FOLLOW:

- **Caption:** The first step in making an assessment of your selected chapter, after reading it through several times, is to provide the chapter with your own heading.
- **Contents:** Describe, summarise and outline the main thoughts that have been noticed in the chapter as you have read it through. All the major points that are listed in the chapter should be listed in your study material.
- **Chief person/people:** List the most important people / person in the chapter and ask yourself the following questions concerning them – Who are they? Why were they mentioned? What is the significance about being mentioned in this chapter? How do they relate to the Bible?
- **Choice verse:** Select a verse that you feel summarizes the ideas that have been listed in your main thoughts.
- **Crucial key words:** List those words in the chapter that have been mentioned more than once in the chapter. Ask yourself the following – Why are these verses important to the whole idea of the chapter? Is the mention of these words consistent in meaning throughout the chapter? Are there any words used that have similar meaning to other words, for example if love was the

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key word, affection could be a word that is similar in meaning to the main idea. Are there any contrasts in words eg. light and dark?

- **Challenges:** Are there any statements within the chapter that you have found difficult to understand or have challenged your belief system? Is there a question that you would like to make a note of that you will be able to answer when you are using a more indepth method of study?

- **Cross reference:** List as many verses as possible (from the same book or from the other portions in the Bible) which are able to clarify what has been learnt in this chapter?

- **Christ seen:** Discuss the different ways in which Christ has been symbolically represented, typified, pictured or shown in the chapter.

- **Central lesson and conclusion:** Write down the major principles, insights and lessons that you have been able to learn from this chapter and ask yourself in what way you will be able to apply this lesson to your life.

For examples:

Read through Galatians 5 several times:

Caption: Walk and live in the Spirit of God

Contents:

- Stand in the liberty that you have received not in the works of man
- Allow your faith in God to be demonstrated through love that you show towards others
- This love should be evidenced in your attitude and actions. Instead of living for the flesh you now live according to the Spirit

Chief people: The Galatian Church

Choice verse: Galatians 5:25 "If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

Crucial words:

- Liberty (v1, 13)
- Love (v6, 13, 14,22)
- Walk (v16, 25
- Flesh (v15-21, 24)
- Spirit (v16, 22,)

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Challenges: No specific challenges

Cross references:

- 1 Cor 13:2-4
- 1 Cor 16:14
- Col 3:14

Christ seen: Christ is seen in this chapter as being the Liberator

Central lesson: Walk in love which is walking in the Spirit

Conclusion: I need to put aside all natural and fleshy means of speaking and acting and I need to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in my life

3. CHARACTER QUALITY METHOD

This method of study is very beneficial to the practical application of godly principles in our lives. It is part of the growth and maturity of the believer to develop Christ-like character. In this study, the Bible interpreter will read a selection of scripture with the purpose of identifying positive or negative traits of the people mentioned so that they can learn from these characters. In using this method of study it is advisable to use tools and resources that will help. For example: a study Bible, Bible dictionary and a concordance.

STEPS:

- Identify the character quality that you would like to study.
- Find out the English definition of this quality by looking at the definition in an English dictionary.
- Identify what the opposite character trait would be. Write down the antonyms.
- Do a simple word study on the words that you have identified. The Strong's Concordance and the Topical study Bible will be able to aid in this study
- Look up the references mentioned in the concordance.
- After reading through the scriptures on each trait, ask yourself the following questions: Does this character trait benefit my life? What are the consequences of displaying this trait? What promises are related to this trait?

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What warnings or judgments are related to this trait? What did Jesus say about this trait? What produces this trait in my life? Do I need more or less of this trait in my life?

- Find a person in the Bible who has displayed this trait. Write down the effects of this trait in their life?

- Write down one memory verse from your cross referencing that you would like to memorize.

- Select a situation or relationship in your life where you would like to work on this trait in your life. Plan a special project where you can see the development of character in your life.

Example:

Name the character trait: Pride. Pride is the cultivation, preservation or exalting of self. It is a protecting of self. Pride is commitment to self. It is building up ourselves in our own eyes or in the eyes of others. Pride is an excessive belief in one's superiority, worth, merit.

Name the opposite trait: Humility

Do a simple word study: Pride: A sample of Hebrew words include: Noun ga'avah, majesty, pride, haughtiness (Ps 10.2; 31.18, 23; Pr 29.23). Adjective ge'eh proud (Job 40.11-12; Jer 48.29; Pr 15.25). Verb gabah, be high, be exhalted, be tall (Ps 131.1; Prov 18.12). Verb, rum be high, exalted, rise (Prov 6.17; Ps 131.1). A sample of Greek words include: Noun `uper8phania, arrogance, haughtiness, pride (Mk 7.22). Adjective `uper8phanos, arrogant, haughty, proud (Lk 1.51; 2 Tim 3.2; Jms 4.6; 1 Pet 5.5). Verb tuphow in the passive, be puffed up, conceited, (1 Tim 3.6; 6.4; 2 Tim 3.4). Verb phusiow, to blow up, puff up, make proud or arrogant, become puffed up or conceited, (1 Cor 4.6; 4.18; 5.2; 8.1; 13.4; Col 2.18).

Do a cross reference of both traits:

- "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate." Proverbs 8: 13

- "When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom." Proverbs 11: 2

- "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." Proverbs 16: 5

- "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is

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better to be of a humble spirit than to divide the spoil with the proud." Proverbs 16: 18 - 19

- "A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor." Proverbs 29: 23

- "You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you clothe yourself with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." I Peter 5: 5 - 6

Do a biographical study: Devil was proud (Isaiah 14)

Find a memory verse: 1 Peter 5:5-6

How will you make this practical – Walk in humility as Jesus would. His humility was demonstrated by His willingness to serve and not by superiority (Philip 2)

4. THEMATIC STUDY METHOD

This is the method which is used to study themes that run through the Bible. The purpose of this study is to trace the theme through the Bible from it's first mention till the book of Revelations and then to write down the conclusions that you have made. The thematic study method is very similar to the topical study method however it is less comprehensive. For example: In a topical bible study you would study the theme "prayers" however in a thematic study you would be more focused and will concentrate more on the prayers of Jesus. The advantages of this study as opposed to the topical method is that it is less intensive and therefore requires less use of tools and time yet it still provides a preview of the topic.

STEPS:

- Select the theme that you are interested in. It is always best to start with something that is short and too the point otherwise you may loose focus.

- List all the verses that you would be studying on the theme during your study. The use of a concordance is necessary.

- Decide on what questions you would like to ask concerning the theme.

- After you have studied and asked questions of each verse, summarize your findings of the topic/ theme.

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- Write out a personal application to your thematic study.

Example:

Select the theme: Jesus' definition of discipleship

List all the verses that you will be studying. For example:

- Matt 10:24-25
- Luke 14:26-28
- John 15:8
- John 13:34-35
- John 8:31-32
- John 15

Decide on what questions you would like answered by this study:

- What are the characteristics of a disciple?
- What are the consequences of being a disciple?

Read through each verse and make a note of your findings. For example: Matthew 10:24-25 "A student is not greater than the teacher. A servant is not greater than the master. The student shares the teacher's fate. The servant shares the master's fate. And since I, the master of the household, have been called the prince of demons, how much more will it happen to you, the members of the household!" A disciple will be like Jesus. A disciple will be treated in the same manner as Christ was.

John 8:31-32 "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you keep obeying my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." A disciple abides in the Word. The Word of God sets the disciple free.

Conclusions from the study: The results of being a disciple of Jesus will be – being persecuted bringing glory to God and knowing the Word of God.

Practical Application: As a disciple of God I will establish a regular quiet time in the Word of God

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5. BIOGRAPHICAL METHOD

The Bible is a record of God's dealings with men and women. Through these dealings, we today are able to learn from the mistakes, failures and success of those who lived many years ago.

Romans 15:4 "Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises."

1 Cor. 10:11 "All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close."

STEPS:

- Select the person who you would like to study. Ensure that you do not confuse people who have the same name. Example: King Zechariah and the prophet Zechariah.
- Using your concordance, make a list of all the references where this person is mentioned.
- Write down the first impressions of the person.
- Make a chronological outline of the person using the various scriptures that you listed previously.
- Asking questions, gain more insight into the spiritual life, nature, reputation, character, background, relationship and personality of the person.
- Identify some character traits from the life of the person.
- Show how biblical truths have been demonstrated in the person's life.
- Summarise the main lesson of the life of the person
- Write out the personal application from your study

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Example:

Select the person: Stephen

List of references: Acts 6:3-8:2, Acts 11:19, 22:20

First impressions: Stephen was an early Christian who had a good testimony in the Church.

Chronological outline:

- Chosen by the early leaders (Acts 6:5)
- Wide ministry – waited tables (6:2, 5), performed miracles (6:8) and preached powerfully (6:10)
- Was persecuted
- Had a ministry after his death. The Church spread because of his life (Acts 8:2-4, 11, 19)

Ask questions: What was his spiritual life like? What character was displayed in his life? Why was he chosen for leadership? What was his response to persecution? What was his attitude?

- He was chosen because he was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, of faith and full of God's grace and power. He was familiar with the scriptures.
- When persecuted he did not deny Christ but kept his cool and spoke the truth witnessing of Christ.
- He had a forgiving attitude

Important qualities in his life: He was Spirit filled, wise, faithful, available to God, knowledgeable, brave, bold, forgiving

Main lesson of his life: Willing to die for Chris

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6. TOPICAL METHOD

Topical study method traces a topic through the Bible much like that of the thematic method. The importance of this type of study is that the Bible interpreter will be able to study the Bible in a systematic and logical order concerning a topic.

STEPS:

- Compile a list of words both antonyms and synonyms for the topic that you have selected to study. For example if you were to study pride, you would study the following synonyms – arrogance, haughtiness. The antonyms for this word would be humility and servanthood.

- Collect bible references for the words that you have listed above.

- Consider each of the "mini" topics separately by looking at the cross references of these words.

- Compare the group references by categorizing those references that are similar. For example if we were studying faith we would group the references in the following: reasons why we need faith, the blessings of faith, the obstacles of faith, doubting and unbelief, example of men of faith, examples of men of unbelief.

- Condense your study in an outline. Using the groups mentioned above, write out a short outline of the topic. Summarize what you have learnt through this study.

- Conclude your study by making it practical and personal.

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

Using the steps mentioned above, prepare a topical study on "fear"

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7. WORD STUDY

The Bible was originally written the three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. Because these languages appear to be more expressive than the English language, it is necessary at times to prepare a word study where the bible interpreter will study the true meaning of the words in a particular verse.

Rick Warren in his book, Bible Study Methods says, "The Word study takes a microscopic look at the origin, definition, occurrences and uses of a particular word, especially as it related to the context of a passage of scripture. The purpose is to learn as precisely and comprehensively as possible what the biblical writer meant by the word he used" (page 133).

STEPS:

- Choose the word that you would like to study.
- Find it's English definition
- Compare translations. Sometimes one word in one Bible may be translated as another word in another translation.
- Write down the definition of the original word by looking at the Hebrew and Greek words.
- Using the concordance see how many times the word has occurred in both the Old and the New Testament.
- Find the root meaning of the word.
- Find out under what circumstances the word was used in the Bible. Did the word's usage only occur in one Testament? How did the usage of the Word change from one Testament to another? Under what cultural circumstances did the word get used?
- Write out a personal application of the study.

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8. BOOK BACKGROUND METHOD

The purpose of a book background study is to gain a general overview of a particular book of the Bible. In this study the Bible interpreter will be able to appreciate the historical events that took place in the book, the culture of the time in which the book was written, the political environment of the book and the archaeological findings to the book that reveal the accuracy of the details found in the book.

STEPS:

- Choose the book that you would like to gain a general overview of.
- Gather the references tools that will be necessary in helping you complete this study.
- Obtain insight by looking at the geography of the book. Become familiar with the location and the areas in the vicinity.
- Gain insight from the history leading up to the purpose of the book. When was the book written? What major events occurred before the book was written?
- Review the culture of the time and discuss how the culture influenced the people that are mentioned in the book.
- Research the political situation of the book.
- Summarize your research and ensure that you keep your study material for later use when studying the books chapter by chapter and verse by verse. This study provides a vital element to your future studies and understanding of the book.

For example:

The book: Ezra

Insight in geography: At the start of the book the people were in the land of the Persians. They eventually travelled to Jerusalem which was in the land of Canaan.

Insight into the history: The people of Judah had been taken captive by the Babylonians as per the prophecies of the great prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah etc because of their disobedience to God. When the Babylonians took them captive they destroyed the Temple and burnt down the walls of Jerusalem.

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Now after being in captivity for 70 years, the King of Persia releases them to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple and restore their worship to God.

Cultural situation: It was the norm when armies defeated another city for the nation to take captive those who were in the cities to be slaves. Here we see that the people who were taken captive by Babylon under their numerous attacks were taken as slaves to their city.

Political situation: As per the prophecies of Daniel, Babylon was to be punished for their destruction of the people of God and therefore God raised up the Persian king to destroy them. It was the Persian King, Cyrus, who released the nation from captivity

9. THE BOOK SURVEY

Rick Warren identifies this type of study as being:

- A survey: Gaining a bird's eye view of the book
- An analysis: Studying everything in each chapter in detail
- A synthesis: Putting everything back together and drawing a conclusion.

STEPS:

- Read the book through in one sitting. Be careful to use a translation that is easily understood so that you will be able to read it quickly without have to reread certain portion.

- Make notes of what you have read by writing down your first impressions and thoughts. When making notes consider the following: the key words in the book, the key verse, the literary style, the emotional tone of the book, the main themes that run through the book, the major people listed in the book and the obvious divisions.

- Do a background study as per our previous study.

- Make a chart that lists the contents of each of the chapters of the book.

- Make an outline of the book.

- Write out personal application that you can receive from the book.

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For example: The book of Ezra

First impressions: The book is about the people of God returning from exile and rebuilding the Temple of God. Main themes: Rebuilding the Temple and spiritual restoration of the people returning from exile.

Key words: Word of God, temple

Key verse: Ezra 9:4 "Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel came and sat with me because of this unfaithfulness of his people. And I sat there utterly appalled until the time of the evening sacrifice." Ezra 10:3 "Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children. We will follow the advice given by you and by the others who respect the commands of our God. We will obey the law of God."

Key people: Zerubbabel, Ezra, King Cyrus, Haggai and Zechariah

Major divisions: National restoration – Rebuilding the Temple of God. Spiritual restoration – The Word of God and Repentance

Chart of each chapter:

National Restoration	Spiritual Restoration
Returning to Jerusalem(1-2) Rebuilding the Temple (3) Resisting the enemy (4-5) Resuming to rebuild (6)	Ezra, the man of God (7-8) Confession (9) Cleansing (10)

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10. CHAPTER ANALYSIS METHOD

The purpose of this method of study is to gain a more detailed understanding of the material that is found in each of the chapters of the books of the Bible. This type of study is far more in-depth than the book study method that was mentioned previously.

STEPS:

- Read through the chapter that you want to study and write out a chapter summary and outline of the main themes and points in the chapter.

- As you read through the chapter again make a list of any observations that you make by asking yourself,

    - "What is this portion of this chapter actually saying?"
    - "What did the author mean when he wrote this?"
    - "What is the meaning of this?"
    - "What is the implication of this?"
    - "Why was this important enough to mention?"

- Find the meaning of the verses in the chapter by looking at the context of the chapter to the chapter before and after, to the whole book and to the Bible as a whole.

- Define any words that you need clarification on by either using an English Dictionary or by doing a word study on the words. The use of several translations will be helpful in this exercise.

- Consult a commentary once you have made your own observations

- Correlate your chapter with other verses within the same book, within the same Testament and throughout the Bible.

- Write down concluding thoughts on the chapter and list some possible applications of the chapter.

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For example: Colossians 3

Outline the main themes:

- Do not be carnal in your living
- Characteristics of a carnal man
- Put on the new man
- Characteristics of a spiritual man
- The outworking of this spiritual man in the home and workplace

Word study:
Seek: zeteo - Of uncertain affinity; to seek (literally or figuratively); specifically (by Hebraism) to worship (God), or (in a bad sense) to plot (against life): - be (go) about, desire, endeavour, enquire (for), require, (X will) seek (after, for, means). Compare G4441. (Strong's Concordance)

Set your affection on: phroneo - from G5424; to exercise the mind, that is, entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; by implication to be (mentally) disposed (more or less earnestly in a certain direction); intensively to interest oneself in (with concern or obedience): - set the affection on, (be) care (-ful), (be like-, + be of one, + be of the same, + let this) mind (-ed, regard, savour, think.

Interpretation of Scripture: We need to purposefully desire to be like Christ. We need to exercise our will and our mind to put to death those things that are carnal and fleshly and are not of God and to put on (as clothing) that which is godly. This can be done when we have renewed our mind in the knowledge of His Word. When we are walking in the clothes of this new man we will display the character and the nature of God in our lives which will be displayed in our relationships with our husband, our wives, our children and our work employers.

Correlation of Scripture:

- Word of God: Colossians 3:10, 3:16, Romans 12:2, John 17:17
- Nature of the new man: Colossians 3:12-15, Galatians 5:22-24
- Relationships: Colossians 3:18-22, 1 Peter 3:1, Eph 6:22-6:9

Practical application: I need to be determined in my mind to no longer walk according to the things of the flesh – I need to put off anger, malice, wrong language etc and instead I need to display love, kindness, mercy etc. When I am next in a situation where I desire to display the wrong fruits I need to stop and ask the Holy Spirit to help me display the new man in me.

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11. BOOK SYNTHESIS METHOD

This study ties all the chapter studies in one book together so that the Bible interpreter will be able to have a clear outline of what the book that they have studied in chapter form actually says and how it ties together in thought and meaning.

STEPS:

- Reread the book through in one sitting
- Write out a detailed, final outline using the chapter by chapter study notes that you have already prepared.
- Decide on what you would title the book that you are studying. Think of an original title that will explain the main themes of the book.
- Make a summary of your main thoughts
- Write out a personal application so that you could apply this to your life.

12. VERSE BY VERSE

This study involves selecting a passage of scripture and examining it in detail by asking questions, making observations and by cross referencing. When completing a chapter or book study, this verse-by-verse study can be used as it requires less time. It is like taking one bite size of a chapter at a time and working through the verses until the chapter has been thoroughly studied and understood.

STEPS:

- Select the verse or passage that you desire to study
- Write our a personal paraphrase of the verse
- List some questions and observations that you would like to study in more detail.
- Do a word study on those words that you need more clarification on
- Use other cross references to see how this verse fits in with the whole theme of the book and of the bible.

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For example:

Ephes. 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Paraphrase the verse: "God has created us with a destiny that we need to walk in"

Questions to ask: What is God's plan for my life?

Cross references: Psalm 139:13-16 "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed."

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Insights: I have been created for good works (I need to be a good example showing love, kindness etc.) so that my life will bring glory to God. What are God's plans for me? Good plans – to make me prosper, to provide me with peace.

Application: What can I do today that is a "good work"?

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PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETATION

OBJECTIVE

The objective of learning the fundamental principles of interpretation of the Bible is so that the bible interpreter will heed what Paul said to Timothy: 2 Tim. 2:15 "Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth."

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, lists the word "Orthotomeo" (# 3718 in its Greek dictionary) with the definition, "...to make a straight cut, i.e. (fig.) to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message): - rightly divide."

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words, lists the word under "DIVIDE, DIVIDER, DIVIDING" on page 319, with the following definition: 8. ORTHOTOMEO, lit., to cut straight (orthos, straight, temno, to cut), is found in 2 Tim. 2:15, A.V., "rightly dividing," R.V., "handling aright" (the word of truth); the meaning passed from the idea of cutting or dividing, to the more general sense of rightly dealing with a thing. What is intended here is not dividing Scripture from Scripture, but teaching Scripture accurately.

The interpretation of biblical texts continues in our day to be a matter of lively interest and significant debate. The problem of the interpretation of the Bible is hardly a modern phenomenon as the Bible itself bears witness that its interpretation can be a difficult matter. Alongside texts that are perfectly clear, it contains passages of some obscurity. When reading certain prophecies of Jeremiah, Daniel pondered at length over their meaning (Dan. 9:2). According to the Acts of the Apostles, an Ethiopian of the first century found himself in the same situation with respect to a passage from the Book of Isaiah (Is. 53:7-8) and recognized that he had need of an interpreter (Acts 8:30-35). The Second Letter of Peter insists that "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private interpretation" (2 Pt. 1:20), and it also observes that the letters of the apostle Paul contain "some difficult passages, the meaning of which the ignorant and untrained distort, as they do also in the case of the other Scriptures, to their own ruin" (2 Pt. 3: 16).

The objective of this lesson is therefore to present: A brief description of the various methods and approaches in Biblical Interpretation

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METHODS OF INTERPRETATION

1. THE CHRISTO-CENTRIC PRINCIPLE

The Christo Centric principle in Bible interpretation is the principle by which we see that the Word of God is eternally centred in Christ, with Him being the revelation in each of the pages, chapters and books. The entire written Word revolves around Him, the Living Word. His Person and work is the theme of God's written revelation. He is the hub and all truths are as spoken relating to Him who is The Truth.

- Heb 10:7 "... in the volume of the book it is written of Me..."
- John 5:39 "Search the Scriptures .... they are they which testify of Me..."
- John 1:45 "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write."

If we are to look at each of the sections of the Bible, we note that Christ has been revealed in each of the books of the Bible in various ways. Listed below are some of the revelations of Christ:

Christ revealed in the historical book of the Old Testament:

The Book	Old Testament	New Testament
Genesis : The Creator The Ark of salvation	Gen 1,2 Ge 6:18, 7:23	Col 1:16 Lk 2:30
Exodus: The Deliverer Passover Lamb	Ex 3, 6:1-8 Ex 12	Acts 5:31 1 Cor 5:7
Leviticus : Holy High Priest	Lev 8,9,10	Heb 7:26
Numbers: The serpent of Brass The Smitten Rock	Num 21:8-9 Num 20:8-13	Jn 3:14 1Cor 10:4
Deuteronomy : The Rock	De 32:4,18,31	1 Cor 10:4
Joshua : Captain of our salvation	Jos 5:13-15	Heb 2:10
Ruth : Lord of the Harvest Kinsman Redeemer	Ru 2:14-17 Ru 4:1-12	Lk 10:1-2 Rev 5:9-10
1 Samuel : Priest/ King/ Intercessor	1 Sam 16:1,13	Matt 27:37
2 Samuel : Son of David	2 Sa 7	Mt 1:1
1 Kings : King of Kings/Lord of Lords	1 Kings 22:19	Rev 19:16
2 Kings : the Righteous King	2 King 3:12	1 Co 1:30
1Chronicles : the Greater King David	1 Ch 11:1-3	Mt 1:1 / rev 22:16
2 Chronicles : Temple Cleaner	2 Chr 1:11, 12	Mt 21:12-13
Ezra: Scribe and Restorer	Ez 6:2-7	Is 58:12/Acts 3:20
Nehemiah : Man of Prayer and Work	Neh 3:1-10	Mt 16:18
Esther : Great King	Est 2:17	Rev 19:7

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Christ in the Old Testament Poetical Books:

The Book	Old Testament	New Testament
Job : Patient Suffering Priest	Jb 1:20-22	Heb 5:1-5
Psalms : Beloved shepherd	Ps 23	Jn 3:16, 10:11-14
Proverbs : The Wisdom of God	Pr 1,2	1 Co 1:20
Ecclesiastes: The Son of David	Ecc 1:1	Mt 1:1
Song of Solomon : Bridegroom	1-8	Jn 14:27, Eph 5:23-32

Christ in the Old Testament Prophetical books:

The Book	Old Testament	New Testament
Isaiah : Our Salvation	Is 12	Mt 1:24
Jeremiah : Branch / King	Jer 23:5	1 Cor 1:30
Lamentations : the Man of Sorrows	1:12,18	Mt 23:37, 38
Ezekiel : The Shekinah Glory	Ez 43:1-4	Jn 1:14-18
Daniel : the Son of Man	7:13	Jn 1:51
Hosea : Prophet of Law and Love	1,2	Acts 3:22-23, Jn 3:16
Joel : Promiser and Baptiser of the Holy Spirit	2:28-32	Lk 24:49, Acts 2:33
Amos: Burden bearer	Am 1	2 Th 1:7-9
Obadiah : Servant / Worshipper	15, 17, 21	Heb 2:12, 2 Th 1:6-10
Jonah : The Greater than Jonah	Jn 1:17	Mt 12:39-41
Micah : Establisher of His house	4:1-2	Heb 3:6
Nahum : Prophet of Comfort and Vengeance	Na 1:2-7, 2:2	Jn 14:16
Habakkuk: The Rewarder of Faith	2:1-4	Heb 10:38, 11:6
Zephaniah: The Jealous God	1:18	2 Co 11:2, Ro 2:5-6
Haggai: Builder of the Lord's house	1,2,3	Mt 16:18, Heb 1:1-2
Zechariah : Jehovah's Servant	3:8	Phil 2:7-9
Malachi: Messenger of Covenant	3:1-3	Mt 3:11, Jn 2:13-17

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Christ in the Gospels & Acts:

The Book	Scripture
Matthew : Fulfiller of Law and Prophets	5:17, 11:13
Mark: Son of Man/Son of God	10:45
Luke : Son of Man, Anointed, Preacher	4:18, 19:10
John: The Word The I Am	1:1, 3:16 8:56
Acts : The Head of the Church	1:5-8

Christ in the Epistles & Revelations:

Book	Scripture
Romans : Salvation	10:3-4
1 Cor : The Resurrection	15
2 Cor : Glory of the New Covenant	3,4
Gal : Faith, Righteousness	3
Eph : Fullness of God	4:9-16
Phil : Our Joy	2,3,4
Col : the Pre-existent , Pre Eminent One	1:19, 2:9
1 Thes : Our Sanctification	5:23
2 Thes : The avenger and the Coming Lord	2 Th 1: 6-10
1 Tim : Teacher who fulfills His Divine Charge	1 Tim 3
2 Tim : Saviour / Seed of David	2 Tim 4:1
Titus : Saviour	1:3, 2:10-14
Philemon : Intercessor / Advocate	The Whole Epistle
Hebrews : High Priest / Author and Finisher of Our Faith	1-13
James : The Husbandman	5:7
1 Peter : The Chief Cornerstone	2:6
2 Peter : the Beloved Son	1:17
1 John : The Word	1,2,3,4
2 John : The Truth / Son of God	2 Jn
3 John : the Truth	4,8
Jude : The Coming Lord, Judge	14,25
Revelations : The Lamb of God	5:5, 14:1-2

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2. THE CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE INTERPRETED

Context is very important to Biblical interpretation and must thus be seriously considered. Neglect of context is a common cause of erroneous interpretation and irrelevant application.

The Context principle is the principle by which God gives light upon a subject through either remote or near passages bearing upon the same theme. Every sentence or verse in the Bible has something that preceded it and something that follows it (with exception to the first and last verse in the Bible). Context is important because it forces the interpreter to examine the biblical writer's overall flow of thought. The meaning of any passage is nearly always determined, controlled, or limited by what appears immediately beforehand and afterward in the text. With this in mind it is thus necessary that we study each verse in the light of its context.

Never take a verse out of its setting and give it a foreign meaning.

The interpreter is unable to properly handle context until he has a good grasp of Biblical content:

- The interpreter must know the content of the book from which the particular passage he is interpreting comes (This can be done through the following study methods discussed previously – Book Background, Book Summary and a Book Synthesis).

- The interpreter needs to know the content of the books in which there are passages devoted to the same theme which he is interpreting.

VARIETIES IN THE CONTEXT SITUATION:

Immediate Context: The first responsibility of every interpreter is to note carefully what precedes and what follows any verse or passage which he is interpreting. This often involves going back two or three paragraphs and ahead two or three paragraphs. Thus we can see that by observing what precedes and what follows a passage, the interpreter has a greater opportunity to see what the writer was seeking to convey to his original readers, thus avoiding taking the scripture out of it's context and making it mean something that it does not. Remember that in the original transcripts, there were no divisions of chapters and verses and thus to be able to receive the whole train of thought of the author, it will be necessary to read the scriptures in their context. Many times chapter divisions do indicate breaks in thought, but there are other places where chapter divisions artificially obscure the continuance of thought. The interpreter must decide for himself where there are genuine breaks in thought.

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Context in a particular book: Parallel material means identical or similar language, or similar ideas found in a different context from the one being studied. When the parallel is found in other material in the same writing, one should be alert to see whether the fuller presentation of the subject in different context helps to clarify the meaning in any one context. In considering parallels, the interpreter should understand the purpose and outline of each particular book.

Context in other books: Parallels in other writings are the same as parallels in one particular book. They consist in identical or similar language, identical or similar ideas in other books. When we study a parallel from another book of the Bible which may or may not involve the same author, the interpreter must understand the purpose of the other book and the way the author unfolds his thoughts (outline). Only then can the student of the Scripture assess the contribution of the parallel to the meaning of the context he is studying.

Absence of context: In the wisdom literature where there are sayings, proverbs and various kinds of concise statements, the interpreter gets very little help from the immediate context. However, the interpreter can group these topically. On the whole, much of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes consist of individual units which are complete in themselves.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING FROM CONTEXT:

- Observe carefully the immediate context. This means that you will need to review that which is before and that which precedes the passage that is being studied.

- Observe carefully any parallels in the same book to the materials in the passage being interpreted. Be aware of the purposes and developments of thought in the book.

- Observe carefully any parallel in another book by the same author or in other books by different authors. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible! Sometimes parallel passages in other Bible books can shed light on the meaning of a passage which is obscure in its immediate context. When we say that a passage is parallel it may be a direct verbal parallel with similar words and phrases, or it may be a conceptual parallel where a similar idea is expressed in different words. For example, parallels exist between parts of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles, between parts of Galatians and Romans, between parts of Ephesians and Colossians, parts of 2 Peter and Jude, as well as between parts of Daniel and Revelation. Cross-reference resources can help locate other passages that speak about the same idea or event. Take into account the purpose and development of the thought of these books. Remember that as you move from the Old Testament to the New Testament,

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with the revelation of Jesus the meanings of certain words and practices changes. For example: the sacrificial system.

- Where the immediate context is of little or no value, try to find genuine parallels which come from the same period or time.

- Bear in mind that the smaller the quantity of material to be interpreted, the greater the danger of ignoring context.

EXAMPLE:

Immediate context:

Philip. 2:12 "Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear." God works in you so that you can work it out. V14 gives the context of how we are to "work" - Philip. 2:14 "In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing,..."

Galatians 5:4 -- Does "Falling from grace" mean that a person can lose his salvation? In the context of this passage, the apostle Paul was discussing the legalistic "Circumcision Party" and their attempt to bring the believers under the bondage of the Mosaic Law. He warned these believers that if a person seeks justification by God through human effort in obeying the Law, then he has rejected the way of salvation that God provided through the gracious gift of His Son -- he has departed from the way of grace, or is "fallen from grace."

Context in other books:

Gal 4:21-31 – to be able to understand this scripture it is important that the Bible interpreter goes back to the book of Genesis and reads the story of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 16, 21).

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3. HISTORY AND CULTURE

There is a time gap, a distance gap, and a culture gap between us and the biblical writers, and therefore in order to interpret the Bible correctly we must bridge these gaps if we are to understand the writers' intended meaning in Scripture. The historical period and the cultural environment in which the biblical writer lived have had an influence on the meaning of his writing. In order to understand the meaning of any passage, we should discover all we can about the writer of that passage: his background, where he was located, and his situation or circumstances when he was writing. A knowledge of the history and culture of the writer's time will also help us to understand how the original readers of the text would have understood it. We should find out as much as we can about the intended audience: their identity and the historical situation in which they would have read the author's words.

History involves the selection of various factors which make up the life of an individual, of groups of individuals within the nation, of nations themselves or of groups of nations. The Christian believes that history is the unfolding of God's plan or purpose (Eph 1:7-11) and therefore cannot centre history in man and ignore God. Intellect and emotions as well as the body are a part of the historical process. Each man moves in one history. It is there that he meets God, and spiritual life and meaning comes to him. History is a God-ordained sequence of experiences in which man discloses his estrangement and hostility to God or his reconciliation to God in Christ. Secular history appears to be the story of man trying to get along by and with himself. The idea that such independence from God is possible is one of man's sinful delusions (Acts 17:28).

Culture is part of history because it concerns the creative result of man's actions. Culture involves the ways, methods, manners, tools, institutions and literary productions of any people. These reveal how a people lived, what values they stressed and why they did or did not prosper. Culture involves the totality which emerges out of the elements that make up every day life.

- Firstly, the interpreter must use and be aware of the historical material that is found within the book as it will have bearing on the meaning.

- Secondly, the interpreter should recognise that the historical situation is more important than the precise historical date.

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UNDERSTANDING THE SETTING:

The "setting" contains the following aspects:

Politics: It is important that the Bible interpreter understands the civil or international affairs at the time the passage was written. In both the Old and the New Testament, political rulers and leaders often played an important role in the life of the Jewish people and the early Church. Where a ruler or leader is mentioned by the name, we should get all information possible about him. The international situation - activities of surrounding nations - also may have a bearing on interpretation.

For example: Why would Ahaz refuse to ask the Lord for a sign after Isaiah commanded him to do so (Isaiah 7:10-14)? This whole incident was intricately connected with the political situation at the time. Pekah (king of the northern kingdom of Israel in Samaria) and Rezin (king of the Aramean people in Damascus) made an alliance to oppose the approaching Assyrian threat. Ahaz (king of the southern kingdom in Jerusalem) refused to join them, so the northern alliance attacked the southern kingdom. Ahaz appealed to Assyria for help, rather than appealing to God for deliverance (2 Kings 16:7-9). His refusal to call upon God for a sign (Isa 7:12) simply affirmed his godless character and his complete confidence in his alliance with Assyria (as if to say, "Who needs God when we have Assyria on our side?")

Religion: It is important to understand the religious practices of God's people and those of the surrounding nations as well. For example: Why did Moses forbid Israel from cooking a young goat in its mother's milk (Exod 23:19, 34:26, Deut 14:21? According to archaeological evidence, this procedure was part of a pagan religious ritual among the Canaanites. God prohibited Israel from practicing the pagan rites of those whose land He was giving them. Why would Elijah suggest Mount Carmel as the site of his showdown with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19)? The followers of Baal thought that Mount Carmel was the dwelling place of their god, so Elijah was giving them every advantage in the contest (as he did when he poured water on the wood for his own sacrifice to God). This way the weakness or impotence of Baal would be even more evident.

Geography: It is important to understand the significance of the places and physical surrounding of the biblical author. Palestine was in truth the crossroads of the Near East. Through this land marched the great leaders of the world empires. The interpreter should know factors such as climate, relation of the setting of the sea, desert, mountains etc. roads and the kind of terrain, and how the people were distributed in the particular geographical situation. When the interpreter is aware of such things, the message he is interpreting or the history which he is reviewing becomes real. Such an interpreter knows that the land of

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Palestine meant much to the people of Israel. This was the land that God promised them. The land is important because of what God said and did there.

For example: Why did David flee to En Gedi (1 Sam 23:29? En Gedi was south of Jericho and west of the Dead Sea, and the terrain in that area is extremely difficult to navigate. There were also caves in that area in which David could hide, as well as a year-round spring of fresh water. This kind of territory would make a logical hiding place.

Business / Economics: It is important to understand the way business was carried our during the time that the passage was written and also to be familiar with the different businesses and trades that were in bible times**.** When we look at the historical scene into which the message of God was proclaimed, we see that matters of trade, agriculture, craftsmen and their products, travel by sea and by land, all help determine whether the economy was stable or unstable. Absence of rainfall meant famine, earthquakes blotted out whole cities, the ravages of war remained for generations etc.

For example: Why would the closest relative of Naomi's husband give his sandal to Boaz (Ruth 4:8)? According to ancient manuscripts, this was done when the sale of land was completed. It was the previous owner's symbolic statement releasing any further right to walk on that land.

Law: It is important to understand the law system of Bible times. For example When Elisha begged Elijah for a "double portion" of his spirit (2 Kings 2:9), was he being greedy in asking for twice as much power as Elijah? According to Deut 21:17, the rightful heir was to inherit a double portion of the estate, so Elisha was simply asking to be named as Elijah's heir and successor in ministry. Why did Boaz take his legal matters to the city gate (Ruth 4:1)? The city gate was where legal business was typically conducted during Old Testament times. The city elders and judges would sit in a special area just inside the gate to hold court (see Deut 21:18-21, 22:13-15, josh 20:4, Job 29:7.

Warfare: It is important to understand the methods of waging war during the Bible times. Why did Habakkuk say the Babylonians "laugh at every fortress and heap up rubble to capture it" (Hab 1:10)? He was not saying that the Babylonian army went around collecting trash, but that they would build mighty siege ramps against the wall of a fortress. These ramps would be constructed from rock, earth, and any other materials that were available.

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Agriculture: It is important to understand the seasonal agricultural practices during the Bible times. For example: Was there anything unusual in the situation when Samuel asked the Lord for rain at the time of the wheat harvest (1 Sam 12:17)? The time of year for the wheat harvest was in the early summer, after the six-month dry season had already started. If rain were to come during this dry season, it clearly would declare the power of God.

Domestic Affairs: It is important to understand the details of the household life. This involves the things people use in their daily existence. It includes the homes people live in, the objects in their homes, the tools for their work, the kind of clothing they wear, their weapons for war, the implements for getting food, the means of transportation.

Why were the five young women considered foolish for not having extra oil for their lamps (Matt 25:1-13)? Oil lamps in those days were small enough to be held in the palm of the hand, and they would not hold enough oil to burn for several hours. It was well-known that these events could last for several hours, so the oil would clearly be consumed before the event was over.

Social-religious situation: Another large element of their every day living was to do with their social relationships from birth to death. After the birth of a child, there were certain customs which were to be observed. The same was true for things such as : weddings, deaths, etc. The religious life of the Israelites found its expression in the tabernacle, the temple, the synagogues and the local congregations in the homes of believers. The social structure of the slave and freedman, of the poor and the rich, makes ancient society quiet different from the kind of society that we live in. To therefore receive a better means for interpretation, it will be necessary to understand and recognise these differences.

PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE INTERPRETER TO REMEMBER:

- Know the people who are involved in the section being interpreted. Does it deal with a tribe of Israel, a particular enemy of Israel, the nation of Israel?

- Determine what period is the most likely temporal setting for the material being interpreted. Remember that it is more important to know the historical situation than the precise historical date.

- Check the place or the places which provide the geographical setting.

- Note the customs, objects of material culture, or social religious relationships that are evident in the narrative or that lie behind the narrative.

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- Recognise how the history which took place before the times of the original hearers or readers influences their responses and attitudes.

- Examine the forces that brought about stability or instability behind the narrative.

- See how the narrative transcends its surroundings.

- Be aware of the similarities and differences between the historical cultural elements surrounding the original writer and his readers, and the historical cultural elements surrounding the interpreter.

Example:

1 Kings 19:13 says that Elijah covered his face. What is the meaning of this practice? Covering the face was a sign of reverence in the Presence of God. Moses hid his face when the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush (Ex 3:6). The seraphim seen by Isaiah in his temple vision covered their faces with their wings.

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4. LANGUAGES USED IN THE BIBLE TIMES:

A language is one of most important areas from which principles are drawn. The Bible has been written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The more the interpreter knows the languages of the Bible the more accurate the interpretation will be. The Old Testament has been written mostly in Hebrew, only a small portion having been written in Aramaic. The New Testament has been written in Greek.

Understanding the Meanings of Words (Lexicology): We must remember that a word can only mean one thing at a time. Therefore, when a biblical writer uses a word, we should make every effort to determine that single intended meaning. In order to do this, we:

- Need to know the possible range of meanings that the specific word might have. Dictionaries (lexicons) and other word study tools can be very helpful in describing the variety of meanings for particular words.

- We also must know the factors that affect the meaning of words:

    - Word Origin (etymology) = what is the original root meaning of the word? Etymology may provide a useful word picture to aid our understanding, but it can also be misleading. Etymology does not tell us as much about the meaning of a word as it does about the history of a word.

    - Word Usage = the meanings of words are established by their common usage during the time of the writer.

    - Context = the specific meaning of a word is always determined by its use in a particular context.

Understanding the Relationships of Words (Syntax): We must understand the basic parts of speech and how they function in sentences.

- Identifying nouns will help us see the subjects and objects in sentences, and identifying adjectives will show us how these nouns are being described.

- Identifying verbs will show us what action is being expressed in sentences, and identifying adverbs will help us see how this action is occurring.

- Identifying prepositions and connecting words (conjunctions) will show us how the ideas in the sentences are connected to form a complete thought.

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- Connecting words (conjunctions) are often important in understanding the flow of thought in a passage, because they indicate the relationships between the ideas that they link together.

PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER:

Words can be changed by the words which they are surrounded by. Hence the interpreter must proceed with certain principles in mind:

- Know all possible meanings of the word in the period of its occurrence.

- Decide which meaning fits best into the context of the writer. The familiar will always sound best even though it might be inferior to another rendering.

- Consider carefully the context of your listeners so that they will not unconsciously read their own ideas into a biblical passage where they do not belong.

- When looking for the root word in the Old Testament, use Hebrew and in the New Testament, use Greek.

- Useful tools should be used. Tools that will aid in the interpretation of languages will be the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and the Vines Expository Dictionary. Remember when using a Strong's concordance that you use the right Bible translation otherwise you will not find the words that you are looking for in the verse.

EXAMPLE: Psalm 37:3-5 "Trust in the Lord and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you."

- Trust" - The word trust comes form the Hebrew word "bawtakh" which means "to hie for refuge, to trust, to be confident, be bold, secure, sure"

- "Dwell" - This word comes from the word "shawkan" meaning "lodge, to reside or permanently stay, abide, continually dwell, have habitation, inhabit, remain, rest"

- "Delight"- The word "Anag" meaning "to be soft or pliable, delicate, delight."

- "Desires" - "Mishalah" meaning "the requests, petitions or desires""Commit" - "galal" meaning "to roll, to commit, remove, roll down, run down, seek occasion, trust, wallow."

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5. FIGURES OF SPEECH USED IN LANGUAGE

We will note that there are various figures of speech that are used throughout the Bible. By figurative meaning the writer has in mind the representation of one concept in terms of another because the nature of the two things compared allows such analogy to be drawn. For example: When Jesus says "I am the Bread of Life", He uses this metaphor because He is to man spiritually what bread is to man physically - the source and the sustenance of life.

REASONS FOR FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

- Figurative language is often used to speak about abstract concepts in terms of concrete things. All human speech contains this type of language because it is intrinsic to the way people communicate. Very often when we are talking about something which is not perceptible by the five senses, we use words which in one of their meanings refer to things or actions that are. If we are going to talk at all about things which are not perceived by the senses, we are forced to use language metaphorically. There is no other way of talking. Anyone who talks about things that cannot be seen, or touched, or heard, or the like, must inevitably talk as if they could be seen or touched or heard.

- Figurative language is sometimes used to emphasize a point, make a vivid impression, or attract attention. A colorful figure of speech typically causes a response of surprise and immediate interest for the listener or reader. When told that King Herod wanted to kill him, Jesus could have said, "Go and tell the king..." Instead Jesus said, "Go and tell that fox..." (Luke 13.32). This startling expression certainly would have captured the attention of everyone who heard it.

- Figurative language can motivate people to take action. Instead of saying, "I am waiting for you to respond," Jesus told the church at Laodicea, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev 3:20). This figure of speech would have evoked a powerful emotional response in the culture of that time.

- Figurative language may aid the memory. Most figures of speech create lasting impressions, and many are absolutely unforgettable. The Pharisees would never forget Jesus' description of them as "whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones" (Matt 23:27).

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- Figurative language adds color and vividness for illustrating or clarifying a point. A figure of speech graphically presents truth without using complicated descriptions. King David spoke volumes about his relationship with God when he said, "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). All that a shepherd is and does could be applied to God's watchful care over him by using a single, concise phrase.

- Figurative language also can be used to obscure the meaning for all but an intended audience. In rare cases the intention of a Bible figure or riddle is to hide the meaning, as one would do by communicating in code. Jesus explained to His disciples why He often spoke in parables: "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand" (Luke 8:10). Matt 13:34-35 explains that "All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 'I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.'" In this case, it was part of the eternal plan of God that only the chosen few would be able to understand Jesus' words during His earthly ministry.

HOW CAN WE RECOGNIZE FIGURES OF SPEECH?

- The words don't make sense literally. 1 Corinthians 11:16-21, Paul calls himself a fool. He isn't one, but is using the figure "sarcasm." Isaiah 55:12, "the trees will clap their hands." Trees don't have hands and don't clap. The figure is personification.

- The words are clear and literal, but meant to convey a deeper lesson or application, such as in a parable.

- The words are clear and literal, but are put together in a grammatical or structural way that brings emphasis to the section. This kind of figure may be lost in translation. Genesis 2:17, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." The Hebrew reads, "dying you will die," using the figure "many inflections," that is the same word in different forms. Ephesians 3:18, "to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." The "and's" is the figure "Many ands" give separate emphasis to each part, more than a comma would.

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PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

- Determine whether figurative language is being used.
- Determine what the figure of speech (image) is referring to.
- Determine the specific point of comparison that is being made between the image and the referent.
- Determine the specific meaning that was intended by the biblical author when he used a particular figure of speech in a specific context. Treat each figure of speech individually according to its specific context, and do not assume that a particular figure always means the same thing throughout the Bible.

WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS KINDS OF FIGURES OF SPEECH?

The study of figures of speech is complex because of the number of languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and English) involved, and because each language has many figures. But the patterns of language are so universally common to mankind that most of the figures of speech cross over from language to language in a recognizable way.

Simile:

This is a formal comparison using, "as" or "like" to express resemblance. In order to correctly interpret the simile, it is vital that you understand both of the things that are being compared. Examples:

- Ephes. 5:28 "In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife."
- Jer 23:29 says "Is not my word or message ....like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces ....."
- 1 Cor 13:11 "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me."

Metaphor:

This is an implied comparison, a word applied to something it is not to suggest resemblance. Example:

- Genesis 49:27 ""Benjamin is a wolf that prowls. He devours his enemies in the morning, and in the evening he divides the plunder."

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- In the expressions, "You are the salt of the earth..." (Matt. 5:13) and "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14), Jesus is multiplying metaphors to communicate graphic truth about the determinative role Christians are to play in affecting the world. In those early days, salt was the major means of arresting corruption in meat or fish, so the figure is not lost on those who listened to Jesus. Light, in any age, enables us to function with any degree of confidence. It dispels darkness.

Hyperpole:

The word hyperbole comes from two words, "huper" and "bole" meaning "a throwing beyond". When a hyperbole is used the author's intention is to use exaggeration as a purpose of emphasis or a magnifying beyond reality. For example:

- Matthew 5:29 "So if your eye—even if it is your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."

- In the anguish of his torment Job indulges in this kind of language. More graphically than any other form of speech it expresses the awfulness of his feeling of affliction. "And now my soul is poured out within me; days of affliction have taken hold of me. The night racks my bones, and the pain that gnaws me takes no rest. With violence it seizes my garment; it binds me about like the collar of my tunic. God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes. I cry to thee and thou cost not answer me; I stand, and thou cost not heed me. Thou hast turned cruel to me; with the might of thy hand thou cost persecute me. Thou liftest me up on the wind, thou makest me ride on it, and thou tossest me about in the roar of the storm. Yea, I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living (Job30:1-23).

- The apostle John in the New Testament uses hyperbolic language in this statement: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25). If we considered Christ's eternal existence, perhaps this statement could be taken literally, but if we limit it to the deeds of the Lord Jesus in his humanity (which I believe is what John has in mind) then it is clearly a use of hyperbole.

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Personification:

This means to make like a person. It takes inanimate objects and speaks of them as people, as if they had life.

- Psalm 114:3-4 "The Red Sea saw them coming and hurried out of their way! The water of the Jordan River turned away. The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like lambs!"

- In Numbers 16:32, "...the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up..." speaks of Korah and his men. Here the earth is personified as having a mouth to devour these men.

- The Lord Jesus uses personification in, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Matt. 23:37). The city of Jerusalem is here personified.

- Again, Jesus personifies tomorrow in these words: "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself" (Matt. 6:34). Here tomorrow is invested with characteristics of human personality, as being beset with anxious cares.

Parables:

Like the rabbis of his time, Jesus used simple word-pictures, called parables, to help people understand who God is and what His kingdom or reign is like. Jesus used images and characters taken from everyday life to create a miniature play or drama to illustrate His message. This was Jesus most common way of teaching. His stories appealed to the young and old, poor and rich, and to the learned and unlearned as well. Over a third of the Gospels by Matthew, Mark, and Luke contain parables told by Jesus. Jesus loved to use illustrations to reach the heart of his listeners through their imagination. These word-pictures challenged the mind to discover anew what God is like and moved the heart to make a response to God's love and truth. Like a skillful artist, Jesus painted evocative pictures with short and simple words. A good picture can speak more loudly and clearly than many words. Jesus used the ordinary everyday to point to another order of reality -- hidden, yet visible to those who had "eyes to see" and "ears to hear". Jesus communicated with pictures and stories, vivid illustrations which captured the imaginations of His audience more powerfully than an abstract presentation could. His parables are like buried treasure waiting to be discovered (Matt. 13:44).

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What is a parable?

A parable is a word-picture which uses an image or story to illustrate a truth or lesson. It creates a mini-drama in picture language that describes the reality being illustrated. It shows a likeness between the image of an illustration and the object being portrayed. It defines the unknown by using the known. It helps the listener to discover the deeper meaning and underlying truth of the reality being portrayed. It can be a figure of speech or comparison, such as "the kingdom of God ..is like a mustard seed ..or like yeast" (Luke 13:19, 21). More commonly it is a short story told to bring out a lesson or moral. Jesus used simple stories or images to convey important truths about God and his kingdom, and lessons pertaining to the way of life and happiness which God has for us. They commonly feature examples or illustrations from daily life in ancient Palestine, such as mustard seeds and fig trees, wineskins and oil lamps, money and treasure, stewards, workers, judges, and homemakers, wedding parties and children's games. Jesus' audience would be very familiar with these illustrations of everyday life.

Jesus' parables have a double meaning. First, there is the literal meaning, apparent to anyone who has experience with the subject matter. But beyond the literal meaning lies a deeper meaning -- a beneath-the-surface lesson about God's truth and his kingdom. For example, the parable of the leaven (see Matthew 13:33) describes the simple transformation of dough into bread by the inclusion of the yeast. In like manner, we are transformed by God's kingdom when we allow his word and Spirit to take root in our hearts. And in turn we are called to be leaven that transforms the society in which we live and work.

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING PARABLES

There are several principles to remember and implement in the study of the parables.

First, note the literary setting of the parable in the gospel. This can provide clues to the overall interpretation of the parable, especially its mood and affective force.

Second, note the wording, structure, general progression, plot progress, and suspense. Remember these are stories and need to be read as such. In this connection it is helpful to note any changes in the same parable in another gospel.

Third, read the parables in their original historical situation first. Therefore, nothing should be read out of them that is not consistent with the customs, etc. employed in them.

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Fourth, note the main characters/things in the parable and any parallels and or contrasts between them. The main characters are often clues as to the main points being asserted.

Fifth, recognize that there are two audiences being addressed by the parables. There is first the audience to whom Jesus originally spoke, e.g., the Scribes and Pharisees, and the audience of the early church to whom the evangelists addressed their writings.

Sixth, avoid over-allegorizing and note carefully what occurs at the end of a parable as a (the) clue to the meaning of the parable. This is called the rule of "end stress."

Seventh, seek to place the teaching of the parable in the overall ministry of Jesus and his teaching as a whole. In this way, it will be seen that most of his parables deal with the kingdom of God, either its inauguration or consummation, and discipleship within the present phase of the kingdom in expectation of the consummation.

Eighth, through continued prayer, meditation and seeking, discern the meaning of the parable for the original hearers and its significance for you. State the major theme and variations in sentences.

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6. THE SYMBOLIC PRINCIPLE

One of the important principles of hermeneutics (the principle of interpreting Scripture) is the Symbolic principle. This is the principle by which the interpretation of a verse or passage of Scripture containing symbolic elements can be determined only by a proper interpretation of the symbol involved.

According to the Webster's Dictionary, the word "symbol" is made up of two Greek words: "syn" meaning "together" and "ballein" meaning "to throw". It literally means to be "thrown together" and denotes an object used to represent something abstract, an emblem, using one thing to stand for or represent another.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF SYMBOLS:

There are eight classifications of symbols that are found in the Bible. These are

Symbolic Objects

- Human objects:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Ears	Channel to receive faith	Rom 10:17, Mt 13:9
Feet	walk	Heb 12:13, Rom 10:15

- Man-made objects:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Arrow	Suffering, conviction, the Word of God sent	Ps 38:2, 45:5, Job 6:4, Hab 3:9
eye salve	the Anointing	1 Jn 2:20, 27, Rev 3:18

- Mineral objects:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Pearl	precious truths, values, formation through suffering	Mt 7:6, Mt 13:45-46, Rev 17:4
Silver	Price of a soul, redemption	Ex 30.11-16, Mt 27.3-9

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- Objects in the sky:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Light	Christ and His Church	Jn 1.4-9, Mt 5.14
Rainbow	God's covenant	Ge 9.12-17, Rev 4.3

- Supernatural objects:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Crown of life	Eternal life	Rev 3.10, Jas 1.12
12 stars	Twelve apostles,	Rev 12.1, 21.12-14

- Plantation:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Corn	Word of God	Ps 78.24
Vine	Israel, Christ and His Church	Is 51.1-5, Mt 21.33-44

Symbolic Creatures:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Ant	Industrious, wisdom in preparation	Pr 30.25, 6.6-8
Eagle	Swiftness in flight, exchange of strength	Job 9.26, Dt 28.49, Pr 23.5, 30.19
Sheep	Christ and the people of God	Ac 8.32, Ps 79.13, Heb 13:20

Symbolic actions:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Baptising	Immersion, burial of the old life	Mt 3.11, Ro 6.1-6, Col 12.12-13
Bowing	humility, self-abasement & worship	Ps 145.14, 146.8, Rom 11.4
Lifting hands	taking oath, praise, surrender	Ne 8.6, Ps 141.2, 1 Tim 2.8

Symbolic numbers: We will be discussing this in more detail later in this course.

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Symbolic Names:

Symbol	Interpretation	Historical Setting	Script
Ichabod	the glory has departed	Loss of Ark of God to Philistines	1 Sam 4.21
Bethel	house of God	Jacob meets with God	Ge 28.12 - 22
Zion	Fortress, Sunny	Mount of David's throne	2 Sam 5.7

Symbolic colours:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Amber	The glory of God	Ez 1.4, 8.2
Purple	Kingship, royalty	Jud 8.26, Jn 19.2
Crimson	Blood, atonement	Lev 14.52, Jos 2.18, 21

Symbolic directions:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Backslide	To backslide, withdrawal	Pr 14.14, Jer 3.6-22
Down	Spiritual declension, backslide, fall away	Gen 12.10, 13.1, Is 14. 12-13, Rev 5.8
West	Sunset, setting down	Is 59.19, Ps 103.12, Mt 8.11

Symbolic Places:

Symbol	Interpretation	Scriptures
Babylon	Confusion, origin of nations	Gen 11.1-9, Rev 17-18
Egypt	House of bondage, the world system	Ex 12, Dt 5.6, Ex 20.2
Red Sea	separation, division, water baptism	Ex 13.18, 14.21-22, 1 Co 10.1-2

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GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING SYMBOLS

- Rightly determine which elements of the verse under consideration are meant to be interpreted as symbols: If the language of the verse makes no literal or actual sense, then it must be interpreted as having symbolic sense. If it does not make literal or actual sense, then it can only be interpreted as having symbolic sense when Scripture interprets or intimates this to be the case in other verses.

- The interpreter must recognize the three fundamental elements of symbolism: The significance of a symbol is based upon the literal or actual nature and characteristics of that which is being used as a symbol. A symbol is meant to represent something essentially different from itself. The link between that which is used as a symbol and that which is symbolized is the characteristic which is common to both.

- The symbolic principle must be used in conjunction with the context principle. That is in conjunction with the whole of the Bible.

- The Bible interprets its own symbols. Thus the interpreter must search through Scripture for the interpretation.

- A study of the usages of the symbol in Scripture must be based on a consideration of the original languages.

- The interpreter should also keep in mind that sometimes some symbols can represent more than one thing.

- When interpreting a symbol within a verse, its general Scriptural significance should be used unless there are clear indications otherwise.

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7. THE TYPICAL PRINCIPLE

The Bible furnishes abundant evidence of the presence of types and of typical instruction. The word "type" is derived from a Greek term tupo (tupos), which occurs 16 times in the New Testament. It is variously translated in the King James Version, e.g.

- twice "print" (John 20:25);
- twice "figure" (Acts 7:43, Rom 5:14);
- twice "pattern" (Titus 2:7, Heb 8:5);
- once "fashion" (Acts 7:44); once "manner" (Acts 23:25);
- once "form" (Rom 6:17); and
- seven times "example" (1 Cor 10:6, 11, Phil 3:17, 1 Thes 1:7, 2 Thes 3:9, 1 Tim 4:12, 1 Peter 5:3).

Three other words in the New Testament express the same general idea.

- One is "shadow" (skia, skia,Heb 10:1)

- The second term is "parable" (parabolh, parabole, Heb 9:9); the tabernacle with its services was an acted parable for the time then present, portraying future blessings.

- The third term is "copy" or "pattern" (upodeigma, hupodeigma), a word that denotes a sketch or draft of something future, invisible (Heb 9:23); the tabernacle and its furniture and services were copies, outlines of heavenly things.

Types are therefore pictures, object-lessons, by which God taught His people concerning His grace and saving power using present objects or people to demonstrate a future Person or event.

Reasons for studying types and typology:

Col 2:17 says "Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." You can never have a shadow without a body to cast a shadow. In the Old Testament you have the shadow preceding Christ and in the New Testament you meet with the body which cast the shadow. Types are pictures or objects by which God taught His people concerning His grace and saving power.

Classification of types in the Old Testament:

A Person: This is where a person's life in the Old Testament illustrates a great principle or truth of redemption and saving power of God. For example: Adam (Rom 5:14). Melchizedek (Heb 5:6) and Aaron (Heb 7:11).

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An Event: God has also used historical events to be recorded in such a way that they may be viewed as foreshadowing events which were to come. For example: The events of Israel (1 Cor 10:1-11) and Passover (Ex 12, Hebrews 9-10).

A Thing: Other cases of typology refer to some kind of thing, either tangible or intangible. For example: The veil of the tabernacle (Heb 10:20), the brazen serpent (Num 21) and the Temple of Solomon

Ritual types: These types include the offerings, the priesthood and the tabernacle and its furnishings.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING THE TYPES:

- Correctly discern what elements, if any, of the passage under consideration are meant to be viewed as types.
- The use of this principle must be in constant conjunction with the context group of principles.
- Because types generally involve symbols, the Symbolic Principle must be constantly used in connection with the Typical Principle.
- The interpreter must ascertain the primary point of resemblance between the type and the antitype.
- Generally speaking the Bible interprets its own types or at least gives the KEY to its interpretation.

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8. THE NUMBERS PRINCIPLE

Numbers as used in the Word of God are never only used for the sake of it. There is a spiritual meaning and significance for each one. For the searcher of the truth there is found to be "the treasure of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). God is consistent throughout His Book and though the Bible was written by various men of God over different periods of time and generations, there is still manifest throughout all the Book the same marvelous meaning and harmony in the use of numbers. This begins in Genesis and flows throughout each Book of the Bible and consummates in Revelation.

One of the principles of Biblical interpretation is the Numerical Principle. It should be remembered that there is a fine line between the significance of Bible Numerics and the danger of numerology, the worship and idolatrous use of numbers. The interpreter should not go beyond the boundaries of Scripture in the interpretation of numbers, whether specified or implied.

The numeric principle has been defined as "that principle by which the interpretation of a verse or passage in Scripture containing numbers is aided by recognition of the symbolic significance of the numbers involved. It is impossible to read scriptures without noticing the continuous use of numbers.

Numbers have thus been used as part of a special form of symbol in Scripture. There are basically two ways in which they can be found:

- By name (specified)
- By implication (implied)

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING NUMBERS:

- The first step in using this principle is to recognize the numbers involved in the verse or the passage, whether named or implied.

- The first mention of a number in Scripture generally conveys its spiritual meaning.

- God is consistent and generally the significance of a number will be maintained throughout Scripture.

- The spiritual significance of a number is not always stated, it may be veiled or hidden. Its significance can be seen by comparing it with other Scriptures using the same number.

- Generally, there are both good and evil aspects in the significance of numbers.

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- The numbers from one to thirteen are the basic numbers having spiritual significance. Multiples of these numbers generally carry the same meaning.

- Always use this principle in conjunction with other principles.

EXAMPLES:

No.	Interpretation	Scriptures
1	God, beginning, source, commencement, unity	Gen 1:1, Mt 6:33, Jn 17:21-23
2	Witness, division	Jn 8:17, Dt 17:6, Lk 10:1, Ex 8:23
3	Number of Godhead, Divine Completeness	1 Jn 5:6-7, Mt 28:19,
4	Earth, creation	Gen 2:10, Lev 11: 20-27
5	Grace, atonement, life, cross, fivefold ministry	Gen 1:20-23, Lev 1-7, Jos 1:14, Is 14:12-14
6	Man, beast, satan	Gen 1:26-31, 1 Sam 17:4-7
7	perfection, completeness	Gen 2:1-3, 5:24, Jude 14
8	Resurrection, new beginning	Lev 14:10-23, 1 Peter 3:20
9	Finality, fullness, fruitfulness	Gen 17:1, Mt 27:45, Gal 5:22, 1 Cor 12
10	Law, order, government	Gen 1, Ex 34:28
11	incompleteness, disorganization	Gen 27.9, 32.22, Mt 20.6
12	Divine government, apostolic	Gen 49.28, Ex 15.27, Mt 19.28, Lk 6.13
13	Rebellion	Gen 14.4, 10.10

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9. THE PREDICTIVE PRINCIPLE

A prophet was essentially God's spokesman, and his sole mission was to speak the Word of God and only the words which God had given him to speak. Prophecy is speaking forth the Word of God. Predictive prophecy is speaking forth the Word of God which has to do with the future. Predictive prophecy can be seen in the prophecies concerning the Coming Messiah, the Restoration of the people of Israel, the Second coming of Jesus, the tribulation. The Bible points to prediction as an absolute proof that God is speaking. God makes that claim Himself that when He utters these predictive statements they can come from God and God alone (Is 42:9, 44:6-8, 45:21, 46:9, 10).

There is a great deal of prediction in the Bible. The writings of other religions are obscure and if they do make a prediction it usually fails, but there are always excuses made for such errors. In order to test the predictive nature and truth about a prophecy we can look for:

- Remoteness of time.
- Minuteness of details
- Novelty of combination (no previous evidence to forecast such details)
- Mystery of contradiction
- Clearness of forecast

Looking at the prophecies concerning Christ and using the above principles we can prove that prophecies concerning Him were true:

- Remoteness of time: there were numerous prophecies written concerning Him not all at the same time.

- Minuteness of details: All these prophecies contain minute details. For example: The drink given on the cross, the gambling over the garment of Jesus.

- Novelty of combination: There had never any experience like this before.

- Mystery of contradiction: Prophecies wrote on the suffering and the glory of Christ.

- Accuracy and clearness of forecast: He was to be born in a certain place and at a certain time.

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PROPHETIC LANGUAGE

There are several characteristics of prophetic language that require special attention when interpreting prophecy. These are:

- **Poetic Language:** Much of the prophecy that we have in written form is presented as poetry.

- **Hyperbole and sweeping language:** The prophets tended to talk in large terms. Jeremiah 4 has a prediction of the invasion and destruction of Judah at the time of the Babylonian exile. From verse to verse 22 the language is quite clear, though it is poetic. Starting with verse 23, it becomes hyperbolic.

- **Symbolic Language:** Prophets use symbolic and allegorical language. A good example of allegorical language can be found in Ezekiel 16. Symbolic language occurs especially in the language of vision, and most especially in apocalyptic visions such as those in Daniel and Revelation.

- **Visions and Dreams:** Visions and dreams are heavily symbolic.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER WHEN INTERPRETING PROPHECY

- Be willing to dedicate yourself to study: An honest study of the scriptures is a search for truth. Do you love the truth, or do you reach conclusions before doing an honest study? "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15).

- Some things are hard to be understood. Study them very thoroughly. Do not twist the scriptures to make them fit your preconceived notions or the speculations of men (2 Pet. 3: 16-17).

- No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1: 19-21). If your interpretation is unique, do some more study.

- By whom was the prophecy spoken (or written)? Jeremiah prophesied (literally) concerning Babylon, which was at the time of that prophecy a world empire (Jer. 50, 51). John prophesied (symbolically) concerning Babylon, which was at the time of that prophecy an abandoned city in ruins (Rev. 18).

- To whom was the prophecy spoken (or written)? Jonah prophesied (spoke) to the city of Nineveh (Jonah 3: 1-4). The book of Revelation was written by "John to the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1: 4).

- What is the purpose of the prophecy?

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- **To bring about repentance**: Jonah warned, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3: 4). The outcome: Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes, and it was spared.

- **To comfort the people of God and explain His judgment**: The utter destruction of Nineveh was foretold in the book of Nahum. The outcome: Nineveh was destroyed exactly as Nahum had prophesied while the nations round about Assyria rejoiced that judgment was meted out to such a wicked city.

- **To prepare the people of God for the Messiah**: Isaiah described the Messiah (Isaiah 53). The Ethiopian eunuch was pondering its meaning…Philip used this passage to preach Jesus to the eunuch (Acts 8: 26-39).

- **To reveal a message to a target audience while concealing the same message from others**: Jesus often spoke in parables "because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. 13: 11). Jesus privately explained the interpretation to his disciples.

- What is the context in which the prophecy was given?

  - Christians were companions in tribulation at the time of the revelation of John (Rev. 1: 9; 2: 10).

  - Christians at Thessalonica perceived that Christ's return was imminent, and they were concerned about the status of brethren who had already died (1 Thess. 4: 13-18).

  - The children of Israel were preparing to enter the land of Canaan. God revealed the conditional blessings of obedience, as well as the conditional consequences of disobedience to Israel (Deut. 28-30).

  - The end of the Jewish temple and nation was drawing near. Within that same generation, Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Roman army under the command of Titus in 70 A.D. (Matt. 24).

- Is the prophecy conditional?

  - **Repent or perish**: Jonah warned, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." (Jonah 3: 4). Two outcomes were possible: Repent and live (be spared), or continue in sin and be overthrown. In this instance, Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes, and it was not overthrown within forty days.

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- **Land possession was conditional upon obedience**: "But if thine heart turn away…ye shall not prolong your days upon the land" (Deut. 30: 15-20).

- Allow scripture to interpret scripture: Often, scripture interprets prophecy.

  - "we will tell the interpretation thereof" (Daniel 2: 36-45).
  - "two horns are the kings of Media and Persia" (Daniel 8: 20).
  - "seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" (Rev. 1: 20).
  - "this is that" (Acts 2: 16).
  - "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written" (Rom 11: 26).
  - "which things are an allegory" (Gal. 4: 21-31).

- Look for similar phrases in other prophecy. This could provide a clue to the proper interpretation. Compare the two prophecies below, which use similar language. The first prophecy refers to a physical judgment against the nation of Babylon.

  - Judgment against Babylon: "the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, the moon shall not cause her light to shine." (Isaiah 13: 10).

  - Judgment in Matthew 24: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven" (Matt. 24: 29).

- Interpret the seemingly difficult or obscure portion of prophecy in the light of the plain teaching of other scripture.

- Look for indications of the timeframe in which the prophecy is to be fulfilled.

  - "to show…things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1: 1).
  - "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (Matt. 24: 34).
  - "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." (Matt. 16: 28).
  - "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2: 44).

- What meaning did the prophecy have for the people of that day? The book of Revelation was written to the seven churches of Asia. Any interpretation that has no significant meaning for the people of that day is improbable.

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- Is the language literal or symbolic?

    - Literal: Three days means three literal days (John 2: 19).
    - Symbolic: "He sent and signified it" (Rev. 1: 1). The word translated "signified" means to show by signs. Thus, seven candlesticks are seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1: 20).

- What did the symbols connote at the time the prophecy was given? The meaning of a symbol may have been clear to the recipients of the prophecy. Yet, in some instances, that meaning may be somewhat obscure to us at the present time. Therefore, we should be open to multiple possibilities and consider which one(s) best fit the context. Symbols represent basic ideas or concepts. Try to grasp the primary idea being expressed. Do not attempt to explain every little detail of the symbol.

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10. THE REPETITIVE PRINCIPLE

This is the principle under which God repeats some truth or subject already given, generally with the addition of details not given before. This principle is closely allied to the progressive mention principle where some revelation is progressively revealed from a book (usually in the Old Testament) through the Testaments.

- "Verily, verily": The repetition given here may only be a word, phrase or sentence, but it is important as God is saying "Take note". Jesus often used this when He was teaching : See John 5:24 - 25, John 6:26, 32, 47, 53, John 8:34

- The judgement on the stubborn nation (Is 6.10). This one passage is found six times in the Bible (apart from Is 6.10) - Matt 13:14, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, Jn 12:40, Acts 28:25-27, Rom 11:8.

- The ministry of Paul: In the Book of Acts, which begins with the ministry of Peter, we have a record of Paul's ministry and in all the records he seems to be preaching only to the Jews. Only towards the end of the book Paul says to the Jews that he is now going to preach to the Gentiles. In the Epistles we see that he is preaching to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles, but he has established Churches among the Jews. We can thus see that there is a repetition of the ministry of Paul with added detail. We have the same ministry, the same preacher, but we see two lines of ministry.

- The history of Israel: The whole of the Old Testament records the history of Israel. This history is repeated in the New Testament in the account of the sermon of Stephen. In Romans we see a record of the wanderings of Israel, which is a repetition of the record in Deuteronomy. These repetitions bring forth a truth that the author in the New Testament is trying to convey.

- The book of Chronicles and Kings: In the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles and 1 & 2 Kings, the same period of history is recorded. Chronicles however is a repetition with a spiritual application, spiritual thought and spiritual information. In Kings, history is recorded in man's viewpoint. In Kings we have the facts of history, in Chronicles God reveals the reason or the meaning for these events. Kings is kingly, Chronicles is priestly. The word "because" is used in Chronicles, but the word "this happened" is found in the Book of Kings.

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ASSIGNMENT

From the following scriptures, discuss the purpose of repetition:

1. Deut 31:6 with Hebrews 13:5
2. Jer 31:31-34 with Hebrews 8
3. Is 54:1 with Galatians 4:27
4. Matt 11 with Mal 3:1
5. Is 29:13 with Matthew 15: 1 -9

11. THE FULL MENTION PRINCIPLE

This is the principle by which God declares His full mind upon any subject vital to our spiritual life. For example:

- The resurrection (1 Cor 15)
- The tongue (James 3)
- Restoration of Israel (Rom 11)
- Trails and triumphs of our faith (Heb 11)

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PART TWO: PREPARING THE SERMON

OBJECTIVES

Building a sermon requires as much preparation as building a literal structure. It would be foolish to begin building a large office complex without first having carefully laid plans. Yet many times a sermon is put together without any forethought or preparation. The objective of this section will therefore equip the pastor/preacher with the necessary information which will aid him/her in the initial sermon preparation.

THE INITIAL STEPS IN THE SERMON PREPARATION

1. PERSONAL PREPARATION:

Each sermon should originate in the fertile heart of the preacher. If the preacher's heart is empty, his sermons will be empty; if the preacher's heart is full, his sermons will be full. Therefore, the preacher should keep his heart pure, and he should be filled with God's Word (Romans 12:1-2). Luke 6:45 "A good person produces good deeds from a good heart, and an evil person produces evil deeds from an evil heart. Whatever is in your heart determines what you say."

Before the sermon is prepared, the preacher must be prepared:

- The preacher should first be prepared in his spirit. He needs to have a personal time of fellowship with God.

- The preacher being prepared in his spirit must be prepared in his mind. Regardless of his intellect, the preacher should have a craving for knowledge. He should have a desire to know, coupled with a careful discernment for truth. In addition to spending much time in the Scriptures, the preacher needs to have a system for developing his general knowledge.

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2. RECEIVING THE IDEA FOR THE SERMON:

Before the pastor / preacher can begin to do any research or outlining of the sermon that he needs to prepare, he first needs to have an idea of what it is that he wants to say. How can he receive an idea?

- Prayer: As you are praying specifically for the day that you will be preaching, you need to ask God to reveal to you the theme of the message that He would have you speak on. Each congregation, at different times and seasons, has a need to hear a specific word from God. Unless we set time aside to hear from God, we will not be effective to that congregation. Pray is vital and should take precedence over the actual writing of the sermon.

- Reading and studying the Bible: Once the theme of the message has been given to you by the Spirit of God, you then need to begin to read and study the Word of God. This may be a particular portion of Scripture, a theme etc. Study as much as possible. Remember that it is the power of the Word that is able to bring salvation, healing, deliverance etc.

- Wait on God: Be open to the Holy Spirit to give you the words and the ideas concerning the sermon that you are preparing for.

3. LOOK AT THE SERMON THEME CRITICALLY:

Once an idea has been reached, the preacher / pastor will then need to look at the theme critically by asking the following:

- What is the truth that is expressed in the idea of the sermon?

- Can the truth be brought down to earth so that it can be practically applied to the hearts and the lives of the people who hear it?

- What is the purpose that is embodied in the idea? What human need will be met when this is preached? Eg. Healing, growing faith etc

- What scripture can be used to base the sermon on?

4. FIND THE RIGHT TEXT:

"What portion of scripture or text should I preach on?" Scriptural basis for your sermon is not only necessary, it is vital. It is not the words of the preacher that brings conviction and liberty to the ones who hears it but it is the Word of God that is like a hammer – it is powerful and is able to bring liberty. The Bible says:

- Jeremiah 23:29 "Does not my word burn like fire?" asks the Lord. "Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes rock to pieces?"

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- Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are."

- John 8:32 "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

When Jesus preached and taught, He used passages from the Jewish scriptures as the basis of His sermons. Paul followed this same principle.

The length of your text:

There are three main kinds of texts that you can choose from when selecting your text:

- A classic text: This is a text that consists of phrases, sentences or simple a verse which contains a truth that you would like to speak on. For example: Ezekiel 18:20 "The one who sins is the one who dies..." The sermon which uses this text will focus on the connection between sin and death and how this relates to them personally. In the sermon the preacher will show the connection between the previous line of Ezekiel's prophecy and its relation to the doctrines of sin found in other parts of the Bible, for example Romans 3:23.

- A conclusion text: This is a text that will consist of a phrase or a sentence which gives the moral of a whole parable, or the summary of the whole passage of scripture. Luke 16:9 "I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven." This verse is the summary of the parables found in verses 1-8.

- A consecutive text: This refers to the systematic explanation of a number of verses one after another. For example Genesis 6:1-10.

Characteristics of your text:

- Complete: Remember that when you are choosing the length of your text that it should always be in full context. Be careful to ensure that your text is not merely a fragment of scripture but can clearly show the beginning and the end of a specific thought.

- Important: The text that you have chosen must be considered as carrying an important truth or principle.

- Brief: The text should be as brief as completeness and importance allows it to be. Short texts are more easily remembered and allow for easy repetition throughout the sermon.

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- Clear: Ensure that you choose the plainer of two or more texts, texts that are more self explanatory rather than texts that require great amount of exposition.

- Natural: A sermon should not be forced from a certain text but rather needs to be a natural flow from it.

- Varied: Make sure that when you choose your text from week to week that you are offering the congregation a balanced diet. Be careful that you focus on both the Old and the New Testament. Ensure that you do not only focus on one specific book but that your choices are on the whole counsel of God.

- Suitable: Selection of your text should also be influenced by the needs of your congregation as well as the seasons or the times of year.

Question your text:

Once you have selected your text you will then begin to question it in order to gain an understanding of its meaning, its context, its background etc. Therefore ask yourself the following questions concerning the text that you have chosen:

- Is your text from the Old or the New Testament? Remember that the meanings of certain words will vary depending on under which covenant the text is found. For example the sacrificial systems found in the Old Testament have been abolished in the ministry of Christ. Any sermons on these laws need to refer to the fulfilment of Christ.

- In what book is the text found in? By asking this question, you will be identifying the text in the progressive revelation of God.

- What is the historical background of the text? By asking this question you will be identifying when the events of the text took place in the history of the Bible. This ensures that you know the chronological events that took place preceding this text and those that took place after the event.

- What is the geographical setting of the text? Have a basic idea of where each of the nations and regions were located. The understanding of the general terrain of the area in which the text is found will provide the preacher with the ability to more easily paint a picture with his words when preaching.

- What are the cultural references found in the text? By identifying practices that are unique to Israelite culture will alert you to areas that you will need to study in order to gain the right interpretation of the text.

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- What doctrines are being revealed in the text? For example Genesis 15:6 reveals the doctrine of justification.

- Are there any cross references? Where in the rest of scripture is the theme or thoughts of the text that you have chosen alluded to, explained or developed?

- Who is the author of the text? It is useful to be able to relate the text to the character and the life of the person who wrote it. For example the Psalms written by David have great importance when seen through the eyes of David when he was running from Saul who wanted to kill him.

- What are the main words of the text? Make a list of all the important words that are found in the text. These words will highlight the main theme of the sermon.

- What are the main places or personalities mentioned in the portion of scripture?

- What is central in the text and what is peripheral? Learn to distinguish between what is peripheral and what is of secondary importance in a text. You cannot say everything possible about every text of the Bible. Therefore ensure that you are focusing on the most important aspect of the text selected.

5. THE OUTLINE:

Lack of proper structure is one of the major weaknesses of many modern sermons because it reflects the lack of sequence and the flow of thought throughout.

The outline of your sermon is therefore a means by which you are able to organize your research on your theme, text or topic in a sequence that makes sense and leads the person who is listening to the same conclusion that you reach at the end of the sermon. It is a map which you verbally show the hearer to lead them to the place where you would like them to go. When Paul was speaking to the Church at Corinth concerning their Church services, he counselled them by saying: 1 Cor. 14:40 "But be sure that everything is done properly and in order."

The outline is to the sermon what the skeleton is to the body-each bone is connected to the next and it holds the whole thing together. Before beginning the outline, the preacher must have firmly in mind the one idea, the theme, controlling idea, thesis, proposition and focus that he wants the

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congregation to remember. If the preacher does not know what he wants to say, how can he determine how he wants to say it?

While outlining is not the only factor involved in determining the effectiveness of the sermon (e.g., language use, illustrations, and delivery are also important), every well organized sermon is prepared with an outline. Developing outlining skills is a must for the preacher who wants his audience to remember his sermons

ADVANTAGES OF AN OUTLINE:

- An outline aids the preacher in the development of the thought of the sermon
- Keeps the preacher on track and stops the preacher from straying from the main theme or topic.
- Enables the preacher to keep the parts of the sermon in the right proportions
- Assures that the sermon has movement and that it moves to a place of application for the hearer.
- Enables the hearer to understand what the preacher is saying and where he is headed.
- Aids the hearers in remembering what has been said

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN OUTLINE:

A good outline has unity. Every point is controlled by the main idea. Each main point must support or advance the main idea. Each sub point must support or advance the main point to which it is subordinate. All other points should be eliminated, no matter how valid they may be. Expository preaching is often poorly done because the sermon, though based on a single passage, has no single theme, but three, four, or five unrelated points. Unrelated points in the same presentation are not a sermon, but a collection of sermonettes. The hearers are more confused than edified. The connection between the points may be logical and chronological. Further, it is insufficient for A to connect to B. B to connect to C, and C to connect to D, if there is no connection between A and C, A and D, and B and D.

For example: God is love (1 John 4:8), Love is patient (1 Cor 13:4) (A and B connected by "love.", Patience is a Christian grace. ("patience connects B and C) and Christian graces make us fruitful (2 Peter 1:8). (C and D connected by "Christian graces.") Each point is a valid point supported by

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scripture; however, there is no theme that ties all points together and leads to a single focus that the hearers will remember.

A good outline has harmony. The main points should echo each other. The main points should be "road signs" for the hearers - signals that they have arrived at a new division in the sermon.

A good outline has balance. Each point receives approximately equal development. A preacher who has three points and spends fifteen minutes on the first one must either preach too long or neglect at least one and probably both of his other points. If one point requires inordinate attention (related to the other points in the sermon), that point probably justifies a sermon devoted exclusively to itself.

A good outline has progression. It moves in appropriate and connected sequence. "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28). There is instruction before exhortation and explanation before application. The hearers thoughts and understanding advance as the sermon advances. If the sermon does not advance, the hearers lose interest.

A good outline has brevity. This does not mean that an outline must be only a few lines. It does mean that an outline must not have too many main points. Too many points will get lost and will not be remembered.

A good outline has a conclusion. Points that are related and move in meaningful sequence lead to a conclusion. Unrelated points with no meaningful sequence leave the hearers wondering what the whole exercise was about.

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6. SERMON TITLE:

Your sermon MUST have a title. Even if your sermon is based around a passage or chapter of scripture you must be able to announce the purpose for focussing on that passage. A catchy or profound title will ensure that the subject matter stays in the minds of the listeners. A title is a highlight of a specific point within the sermon stated in a manner to advertise the sermon. Therefore, prayer, preparation, study and skillful phrasing are essential to composing effective sermon titles.

KEY PRINCIPLES TO SELECTING YOUR TITLE:

- Your title needs to be relevant to the text or the theme that you will be preaching on.

- Your title should provoke interest. The title should be relevant to the life situations of the people of the congregation and therefore will have some significance to their lives.

- Your title should be brief. Lengthy titles are difficult to remember and therefore should not be used.

- Your title can be:

    - A Declaration: "God is in it all"

    - A Question: "Why do believer's fall?"

    - An Exclamation: "Falling to Get Up"

    - A phrase and a question: ""The Perplexities of marriage: What can we do to overcome them?"

    - Concerning a compound subject: "The Holy Spirit and His Gifts" or "Faith: Its challenges and its rewards"

    - A snippet of your text: "Consider your ways" or "He brought me through"

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PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

Using the information above (steps 1 – 6) prepare an outline of the sermons that you will preach in the following situations:

- A funeral
- A wedding
- At Christmas
- At Easter

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THE STRUCTURE OF THE SERMON

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this part of the lecture notes is to aid the learner in understanding the essential components of a sermon and to provide tools by which a preacher can structure his/her sermon which will have positive and effective results for both the preacher and the hearers. The focus will be one:

- The introduction of the sermon
- The body or content of the sermon
- The conclusion of the sermon

1. INTRODUCTION:

The introduction is one of the most important aspects of your preparation because it seizes the attention of the hearer and causes them to sit up and listen. If you do not properly introduce your sermon you may find that you will not have anyone really paying attention to what you are saying. A good sermon introduction will capture the attention of a congregation and introduce the preacher's subject or text.

TYPES OF INTRODUCTIONS THAT CAN BE USED:

The "Pay Attention" introduction:

- Acts 7:2 "This was Stephen's reply: "Brothers and honorable fathers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to our ancestor Abraham in Mesopotamia before he moved to Haran."

- Deut. 4:1 ""And now, Israel, listen carefully to these laws and regulations that I am about to teach you. Obey them so that you may live, so you may enter and occupy the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you.

- Matthew 15:10 "Then Jesus called to the crowds and said, "Listen to what I say and try to understand.

The Contextual introduction:

This is the most commonly used introduction where the preacher explains the connection and the relations between the text and the surrounding material.

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The Background introduction:

Here the preacher uses his introduction as a means by which he explains the history, geography, culture and places which are of importance in the text that he will be focusing on.

The Principle introduction:

In this case the preacher will begin with a principle that the hearers are familiar with and then proceed to show in the sermon how the text proves the principle. When using this type of introduction be careful to ensure that the statement of principle used is positive, brief, bold and exact.

The Example introduction:

This is an introduction which is completely opposite to the principle introduction. Instead of starting with the principle and then moving to the example in the content of the sermon, this introduction chooses to start with the example that will illustrate the principle that he would like to preach on. For example:

- When using the principle introduction, the preacher will focus on the favour of God in the lives of His children.

- When using the example introduction, the preacher will focus on the life of Joseph and then will move in his content to explain the favour of God.

The Contrast introduction:

Here the preacher uses a commonly held principle or example of conduct is contrasted with scriptural principles or examples which are then preached upon. For example: The introduction can focus on the world's understanding of leadership and then move on to discuss in the content/body what Jesus' view of leadership was.

A Topical introduction:

This is the introduction that will introduce the topic of the sermon. Here the preacher will focus on a topic that is current and of ecclesiastical interest

An Advantages introduction:

This is when the preacher will begin the sermon by highlighting the advantages of the topic or text. This type of introduction can be used when the topic being discussed is sensitive to the hearers and therefore reveals the importance of discussion.

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An Apologetic introduction:

This is the type of introduction that confronts errors and heresy both inside and outside the church. The preacher may begin with a reference to a person, a cult or an organization which holds a particular view and then go on to prove the falsehood asserting the biblical truths in the content of the sermon.

THE DON'TS OF THE INTRODUCTION:

- Be too long: An introduction that is too long will cause an imbalance to the rest of the sermon.

- Be too showy: Do something that will draw the attention of the hearer but be careful of too much sensationalism.

- Be too personal: Be careful not to always begin your sermons with personal examples. Rather leave these examples to explain the main points in the body or the content of your sermon.

- Be too predictable: Do not use introductions that you can adapt from one sermon to the next. Ensure that the introduction that you will be using will be unique for that sermon.

- Be offensive: The point of the introduction is to draw the attention of a person and not to offend them. Therefore have a regard for the age and the sensitivities of your congregation.

- Steal the sermon's thunder: Do no say all that you want to say in the conclusion in the introduction because the listeners will then not need to listen to the rest of the sermon. This may also lead to repetition later on in the sermon.

EVALUATION

Once you have written out the introduction (word for word or in point form) it is then important that you evaluate what you are going to say. You can evaluate your introduction by asking the following questions:

- Is the introduction interesting?

- Can the hearer identify with what the preacher is saying and by the illustrations that are being used?

- Is the introduction short?

- Is the introduction appropriate to the occasion, the hearers, the truth etc.

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- Is the path of the approach friendly and not effusive?
- Is the introduction clear?
- Does the introduction vary from week to week? Have I used the same introduction or even a similar one in the last month?

PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

Using the outlines that you previously prepared for a sermon, write out an introduction for one of them.

Once you have completed the introduction, evaluate your introduction and rewrite it showing the changes that you will make. If you have not made changes justify your reasons for not making any changes.

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2. CONTENT OF THE SERMON

The objective of the preacher in the content of the sermon is based upon three specific functions:

- The redemptive function which is to present Words of life to the congregation that will bring healing and redemption.

- The prophetic function which brings to mind the Word of God for today.

- The kingly function which magnifies and exalts God so that the people will know Him and worship Him as king.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The content of the sermons of the Early Church recorded in Acts were always centred on, "Christ crucified and resurrected" (Acts 2:14-33). Their preaching was thus centred on their experiences which they had in Christ.

- Jesus said, "I am the way to the Father" (John 14:6)

- The new way into the presence of Father was inaugurated by the presentation of the sacrificial Blood of Christ, by our High Priest, Jesus Christ (Heb 9:8-14, 22-25, 10:19-22). This superceded and replaced the Old Covenant's sacrificial system.

- The disciples/apostles understood the work of Christ on Calvary so clearly that their entire focus of proclamation centred on the way to the Father, through the Blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

- The early Church was branded as the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5) who belonged to "The Way". For example :

    - Acts 9:2 - Paul persecuted those who belonged to 'The Way'.
    - Acts 18:25-26 - Apollos and his instruction in 'The Way of the Lord'.
    - Acts 19:9 - opposition to Paul speaking of 'The Way' (Jews).
    - Acts 19:23 - opposition to Paul speaking of 'The Way (occult).
    - Acts 22:4 - Paul speaking of his persecution of 'The Way'.
    - Acts 24:14 & 22 - Paul speaking of 'The Way' to Roman governors.

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TYPE OF SERMONS

The content of any sermon is dependent upon the type of sermon that is chosen. There are many different types of sermons that a preacher can use in his message however, remember when choosing a sermon always look at the following two criteria: Firstly, the type of congregation and secondly, the best way to present the truth. Only once you have identified the following, can you best decide on the type of sermon to be used.

1. EXPOSITORY SERMON

An "exposition" is a detailed explanation, speaking that sets forth or explains facts, introduction of main themes. This type of sermon therefore is detailed exposition or explanation of the text/passage of Scripture chosen. It is a comprehensive analysis of larger blocks of Scripture so that the bigger picture can be understood

If you are choosing to use an expository sermon, you would follow the step outlined below:

- Research: The entire passage of scripture must be thoroughly researched (i.e. paragraph, verse, sentence, phrase, word) in the chapters/subsections preceding and following the chosen passage. The purpose of this research is to gain context and background to the text. Much of this research will not necessarily be presented from the pulpit but is essential for the preacher to have a firm understanding of why the text was written and how it relates to the rest of the scriptures.

- Central theme: The text chosen must have a central theme, even if sub-themes are present and relevant, that is unity of theme is essential. Not every detail in the passage can therefore be explained or presented in the sermon, to ensure that the main theme is etched on the minds of the listeners.

- Application: The preacher must apply the truths taught to the lives of the listeners to ensure that their needs are met in Christ; that is not just a study of truth, but feeding the people according to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Problem areas in expository preaching:

- Laziness: This results in a lack of preparation and background knowledge of the Word of God.

- Monotony: This means that the person plods from verse to verse without emphasis or enthusiastic proclamation of the main theme. It results in the exposition degenerating into a series of running comments on each verse

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read.

- Length: The text may be too long to be dealt with effectively in the short time provided.

2. EXEGETICAL / TEXTUAL SERMON

An "exegesis" is an analysis or interpretation of a word, or literary passage. An exegetical or textual sermon is analytical because its main point is the analysis of the text.

When you choose this type of sermon, ensure that you:

- Choose a small text: The difference between the expository and the exegetical sermon is the quantity of text chosen to speak on. The exegetical sermon only focuses on one or two verses or a short sentence.

- Analyse the text: The exegetical/textual sermon analyzes texts in one of the following ways:

    - Individual words: Romans 5:8 "Christ died for us": "Christ": a good man, the Son of God, God in the flesh. "Died": as a martyr, as a sacrifice. "For": on our behalf - in our place. "Us": mankind and the individual

    - Individual phrases: 1 Thessalonians 1:9,10. 'ye turned to God from idols' - the past, 'to serve the living and true God' - the present, 'to wait for His Son from heaven' - the future

    - Individual verses: Romans 1:14-16,

        v 14 'I am UNDER OBLIGATION....'

        (A) to Greeks
        (B) to barbarians
        (C) to wise
        (D) to foolish

        v 15 'I am EAGER...'

        (A) ready, available
        (B) to preach the Gospel in Rome

        v 16 'I am NOT ASHAMED...

        (A) the Gospel is good news
        (B) the Gospel is powerful

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The advantages of a textual sermon:

- It focuses attention on a single area of scripture and therefore the richness of the Word can be brought forth

- A beginner preacher finds this type of message fairly simple to prepare as there is a natural outline to follow. However, the textual sermon must be alternated with other sermon types to prevent the hearers becoming bored with a stereotyped message.

3. **SYNTHETIC SERMONS**

A "synthesis" means the putting or placing together of parts or elements to form a whole. Synthetic materials consist of different compounds bonded together. In synthesis sermons, various texts and ideas are brought together to form a theme. One would begin with an idea based on Biblical truth and gather around it confirmatory and illustrative texts.

For example: The birthplace of Jesus. Different texts are able to provide different complementary aspects/segments of the whole truth:

- Birth in Bethlehem - Micah 5:2 "....Bethlehem...for out of you shall come forth a ruler...",
- End of infant's exile in Egypt - Hos 11:1 "...out of Egypt did I call My son.",
- Hometown, Nazareth - Matt 2:23 "...He shall be called a Nazarene."

The synthetic sermon uses this method with themes, for example the Doctrine of Resurrection:

- Psalm 16:10 cf John 20,21 - Resurrection of Messiah
- Acts 2:24; Ephesians 1:19-23 - Power of resurrection
- Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:4-5 - Resurrection of righteous.
- Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Rev 20:5,11-15 - Resurrection of the unrighteous
- 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 - resurrection from mortality to immortality.

4. TOPICAL SERMONS :

"Topical" means a sermon "having to do with topics of the day; of current or local interest". The 'topic' or 'subject material' for a topical sermon uses a text (or part of a text) as a basis or springboard to deal with present day situations that are of special interest to the congregation. The text used does not generally tie into all parts of the sermon. Related texts may be used to tie the sermon together. Once the text has been used to introduce the sermon idea, the topic is developed without drawing upon the text any further.

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The topic usually:

- Exposes a need or problem
- Is a subject of special interest to the congregation
- Presents a solution for consideration by listeners
- Motivates listeners to action or decision.

The advantages of the topical sermon:

- It gives the preacher a broad range within which he can comment and treat his subject matter

- It can give scriptural input and answers for current events

Disadvantages:

- The topic can sometimes be too general and broad in scope. This encourages some preachers to ramble. It must be more specific.

- It can encourage too great an emphasis on social or even political issues (world peace, racial prejudice, feeding schemes) if the preacher does not focus on the biblical perspective, but gives his own opinions and prejudices.

- The congregation enjoy the focus on a person and their their rather than theology.

5. **CONTRAST SERMONS**

Contrast sermons use a text that projects 2 contrasting truths. For example: Proverbs 10:4 "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich." The 2 truths, usually one positive and one negative, are presented as arguments 'for' and 'against'. The conclusion must present the deciding factor with conviction and force.

For example: Romans 6:23	
'Against'	**'For'**
"The wages of sin is death	...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
2 Masters	
Sin	God
2 Payout types:	
Wages	A gift
2 Payments:	
Death	Life

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NB: The 2 sides of the argument are developed side by side, to keep the contrast effective throughout. The conclusion concerns the choice that must be made.

6. BIOGRAPHICAL SERMONS

The word "biographical" means "an account of a person's life written by another". Throughout the Old and the New Testament, there are biographies of men and women's lives that are able to provide vital information to us. They reveal to us:

- Their weaknesses and strengths
- The qualities expressed in their life that are important to God. For example their availability, heart after God, brokenness of self, faithfulness etc.
- How God sees these men. For example: Moses "..the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend." (Ex 33:11)
- How these men/women live totally committed to God's purpose in their lives, and consequently experienced God's strength and victory.
- The reasons for their failure

Sermons which are built around these individuals and their lives inspire, teach and warn the Church. In order to present this type of a sermon, you will need to either present a series of sermons on the life of the individual or focus on a particular aspect of his life as biographical sermons can be very comprehensive. Therefore focus on one issue at a time, for example, character, calling, strengths, motives etc. This will require that you make a thorough study of all the details concerning the life of the individual.

7. KEY-WORD SERMONS

This type of a sermon is built around a key word or phrase which is used repeatedly throughout the sermon. It presents a specific pattern of meaning. In the Bible we see examples of this:

- Ecclesiastes: 'under the sun'
- John: 'verily / truly I say unto you..."
- Matthew: 'the Kingdom of heaven'
- Genesis 13,18,19: 'look'
- Genesis 39 - '...the Lord was with Joseph..."

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8. CHAPTER SERMONS

A sermon can also be based on a whole chapter which sets forth a specific truth as a complete subject. Take a look at the following examples:

- Psalm 1: The blessed and the ungodly man and their destination
- 1 Cor 13: The definition of love
- 1 Cor 14: The operation of the spiritual gifts
- 1 Cor 15: The resurrection

The expository method of approach is used in studying and preaching from the chapter that is, a whole chapter is used, not just a section of scripture from the chapter. This chapter must be studied in the context of the chapters preceding it and following it; and in the context of the entire epistle or book in which it is found.

9. NARRATIVE SERMONS

The word "narrative" means a "story form: art or practice of relating stories or accounts/tales". Sermons that are based upon the narration of a Bible incident are dynamic because they are already anointed by the Holy Spirit in their inclusion in the Biblical text and have a natural climax. For example:

- 1 Samuel 17:1-54: David's victory over Goliath
- 2 Kings 5:1-14: Naaman's healing
- Matthew 8:5-13: Centurion's servant healed
- Luke 15:11-32: Prodigal Son

However, when using this type of sermon it is important to remember that the details of the narrative/story should only take half of the allocated sermon time, the rest being used for application of the story to the needs of the Church today. For example:

- David: The victory of a covenant keeper
- Naaman: The fruit of humility before God : healing
- Centurion: Faith in God's authority
- Prodigal Son: The Father's joy in reconciliation with His son

There are three things that storytelling sermons should accomplish. They should give a contemporary appeal to Biblical tradition. It should guide the imaging the hearers do, and lastly it should help identify the meaning with in the stories.

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CHARACTISTICS OF THE CONTENT

Structured:

Ensure that the main block of the sermon is divided clearly into two or three main points that are clearly identifiable and explained. The main benefit of structure, apart from helping the preacher present his material, is the retention of the message to the hearers.

Simple:

Ensure that you do not use too many main points in your content. A deviation from one point to another can only lead to loosing your audience. The best means of keeping the attention of your hearers is to only have two or three points that are a natural flow from one point to another.

Stated:

There is much debate on how much should be included in one sermon. However in order to answer this question it is vital that we answer it in regards to, "what is my purpose?" A sermon should only state what is necessary to fulfil the purpose of the sermon. Any other information added to the sermon can cause monotony, the hearer to loose their train of thought and can lead to the sermon being too long.

Smooth:

Like the introduction, the content needs to be move smoothly from one point to another without being stinted and out of place. Ensure that there is always a free flow in the sermon points. Each point should grow out of the point that preceded it.

Spiritual:

When we say that the sermon content is to be spiritual it means that the purpose of the content should be to bring people into a closer fellowship with God, to bring people to salvation and to cause them to make an application that will be according to maturity and growth in the Bible. Therefore application should not always be left to the conclusion of the sermon but should be slowly revealed in the content as well. The Word of God therefore needs to be applied to the hearers in a relevant and thorough way as each division or main point is being expounded upon.

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Scriptural:

The sermon content should come from the text selection that was decided in the initial steps in sermon preparation and should be expounded on using cross referencing of this text. Therefore the Bible should not only be used to introduce the topic, but it should be used as a means by which the topic or text is expounded upon.

Striking:

Vividness and variety in the content of the sermon is what keeps the attention of the hearers after the introduction. A way in which the preacher can keep the attention of the hearer is by using illustrations. The word "illustrate" means to "make clear, to illuminate and to throw light upon a subject". Illustrations are essential because abstract statements made without a practical experience of real people in human situations sometimes become detached and therefore have little power to convince a person. When Jesus taught or preached, He used illustrations because He understood the power that was found in it.

The function of illustrations:

Illustrations are used to make truths concrete: "The right kind of illustration provokes a mental picture in which the hearer actually sees the truth" ((Principles and practices of preaching – Ilion T Jones page 137). When Jesus became flesh – He became a practical illustration of who God is – His love, His mercy, His forgiveness. John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Through the illustrations of His life, people were able to see God and understand Who He is.

Illustrations are used to make the truths interesting: Illustrations causes the hearer to sit up and listen – it enables the preacher to be able to connect with the hearer through experiences that they have had, or others.

Illustrations are used to make the truth impressive: It makes the truth not only easy to understand – but it also makes it easy to remember. An illustration is easily impressed on the mind of a person.

Illustrations are used to make the truth persuasive: It is able to move the listener where maybe the truth fails to do so because it seemed detached and distant from the hearer. By bringing it closer to home with illustrations of real men and women – real experiences, it is able to connect with the hearer and draw from them emotions. A sermon must move people to action.

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Illustrations are used to make the truth practical: It brings the truth down into common life – where common people of common faith live. Sometimes the illustrations of the people in the Bible do not always seem relevant to us. We assume that they were extraordinary people and therefore God moved on their behalf but would He move on ours? Through the use of practical illustrations – people can see that God still is the same today, yesterday and forever.

Biblical examples:

In the New Testament, we can see from both the life of Jesus and that of Paul, that when preaching, illustrations were used.

- Jesus, used illustrations while He was teaching the people. His illustrations were always taken from the audience's natural life (that pertaining to their every day lives). Once He had taught the illustration (parable), He would then expound on it in more detail. For example: The Sower - See Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23.

- Paul used illustrations when writing to the various Churches. For example: Soldier and warfare - Ephesians 6:10-18 "Put on the whole armour of God", 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, 2 Timothy 2:3-4 "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life....", 1 Timothy 1:18 " in accordance with the prophecies made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight." 2 Timothy 4:7 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

Gathering Illustrations:

New and updated illustrations are important for the different generations that are preached to. It is no good using the same illustration that you used ten years ago to a congregation. Why? Today's generation will not be familiar with things that happened ten years ago. This means that the illustration will loose its effectiveness as it will not be practical and applicable to the congregation spoken to. When gathering illustrations, it is important to constantly be on the alert for new, exciting illustrations. These can be found:

- In creation : The beauty of God's creation is a constant source
- In modern day life: Occupations etc.
- In the scriptures themselves

Once you have gathered these illustrations, you need to be organised and file them in a particular order so that you can constantly draw from them when preparing for a sermon. The best way to file these illustrations would be in alphabetical order as per theme. For example salvation illustrations, faith illustrations, miraculous illustrations etc.

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Characteristics of good illustrations

- Choose an everyday example that the majority of people know and can relate to immediately. Some illustrations are so remote that most people cannot relate to them and the people hearing the illustration become totally involved in the illustration and don't understand the spiritual truth that you are trying to convey.

- Keep it simple and clear. Some illustrations are so complicated that you lose the congregation on explaining the illustration. This defeats the object which is to convey a spiritual truth. For example : In a sermon on how we are to launch our spiritual weapons, if one went into too much detail on how a missile is launched, most of the congregation would not understand as it would be too technical. Remember you need to appeal to the whole congregation and not only to the men, women, intellectual, sportsmen etc.

- Keep it short. Let the truth be delivered with a to-the-point illustration. Some preachers don't have much truth to share, therefore pad it up with a long story.

- Make sure that you relate the illustration to the spiritual truth. Parallel the spiritual truth so that the people listening understand the connection between the illustration and the truth that you are conveying to them.

- Use your OWN illustrations as they reflect your personality. Never get caught in the trap of using other people's illustrations so that you can receive the same anointing.

Precautions in using illustrations:

- Avoid using canned goods (books of illustrations) even if they are from well known preachers.

- Don't use cliches e.g. "A story is told".

- Don't use anecdotes, especially improbable ones from real life, i.e. be objective. Rather use factual illustrations.

- Don't refer to well known people in a negative light.

- Beware of using unsavoury examples.

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3. CONCLUSION:

The purpose of a conclusion is to be able to bring a sermon to an effective close without leaving the listeners wondering "what next?" A strong, well planned conclusion is essential and can accomplish the whole purpose of your message.

The purpose of the conclusion is:-

- To sum up the content of the sermon
- To round off the sermon content
- To focus attention on the central theme
- To make an appeal relating to the sermon content. The entire focus of the message should be aimed at the work of God in the life of the believer, so that the appeal will be a motivation for action. For example: salvation call, growth, renewing of mind, healing, deliverance (Acts 8:5-7)

When a sermon has been effectively executed, that is when the principles of the introduction, body and the conclusion have been applied, the result will be that the truth will be practically applied and the hearers will be moved to a certain actions.

TYPES OF CONCLUSION:

Summary:

A summary is used when the major points of the sermon are listed or repeated in the order in which they were presented. This is important where careful logic has been used

Illustration:

A good illustration, which parallels the central truth, can specifically lead people to respond to the appeal.

Quotation:

The right quotation can draw the whole message together eg "the healing of a nation begins in the homes of its people..."

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Application or demonstration:

By demonstration the preacher is showing how the teaching may be applied to one's life. What is the meaning of application? Jay Adams in his book, Truth Applied (page 17) writes that it means "the … process by which preachers make spiritual truths so pertinent to members of their congregations that they not only understand how these truths should effect changes in their lives but also feel obligated and perhaps even eager to implement those changes." Application is therefore the process by which the principles of God's Word are brought into life-changing contact with people.

Principle of application:

- Scriptural: Application should be based upon the Bible (especially the text that is being preached on). This application should also be consistent with the teaching throughout the Bible.

- Persistent: Application should not be left to the conclusion of the sermon but should persistently be revealed throughout the content. Therefore the application that is mentioned in the conclusion should be a repeat and an expansion of what has already been revealed in the contents and main points of the sermon.

- Prepared: Unless application is prepared and understood as being as important as the sermon exegesis, it will become ineffectual. It is therefore important that it should be understood and clearly revealed in the sermon preparation.

- Present: The application of the sermon should be up to date and relevant for the generation that you are preaching to.

- Personal: Application should be made in the second person. For example: "you need to understand", "your experience", "you must". Your hearers need to know that they are being referred to personally and individually therefore they will be faced with a need to make a change, a commitment.

- Direct: Never leave the hearers to make their own conclusion and application to the sermon that you are preaching. You, as the preacher need to make it direct so that they will be able to answer the questions of "So what?" and "What now?"

- Passion: Application must always involve an emotional commitment and stirring that will cause people to act.

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CHARCTERISTICS TO A CONCLUSION:

- Recap: Recap the main points of the sermon without bringing any new ideas and thoughts into the sermon.

- Be brief: Ensure that your conclusion is brief and to the point and you do not conclude your sermon more than once by going back to the content and then going back to the conclusion.

- Be positive: All negative aspects of the subject are to be in the body of the sermon and not in the conclusion. The purpose of the conclusion is to stimulate a person to do something positive. Therefore if your sermon is on the sinfulness of man, your conclusion should incorporate the positive side of "Christ has died for the sinner so that we no longer have to be enslaved in sin".

- Make it the conclusion of not only part of the sermon but the whole sermon. It needs to effectively include what you were saying throughout the sermon.

- Variation: Ensure that you do not always use the same type of conclusions in all your sermons. Use a variety of ways so that the attention of the hearer can be kept.

- Appeal: Always point back to Christ. Offer an opportunity to receive Christ and expect people to respond. Ask for a specific response. Nothing becomes dynamic until it becomes specific.

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EVALUATING YOUR SERMON STYLE

Once you have completed the three elements of the sermon, the introduction, the body and the conclusion, it is then necessary to spend time reading over what you are going to preach and critically evaluating it. There are four important things to keep in mind while composing a sermon:

- A sermon is composed for listeners. It should be composed to be heard and not read. The reader can stop and think about what has been said, but a hearer can't. He can't ask questions, stop to reread etc.

- A sermon is composed for a mixed group of people. He needs to ensure that he is speaking in a terminology that is easily understandable by all people and not only one sector or group

- A sermon is composed for the people of this present generation. The style of communicating the sermon should therefore reflect the generation that you are living in.

- An effective aural style (of or pertaining to the ear) is best described as being:

    - Simple use of words. The words need to be commonly understood by all the people listening

    - Few words: Eliminate any adjectives, adverbs etc from your sermon that are not necessary in adding to the purpose of the sermon. If you are able to say something in two words, do not try and use three to seem impressive.

    - Expressive words: Use words with action in them

    - Simple sentence structure: Avoid the use of jargon - involved sentences with excessive amounts of words that have little meaning - and add nothing to the clarity of thought.

1 Cor. 2:1-4 "Dear brothers and sisters, when I first came to you I didn't use lofty words and brilliant ideas to tell you God's message. For I decided to concentrate only on Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. I did not use wise and persuasive speeches, but the Holy Spirit was powerful among you."

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PART THREE: DELIVERY OF THE SERMON

Delivery is the third main element which we need to consider in our study of principles of sermon preparation. We have already looked at content and structure. Our study would be incomplete unless we consider delivery. Delivery focuses on how we actually preach, or deliver, the message. When we come to the delivery of the sermon we come to that aspect of preaching where we are dealing with the actual act of preaching. Of all the elements in sermon preparation and preaching, delivery is most probably the element least thought of. Most preachers take it for granted that they have a certain preaching style which is unique to them, and which need not be changed or improved upon. Such an attitude ignores the fact that effective preaching consists not only of *what* is being preached, but also *how* it is being preached.

Every preacher is going to be a poor, average, or good communicator. Communication may be divided into the two categories of verbal and non-verbal communication.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Man is distinctive from other creatures in that he is able to communicate thought, especially abstract thought, by means of language. Man is therefore by nature a communicator. In order for the communicator to point the receptor in the right direction, the communicator must try to:

- Be interesting: When you are interesting, it is very easy to get people to listen to you. In order to make something interesting, focus on that which is novel, new, interesting and different. It must be listener-connected, that is, it must be something that they are interested in.

- Be clear: Explain the message with clarity. Present the message in a proper order. Start the message off using the simple and then moving on to that which is more complex, thereby making it easy for a person to follow. Illustrations bring clarity to a philosophical statement.

Verbal communication skills have to do mainly with the use of the voice and the use of language. Language is the essence of communication. Every preacher has a style of preaching, which he very often adapts, depending on the nature of the congregation he is addressing. So, for example, the preacher will use one style when speaking to children, another when he speaks to adults. Again, he will most probably use one style when speaking to students, another when speaking to a ladies group. Style is an instrument which the preacher uses to make himself understood. It is, therefore, important that he uses a clear style. His language must be simple, so that even children can understand him. He must be clear in his own mind about what he is going to say, and how he is going to

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say it. If he is not clear in his delivery, the congregation will not be clear in their understanding of what they thought he was preaching about. It is also important that he uses a direct and personal style. He is preaching to men and women who want to hear from God. He must address them directly. Moreover, the preacher should try to use a vivid style. Use picturesque language. Help the congregation to grasp the truth by painting a picture with words, which they can see, as well as hear.

The voice is obviously the most important instrument the preacher uses in verbal communication. Preaching is not the same as talking; nor is it the same as shouting. The preacher has a number of God-given voice tools in his vocal toolbox:

- Volume: There is no point in communicating if we are not heard. The voice therefore needs to be loud enough to be heard throughout the whole sermon. Volume should flow naturally from the subject material and its impact on our hearts.

- Diction: Diction is the clarity with which words are spoken. It is one thing to have volume in the words spoken, but unless these words are clear, they will still not be understood.

- Tone: Tone refers not so much to the volume of the note but the pitch of it. The voice has a wide range of tones from low bass notes to high alto notes. In our everyday speech our tone varies with mood and circumstances. This natural variety of tone should be carried into the pulpit in order to avoid an unnatural monotony.

- Emphasis: When we talk to a person we naturally emphasize what we most want our hearers to listen to. We do this by an increase in volume, diction or tone for a word or two. This natural "tool" for making one word or phrase stand out from the rest is an important asset in bringing emphasis to a certain point or text.

- Pace: Regular and appropriate variation in pace makes the listening easier. Ensure that you make use of pauses in your sermon as they allow truths to sink in before you continue and raise another point.

- Variety: This refers to the combination of a number of these tools.

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WHAT CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH YOUR VOICE?

The voice of God's preacher is the thing that is used to transfer what is in his mind to the minds of his people. It is the vehicle which God has chosen with which to deliver His truth to His people. Because of this, the preacher must take extra care of his voice. John the Baptist was called a voice.

Because of the importance of the preacher's voice, he should watch it carefully and care for it properly. There are four things that cause voice trouble for a preacher.

Strain:

Strain is almost always caused by improper care of the voice and by improper knowledge of its limitations. There are many things that a preacher can do to prevent this from hampering him from preaching:

- Perform vocal exercise. Any muscle in the human body needs exercise. Athletic teams must properly exercise before a game or they will damage their muscles.

- Stay close to the microphone. Use the microphone.

- Use a change of pace while preaching. Do not preach an entire sermon at full volume. Give your voice a chance to rest. An athlete does this with his body. A preacher should do it with his voice.

Tension:

Just as strain causes voice problems, tension can also be a problem in preaching.

- Prepare in advance, and avoid the meeting of a deadline. When a deadline is approaching, the preacher's entire body becomes tense which can affect his voice.

- Do not discuss problems before preaching. Do not allow church problems or personal problems to be a part of your conversation or thinking process before you preach. Problems will tense up the body, including the voice, and often cause serious voice problems while preaching.

Colds and Flu:

When you are sick or have a sore throat it is important that you look after your voice and not strain it as this could cause permanent damage.

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Food:

Never speak right after eating.

CARE FOR YOUR VOICE:

Your voice is a powerful but delicate instrument. With the right care, you can both protect your voice and use it to your best advantage. Start by caring for your voice with this five-step approach.

One: Breathe deeply:

You can speak only as well as you breathe. The voice, after all, is a wind instrument. You need to supply it with ample air in order to power your talk. Before getting up to speak, find a place where you can pause quietly for awhile. Do a few breathing exercises. Take deep (diaphragmatic) breaths to supply your voice with air.

Two: Learn to relax:

Tension in your upper body diminishes the power of your voice and can cause hoarseness. Over time, it can adversely affect your throat and can lead to vocal chord damage that is sometimes serious enough to require surgical repair. Through vocal warm-up exercises, you reduce tension in your shoulders, neck, and throat. As you exercise, allow your body to breathe naturally. Relax your body and let whatever tautness is there flow out each time you exhale.

Three: Condition your voice:

Try gargling, which helps assure that your voice is in the best possible condition. This is especially helpful if you happen to have a cold on the day you're presenting. A teaspoonful of salt and a teaspoonful of baking soda dissolved in a cup of warm water make a simple solution that will wash away phlegm, allergens, and other irritants. After you gargle, coat and soothe your throat with a cup of herbal tea or decaffeinated tea, with plenty of honey.

Four: Hydrate:

Drink plenty of water before and during your talk. Talking for long periods can dry out your vocal apparatus, making it more prone to damage and fatigue. Avoid foods and beverages that impair your voice. Avoid spicy foods, which can increase the production of stomach acids. Be aware of any medications you may be taking, such as allergy pills, which can dry out your throat. If you

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must take your medications without exception, it becomes even more important to hydrate before you speak.

Five: Empower Your Voice:

There are several ways you can do this. One of the best things you can do is get a good night's sleep. You'll have more vocal energy and will avoid sounding tired. Once you've begun speaking, open your mouth wide. You can't have a big sound unless you have a "big mouth." And do use large gestures. Besides helping you to emphasize a point, large gestures from your shoulders actually reduce upper body tension and empower your voice.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

This is an important element in preaching. We communicate through our body language, our posture, our dress code. It is important that we understand this and pay attention to it. If our nonverbal communication contradicts our verbal communication, our congregation is more likely to note the nonverbal message we are conveying to them.

- **BODY LANGUAGE:**

More than half of your impact as a speaker depends upon your body language. You probably have control over the words you speak, but are you sure that you have control over what you are saying with your body language?

Body language comprises gesture, stance, and facial expression. These are all the more important when all eyes of an audience are upon you. When you are presenting, strong, positive body language becomes an essential tool in helping you build credibility, express your emotions, and connect with your listeners. It also helps your listeners focus more intently on you and what you're saying.

Effective body language supports the message and projects a strong image of the presenter. Audiences respond best to presenters whose bodies are alive and energetic. Audiences appreciate movement when it is meaningful and supportive of the message. The most effective movements are ones that reflect the presenter's personal investment in the message.

Anyone can utter a series of words; it is the presenter's personal connection to those words that can bring them to life for the audience. Preachers, who care deeply about their subject, tend to use their entire bodies to support the message. Their gestures are large enough to embrace the room full of people. Their faces express their passion while their eyes connect with the audience, focusing on one person at a time.

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Facial Expressions: Facial expressions should be used in your deliver as they:

- Reinforce your message by telling how you feel about it
- Reflect your personality
- Reflect emotions such as fear, anger, excitement, sadness etc
- Reveal your attitude about your subject, your audience, and yourself

Eye Contact is the most impact of all bodily movements. The movements of your eyes can build a connection with your audience. No part of your facial expression is more important in communicating sincerity and credibility than your eyes. Nothing else so directly connects you to your listeners-whether in a small gathering or a large group. Effective preachers engage one person at a time, focusing long enough to complete a natural phrase and watch it sink in for a moment. This level of focus can rivet the attention of a room by drawing the eyes of each member of the audience and creating natural pauses between phrases. The pauses not only boost attention, but also contribute significantly to comprehension and retention by allowing the listener time to process the message.

The advantages of use of eye contact in delivering the sermon are that it:

- Opens communication with the audience
- Establishes rapport with the audience
- Checks on audience's response
- Makes the preacher believable
- Displays emotion
- Keeps audience interest

Gestures: In conversation, gestures are natural, unconscious and spontaneous. Gestures in public speaking need to be larger and more expressive. The gestures used in the sermon function to repeat, contradict, substitute, complement, emphasize and regulate what has been said verbally. Rather than practicing gestures, try to correct distracting ones. *Do* use your hands. They don't belong on your hips or in your pockets or folded across your chest either or held behind your back. Use them-to help emphasize a point, to express emotion, to release tension, and to engage your audience.

Stance: How you stand in front of the room speaks before you open your mouth. Your stance can tell the audience that you're happy, scared, confident, or uncomfortable. Audiences "read" these messages unthinkingly but unfailingly. Stance speaks. A balanced stance with weight even but slightly forward tends to say that the speaker is engaged with the audience. A slumped stance leaning to one side can say the speaker doesn't care. Constant motion, such as swaying, is a distraction that can annoy your listeners.

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- **APPEARANCE:**

The preacher's physical characteristics, grooming, clothing, etc are also important in sermon delivery. Ensure when you are dressing that you do not:

- Let how you look distract your listeners. Your clothes should match. They should be appropriate for the setting (a tuxedo can be as distracting as shorts in the wrong context!) Be appropriately well-groomed.

- Let how you look undermine your credibility. Sloppy clothes or grooming don't convey a sense of credibility. As much as it depends on you, demonstrate some discipline in regards to what is inside your clothing too.

Be tastefully dressed for the occasion. Be smart, fashionable, striking without being extreme.

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ASSIGNMENT

As a Learner:

Using the course material, prepare a sermon that you will present/deliver to your tutor and fellow learners. Your sermon should not exceed 20 minutes.

As an Evaluator:

As an evaluator you will be required to evaluate your fellow learners using the Information listed below. Remember that the point of evaluation is not to criticize but rather to supply the other learner with positive input that they will be able to learn from in order to improve their preaching style, delivery and sermon content. Be constructive!

EVALUATION

Rating system:

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Average	2
Poor	1

THE SERMON:

Is it Biblical?

Because God's Word lies at the centre of all preaching, sermons should be scriptural and doctrinally correct. Using the rating system rate the learner in the following points: following rating system:

- Was the sermon content derived from Scripture?
- Did the sermon help in understanding the text that was preached on?
- Was the main point effectively seen throughout the sermon?

Was it contextual?

- Was the preacher clear in the culture and the issues that surround the text?
- Did the preacher take the text out of context when delivering it?
- Did the sermon make a connection between the biblical wolf and the current situation of the audience?

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Was there a balance?

- In the various texts and references used in the sermon (Old and New Testament, different writings)
- In the use of illustrations
- In the personal experience, perspective and insight of the preacher

The introduction:

- Did it capture your attention?
- Did it effectively introduce the subject?
- Did it create interest for the sermon?

The content:

- Was the main idea clear?
- Was the content true to the text?
- Were the illustrations sufficient to explain the main points?
- Was the flow from one point to the next free and moving?
- Was the structure of the different points balanced?

The conclusion:

- Was the application clear and personal?
- Did you know how to respond to what you had learnt in the content?
- Did the sermon end decisively?
- Did the speaker accomplish his/ her goal?
- Was there an appeal made?
- Was the closing prayer appropriate to the application and appeal made?
- Did the preacher stick to the "20 minutes" allocated?
- Did they finish the points with balance (not rush because time was coming to an end?)

Did the preacher preach Christ?

- How well was the Gospel message worked into the sermon?
- Was the Gospel clearly presents for unbelievers present?
- Was the presentation of the Gospel a means by which the preacher challenged and encouraged the congregation?

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THE DELIVERY:

Was the preacher authentic?

- Did the preacher display passion and enthusiasm for the message?
- Did he show conviction in what he/ she said?

Did the sermon move the audience?

- Did the sermon engage you intellectually?
- Did the sermon stir your emotions?
- Did the sermon inspire you to take a particular action?

How well did he/she communicate? Evaluate the following

- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Eye Contact
- Volume
- Speed
- Language used
- Pronunciation

Dress:

- Did the speaker dress suitably for the occasion?

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