

## Blog 32: Rules of Interpretation

### The Bible

We must be people, who can rightly divide the Word and are committed to its excellence, its accuracy, its inerrancy, its inspiration, and its value. As in every century, the Word is under attack today.

We can make no progress in learning/understanding the scriptures without the Holy Spirit. But Jesus sent Him to us. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to teach and develop you into a person of God and His presence in the life of the Christian is essential to the Christian's understanding, appreciation, and implementation of the scripture (1 Cor 2:6-16).

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What is the Bible all about? Why did God leave this book behind?

I have five thoughts on why God gave us the Bible:

1. To teach us about God's creation and the start of human life; to reveal God's battle with Satan; and to show God's final preordained victory.
2. To teach us how to prepare to be in heaven (not create a great society). Your preparation for heaven is a major objective from God. It is done by your obedience to the Word and application of your giftedness from God.
3. To see what God is pleased with, what He isn't pleased with, and what He is neutral on.
4. To teach us about himself, His character, His nature.
5. To give us hope, patience and comfort.

Rom 15:4: "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, so that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

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We hear and learn by listening through filters. In college, I was an engineering student. In my senior year, after completing many courses in calculus, I took an advanced calculus course. In the class I was able to pick up some nuances and truths made by my professor because of my mental math filters I had developed through the years. As a freshman, I would not have heard what I did. My mind was not developed or sensitive to the professor's words. I heard but didn't really hear. Just opposite of that example, my junior year I took a literature class. I was lost, and the professor noted to me that what I needed to do was read 300 books. What he was telling me was to develop some mental literature filters.

Note: Mat 11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. These are not physical ears but ears in tune with the word of God.

This is true of listening to the Word. You need to develop "God filters" to hear Him correctly. Developing these filters takes time and much study in the Word and discussion with the people of God.

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Take inventory today.

1. All cultures without a knowledge of God have failed. Higher education, culture and intuition will not lead you to the "good life".
  2. Historically, all societies that pursued the anti-God thinking collapsed in debauchery.
  3. Are you committed to be a man of the Word? (See Romans 12:2.) Your growth as a Christian will be limited when you depend only on your local church or small group educating and nurturing your growth.
  4. You must have an older, mature person, a "seasoned saint" in the Word to help you learn the Word.
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I am asked by people how I study and interpreted the scriptures. The eight rules below is the starter list I give them:

Rules for interpretation:

1. What commands in the Bible are imperative to us and require application?
  - a. We are under obligation to obey any negative commandment in the New Testament.
  - b. Unless a negative command in the Old Testament is repeated in the New Testament, we are not under obligation to obey it.
  - c. You are under obligation to any biblical conviction you have declared to you by God, i.e., application of a positive command or response to a history/biography/fellow believers challenge from the Word. ref: I will memorize 10 verses this month.
2. How do I know what the right interpretation is?
  - a. Remember, scripture best interprets scripture. As an example, Luke 16:19-31 (blogs 22 and 23) could lead you to salvation by works or wealth. But the biblical scripture says salvation is by repentance and grace.
  - b. Also, reviewing your studies/thinking/conclusions in the presence of seasoned saints.
  - c. By checking out your thinking with elders of the past.
3. Words: Be a student of the most-used and important words in the book in the Bible you are studying. Look them up in Greek and English and record your findings. Always interpret and apply within the boundary of the definitions.
4. On the positive commands, you decide what the application looks like in your life, i.e., Eph 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” decide what the application looks like but remember you get to explain your thinking to God later.
  - First you must define what this love\* is, then
  - Define how Christ loved the church, and

- Know your spouse.
- Then create a list of ways you can demonstrate this love to your wife and do them.

\*Though the word love can have some emotional component, I think the word is better defined in terms of commitment.

5. When reading anywhere in the Bible, if the Holy Spirit convicts you to make an application, you are to obey. But do not challenge anyone else on their conviction on that verse. This is between you and God.
6. On the negative commands just do what they say. If it says do not commit adultery, the interpretation is to not commit adultery.
7. Whatever rule you abide by to interpret one verse, you must use the same rules for all the rest. Being consistent is imperative.
8. If Jesus says it or quotes it, pay attention.

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Application:

Question: What does it mean to you to –“rightly divide the Word”?

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit will awaken in you a hunger for the Word and guide you in your pursuit.
2. Pray that God give you a "Seasoned Saint", that is mature that can and will teach you how to study and learn and apply the Bible and is willing to meet with you.
3. Become a Berean, i.e. Acts 17:11 and after every session you are taught, go home and “see if what they said was true”.
4. Make a copy of these Rules and put them in your bible for ongoing reference and review them periodically.

There is a war going on for your minds and the elimination of the Bible.  
Be prepared.