



GRASPING GOD'S WORD

A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible

Grasping God's Word

- Repetition of words
- Contrasts
- Comparisons
- Lists
- Cause and effect
- Figures of speech
- Conjunctions
- Verbs
- Pronouns
- Questions and answers
- Dialogue
- Means
- Purpose/result statements
- General to specific and specific to general
- Conditional clauses
- Actions/roles of God
- Actions/roles of people
- Emotional terms
- Tone of the passage
- **Connections between Paragraphs and Episodes**
- **Story Shifts: Major Breaks and Pivots**
- **Interchange**
- **Chiasm**
- **Inclusio**

Grasping God's Word

- **Historical-Cultural Context**
 - ***The crucial interpretive principle: For our interpretation of any biblical text to be valid, it must be consistent with the biblical-cultural context of that text.***
 - Historical-cultural context involves the *biblical writer*, the *biblical audience*, and any *historical-cultural elements* touched on by the passage itself
 - Historical-cultural context relates to just about anything outside the text that will help you understand the text itself.

Grasping God's Word

- What do we bring to the text?
 - Preunderstanding
 - Includes all the preconceived notions and understandings that we bring to the text
 - Most have been formed consciously but some subconsciously
 - Preconceived notions are not always wrong, but most are
 - Comes from experiences or previous encounters with the text
 - Formed by felt boards in Sunday School, Bible Studies, private reading of the text, hymns, other Christian music, jokes, art, and nonbiblical literature
 - David strumming a harp in a white robe beside a creek – 1 Samuel 17
 - Theological agendas already formulated
 - Anything that doesn't fit in our agenda we skip or ignore
 - It's called "overstanding" and not "understanding"

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- What do we bring to the text?
 - Preunderstanding
 - Familiarity
 - We are prone to skip through it
 - Luke 2
 - Cultural Baggage
 - [Pinocchio?](#)
 - Jonah 2
 - [Burning Bush?](#)
 - Exodus 3
 - Culture? – combination of family and national heritage
 - Interpretational reflex – natural thing to do, we do it without thinking

Grasping God's Word

- **What do we bring to the text?**
 - **Preunderstanding**
 - **What we do want to do is submit our preunderstanding to the text, placing it under the text rather than over the text.**

Grasping God's Word

- What do we bring to the text?
 - Foundational Beliefs
 - With preunderstanding we must let it change each time we study a passage
 - Foundational beliefs, by contrast, DO NOT change with each reading
 - The Bible is the Word of God
 - The Bible is trustworthy and true
 - God has entered into human history; thus, the supernatural (miracles,etc) does occur.
 - The Bible is not contradictory; it is unified, yet diverse.
 - The Resurrection of Christ
 - The Gospel
 - The Trinity
 - Sure more could be added, these beliefs impacts how we view the entire Bible, they serve as our starting point

**NEXT WEEK
LITERARY CONTEXT**

