Re-Fuel: THE WORD Week 2

7-DAY BIBLE STUDY CHALLENGE: INTERPRETATION - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

They read out of the book of the law of God, translating and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was read. Nehemiah 8:8 HCSB

THIS WEEK'S GOAL

Understanding Scripture: From Observation to Interpretation.

Big Idea: Correct interpretation begins with understanding what God has said and what the biblical author intended to communicate.

Last week we learned to slow down and observe Scripture.
OBSERVATION asks: What does it say? This week, we're taking the next step.
INTERPRETATION asks: What does is mean? Next week we'll learn
APPLICATION asks: What should I do?

Interpretation is discovering what the biblical author intended to communicate through the words
he wrote, understood in their proper context.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR CORRECT INTERPRETATION

1. READ THE CONTEXT. What comes before and after the passage? How does it fit within the chapter and book?
2. UNDERSTAND THE AUTHOR AND AUDIENCE. Who wrote it? Who originally received it? What circumstances were involved?
3. RECOGNIZE THE LITERARY STYLE. Is this history, poetry, prophecy, a parable, wisdom literature, or a letter?
4. LET SCRIPTURE HELP EXPLAIN SCRIPTURE. Compare related passages without ignoring their individual contexts.
5. SEPARATE INTERPRETATION FROM APPLICATION. First discover the intended meaning. Then determine how to respond.

WHY DOES YOUR BIBLE TRANSLATION MATTER?

The Bible was originally written primarily in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Translators work to communicate those Scriptures accurately in English.

According to LifeWay, the HCSB was developed by more than 100 scholars representing 17 denominations, emphasizing both clear, contemporary English and faithfulness to the original biblical languages.

Translation	General Approach
KJV	**Formal equivalence; traditional English**
HCSB	**Optimal equivalence**; **balances accuracy** & **clarity**
ESV	**Essentially literal**; **emphasizes original wording**
NIV	**Balanced**; **more meaning-oriented contemporary English**

Why we use the HCSB at New Hope:
We value its commitment to accurately communicating Scripture in understandable English. Other responsible translations remain useful for comparison and study.

Remember:
Translation differences do not automatically mean that biblical teachings have been removed. Sometimes differences reflect manuscript evidence; other times they reflect how translators communicate the same original wording.

OUR RULE THIS WEEK
Don't ask only, "What does this verse mean to me?"
First ask: "What did the author intend to communicate, and what evidence supports that understanding?"

DAY 1 — MARK 2:1-12 JESUS HEALS THE PARALYZED MAN

Today's focus: Finding the central meaning of the passage.

Read the passage twice. Review your observations from last week.

1. What is happening in the surrounding text?

2. Why do the scribes question Jesus' declaration of forgiveness?

3. According to verse 10, what does Jesus want people to understand?

4. What is the central message of this passage?

5. Which verses support your interpretation?

Once question I still have:

DAY 2 — MARK 4:35-41 JESUS CALMS THE STORM

Today's focus: Understanding what a miracle reveals about Jesus.

Read the text. For additional context, look at Mark 4:1-34 and 5:1-20.

1. What circumstances are the disciples facing?

2. What does Jesus do that surprises them?

3. Why is the disciples' question in verse 41 important?

4. What does this account communicate about Jesus' identiy and authority?

5. What evidence supports that interpretation?

Once question I still have:

DAY 3 — LUKE 10:25-37 THE GOOD SAMARITAN
Today's focus: Understanding why Jesus told a parable.

1. What question leads Jesus to tell this story?

2. How does the lawyer attempt to justify himself?

3. How does Jesus' final question challenge the lawyer's thinking?

4. What is Jesus communicating about being a neighbor?

5. Which verses support your interpretation?

DAY 4 — JOHN 5:1-15 JESUS HEALS AT BETHESDA
Today's focus: Reading beyond the immediate passage.
Read John 5:1-18 to understand the larger setting.

1. What happens to the man who had been disabled?

2. Why does the Sabbath become an issue?

3. What does the larger passage reveal about the conflict surrounding Jesus?

4. What central truth does John communicate through this account?

5. What evidence supports that interpretation?

DAY 5 — MARK 10:46-52 BLIND BARTIMAEUS

Today's focus: Understanding a passage within its larger setting.

Read Mark 10:32-52.

1. What has Jesus been teaching before this encounter?

2. What does Bartimaeus recognize about Jesus?

3. What is significant about Bartimaeus following Jesus afterward?

4. How does this account contribute to Mark's teaching about discipleship?

5. Which verses support your interpretation?

DAY 6 — LUKE 19:1-10 ZACCHAEUS

Today's focus: Letting Jesus explain the meaning.

Read Luke 19:1-10.

1. How does Zacchaeus respond to Jesus?

2. How do the people respond to Jesus visiting Zacchaeus?

3. What does Jesus declare in verses 9-10?

4. How does Jesus' statement explain the purpose of this encounter?

5. What is the central truth Luke wants readers to understand?

DAY 7 — JOHN 13:1-17 JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

Today's focus: Discovering the intended meaning before applying it.

Read John 13:1-17, then consider John 13:18-35 for context.

1. What does John tell us Jesus knows before washing the disciples' feet?

2. Why does Peter object, and how does Jesus respond?

3. How does Jesus explain His actions in verses 12-17?

4. What does this passage communicate about Jesus and the kind of leadership He models?

5. Which verses support your interpretation?

BEFORE NEXT WEDNESDAY:

Take a few minutes to reflect on your week.

Which passage was most challenging to interpret?

How did studying the context change your understanding?

Did you discover an interpretation you previously held that needed correcting?

What question would you like to discuss at Re-Fuel?

NEXT WEEK — APPLICATION

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

We've learned to OBSERVE what Scripture says.

We're learning to INTERPRET what Scripture means.

Next week, we'll learn to APPLY God's Word through faithful obedience.

Our goal isn't simply to know more about the Bible. It's to know Jesus more deeply and live according to His Word.