



Interpretation 101: Discovering the Meaning God Intended

Interpretation is the practice of asking, “What does this passage mean?” After carefully observing what the text says, we seek to understand what the biblical author intended to communicate to the original audience and how that message fits within the larger story of Scripture. Interpretation is about discovering God's intended meaning rather than creating our own. We interpret by paying attention to context, literary style, historical background, and the way each passage points to Christ and God's redemptive plan. We interpret so we can understand God's truth accurately; we understand His truth so we can know Him more deeply; and we know Him more deeply so we can live faithfully. Sound application grows out of faithful interpretation.

Key questions in Biblical Interpretation

To Look for the Context of the Passage, Ask:

- What comes before and after this passage?
- What is happening in the chapter or book?
- Why did the author include this?

Seek to Discover the Author's Intended Meaning, Ask:

- What did the author intend his readers to understand?
- What would the original audience have heard?
- Why was this message significant to them?

Howard Hendricks often warned against asking, *"What does this passage mean to me?"* before first asking, *"What did it mean to them?"*

Let Scripture Interpret Scripture, Ask:

- Where else does the Bible talk about this theme?
- How does this fit into the larger story of Scripture?
- Is the author quoting or referencing another Old Testament passage or eye witness account?

As we continue reading through the Bible together, use the questions above to practice interpretation.

Date	Reading
July 20	Hosea 1–7
July 21	Hosea 8-14
July 22	Isaiah 28-30
July 23	Isaiah 31-34
July 24	Isaiah 35-36
July 25	Isaiah 37-39; Psalm 76