Studying the Bible

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*This teaching is based on principles outlined by Duvall and Hays in* ***Grasping God’s word: A hands-on approach to reading, interpreting, and applying the Bible****.*

How to study the Bible

1. Grasp the text in their town
	* Ask the question: What did the text (passage of scripture) mean to the Biblical audience?
		+ *We are not asking “what does this text mean to me?” yet*
	* Look for:
		+ repeated words
		+ grammatical structure
		+ emphasis on phrases/words
		+ the context: what came before this text, what comes after this text?
2. Measure the width of the river to cross
* Ask the question: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?
* Note differences in the culture, language, time, and situation
* If we don’t identify differences, we can make bad deductions on what the text of scripture is saying
	+ *This can hinder application of the text*
1. Cross the principlizing bridge
	* Ask the question: What are the theological principles from the passage of scripture that can be applied to our world?
	* **The same spirit that inspired the word of God then is the same spirit that will bring his word to life to our hearts now.**
		+ This principle helps us build a bridge from the town of the Bible to the town of our world that we can then walk.
2. Consult the Biblical map
* Ask the question: How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?
1. Apply the theological principles to our town.
* Ask the question: How do we live out the theological principles found?
* Apply the text to specific situations in our life



Duvall, J. S., & Hays, J. D. (2020). Grasping God's word: A hands-on approach to reading, interpreting, and applying the Bible. Zondervan Academic.

Practice

**Read the following text and apply the teaching to study Joshua 1: 1-9.**

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

**Grasp the text in their town:**

*God told Joshua to be strong and courageous and to be obedient so that the conquest of the promised land would be successful.*

**Measure the width of the river to cross:**

*We are reading from the Old Testament*

* *Israel is under a different covenant*
* *We are not leaders in Israel*
* *The culture, language, time and situation are all different*

**Cross the principlizing bridge:**

*Do we all serve God? Do we all want to be effective in our service to him? Do we all want to be courageous and to serve without fear?*

*Theological principle: Whatever God has called you to, draw strength and courage from his presence.*

**Consult the biblical map:**

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely* ***I am with you always****, to the very end of the age.” – Matthew 28:19-20*

*God is our refuge and* ***strength****, an* ***ever-present help*** *in trouble. – Psalm 46:1*

*Look to the Lord and* ***his strength****; seek his face always. – Psalm 105:4*

*Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my* ***power is made perfect in weakness****.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that* ***Christ’s power may rest on me****. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For* ***when I am weak, then I am strong****. – 2 Corinthians 12:8-10*

**Apply the theological principles of the town:**

*Listen to and spend time with and meditate and obey what God has said.*

* *Meditate on the word*
* *Commune in prayer*
* *Put aside distractions*

Resources

* [Free Course from The Gospel Coalition](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/foundations-biblical-interpretation/#approaches-to-meaning)
	+ If you would like to take an extended, deeper dive in understanding how to interpret the Bible, this free course may be a great option for you.
* *Grasping God’s word: A hands-on approach to reading, interpreting, and applying the* Bible – J.S. Duvall and J.H. Hays
* [The Bible Project Video](https://bibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/)
	+ This organization provides helpful, easy to watch videos that help us to understand the Bible. We encourage you to watch them all!
* [Six Question to Ask When Studying the Bible in a Group](https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/six-questions-to-ask-when-studying-the-bible-in-a-group) - Desiring God
* [ESV Study Bible](https://www.crossway.org/bibles/esv-study-bible-case/)
* *Living By the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the* Bible – Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks
* [The Chapel Resources on reading the Bible](https://thechapel.com/reading-the-bible/)