

How to Know What the Bible Means by What It Says: Principlizing and Applying (Lesson 4)

Intro/Review

- The Steps in the Interpretive Journey
- Step 3: Cross the Principlizing Bridge Across the River of Differences
- Step 5: Grasp the Text in Our Town

I. Two types of theological truths: (ch 10, slide 15)

- A. General, Universal theological truths (Principles)
- B. Context-specific theological truths (Applications)
- C. Universal theological truths can be applied in different ways depending on the situation.
One true interpretation, many applications
 1. When the river of differences between us and the original biblical audience is wide, the differences between the context-specific applications of the universal theological truth will be significant.
 2. When the river of differences between us is narrow, the differences between the applications of the universal theological truth will be small.
 3. Move from the Context-specific meaning of the text to the more general theological truths taken from that passage.

II. Cross the Principlizing Bridge (Step 3)

- A. Recall differences between us and the original audience noted in Step 2
 - B. Identify similarities between the situation of the original biblical audience and us; the **KEY ELEMENTS** of the original situation that your principle must address.
 - C. Write out the theological principle(s) evident in the passage
 1. One or two sentences for each principle
 2. Use present tense verbs.
 3. The principle should...
 - a. be reflected in the text
 - b. be timeless and not tied to a specific situation
 - c. not be culturally-bound
 - d. be relevant to both the original and a contemporary audience
 - e. As specific as possible, but still general enough to apply to us as NT believers
 - f. agree with the rest of Scripture (Step 4)
- Example: “God is holy and He wants His people to be holy.”

III. Practice Steps 1-4 : Philippians 4:13

IV. Step 5: Grasp the text in our town (Application).

Question: How should individual Christians today live out the universal theological principles revealed in the text?

This step consists of several substeps:

- A. Review the KEY ELEMENTS existing in the original situation that the theological principle addresses; the similarities between us and them.
 - How did the biblical author want his original audience to apply the Outstanding and Abiding Theological Principle to their circumstances?
- B. Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context.
 - Parallel Situation = One that contains *all* of the KEY ELEMENTS that you identified in “STEP 3: Cross the Principlizing Bridge.”
 - The parallel situation must include the central teachings of the biblical text, NOT JUST A PORTION OF IT.
- C. Make your application specific to your situation or social context.
 - Who, what, when, where, why, how
 - Use SMART Goals when making personal applications:
(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant/Results-based, Time-bound)

V. Applying Philippians 4:13 to a Contemporary Situation

- A. First, identify how the Theological Principles in the text address the original situation.
 - KEY ELEMENT 1: A Christian
 - KEY ELEMENT 2: A Christian who is experiencing a variety of trying circumstances as a result of following Christ faithfully.
 - KEY ELEMENT 3: Christ will give the Christian strength to endure any circumstances.
 - KEY ELEMENT 4: The peace of God replaces anxiety in the Christian who brings his/her requests to the Lord during trying circumstances (4:4-7).
 - Some Principles
 - 1. Christ will give believers strength to be content in a variety of trying circumstances that come as a result of following him faithfully.
 - 2. Believers can learn to be content in a variety of circumstances through Christ, who gives them strength.
- B. Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context.
 - Situation 1:
 - Situation 2:
 - Situation 3 :
 - Situation 4 :

- Situation 5 :