

Here is some Pre-Reading to do before Session Five

Session 5 - Interpretation: What Does It Mean?

Main Thought

Before we apply a passage, we need to ask what it means.

Interpretation simply means seeking to understand the meaning God has given in the passage. We do not give the Bible its meaning. We seek to receive it carefully and faithfully.

Observation asks, “What does the passage say?” Context asks, “What surrounds this passage?”

Interpretation asks, “What does this passage mean in that setting?”

A passage may have many faithful applications, but it does not have many contradictory meanings. Our aim is to understand what God has said before we decide how we should respond.

A Word of Encouragement

The word interpretation can sound academic, but the idea is simple: we are learning to listen carefully to the Word of God.

Needing help does not mean you have failed. In Acts 8, the Ethiopian man was reading Scripture and still needed someone to guide him. God was kind to provide that help.

You do not need to understand everything quickly. A faithful question is better than a rushed answer. As we ask God for wisdom, read carefully, and receive help humbly, we can grow in understanding.

A Few Simple Interpretation Questions

When you read a passage, ask:

- What did this passage mean to the first hearers or readers?
- What is the main point of the passage?
- What does this teach about God, people, sin, salvation, obedience, or Christ?
- Is this passage describing what happened, or commanding what we should do?
- How does the context help make the meaning clearer?
- What should I understand before I ask how this applies to me?

Please Read These Passages Before Session Five

1. **2 Timothy 2:15**

As you read, simply notice:

- What call is given about handling the Word of truth.
- Why careful handling of Scripture matters.
- How this verse connects with learning to study faithfully.

2. Acts 8:26-35

As you read, simply notice:

- What the Ethiopian man is reading.
- What he does not yet understand.
- How Philip helps him, and how the Scripture points to Christ.

3. Judges 6:36-40

As you read, simply notice:

- What God had already said to Gideon.
- What Gideon asks God to do.
- What this passage shows about Gideon and about God.

4. 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11

As you read, simply notice:

- How Paul says these Old Testament events function for us.
- The difference between an example and a direct command.
- How Scripture teaches us through both warning and instruction.

5. Luke 24:44-47

As you read, simply notice:

- What parts of Scripture Jesus mentions.
- How the Scriptures point to Him.
- Why Christ must shape how we understand the Bible's message.

One Simple Thing to Bring next time we catch up.

Before Session Five, read Acts 8:26-35 one more time and write one sentence in response to this:

Needing help to understand Scripture is...

It does not need to sound impressive. Just be honest.

Closing Thought

Faithful interpretation is not about inventing impressive ideas. It is about listening carefully to what God has said, in the context He gave it, so that we can respond to Him faithfully.

The goal is simple: read carefully, ask honest questions, seek the meaning God has given, and trust that He can teach you through His Word.