

Ephesians

A Real Piece of Work

Week Five

Last week we moved into the “**Interpret**” stage of Inductive Bible Study, where we answer the question, “What does it mean?” We began collecting tools that help us answer that question. The first item in our tool belt was “Context.” In other words, questions about a passage are often answered by what comes before or after it.

One question we often should ask in Bible Study is “What does this WORD mean?” That is, we “should” but if we’re honest we often skate right past important or unfamiliar words without questioning their meaning. Some words become so familiar to us we don’t think about their meaning anymore. A favorite family movie, “The Princess Bride” features a villain whose pet expression is, “Inconceivable!” Eventually, another character challenges him, “I do not think that word means what you think it means.” So true!

The second Interpretation Tool for our Bible Study Tool Belt is as obvious and underused as “Context.” It’s a **Dictionary**. The translators of your Bible chose the words they did for a reason. If you come across an unfamiliar word, or if you notice a word that seems important to the passage (maybe it’s repeated a lot) look it up in the Dictionary. Even familiar words have shades of meaning that get lost with overuse (like, “awesome!”). You may be surprised at what you can learn from a dictionary, for example, where a word came from, or meanings it carried in the past that we’ve forgotten. It’s important to remember that we use both of these Tools together. For a very simple illustration, your dictionary may give you several very different definitions for the word “trunk”. The context in which the word is used lets you know which is the correct meaning.

Week Five Homework

Observe (What Do I SEE?)

Pray...Read...Mark up the passage...List 1-2 observations per verse.

Ephesians 4:1-16 (NIV)

Observations

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,
he led captives in his train
and gave gifts to men.”

⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who

descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

“Lump and Label”...Go back over the passage and look for 2-4 “lumps” of content that together express one idea. Give each “lump” a “label.” Try to make your labels as brief as possible.

<i>Lump (verses)</i>	<i>Label</i>

List any questions you have about this passage.

Interpret (What Does it MEAN?)

Use a Dictionary to gain insight...if any of your questions involved a word whose meaning isn't clear, look it up in a dictionary. Or, if a word seems very important to the passage, be sure you're clear on what it means. Record what you find.

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Apply (How Does it WORK?)

Make it practical. Now that you have spent some time looking in detail at God's Word, don't stop! Ask yourself, "How does this work...in general...and for ME?" You may find it helpful to look for...

S—a SIN to avoid

P—a PROMISE to claim

E—an EXAMPLE to follow

C—a COMMAND to obey

K—KNOWLEDGE of God to believe

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