

Devotional Bible Study Method Session 3

Five Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Who is the author talking to and why?

Is he addressing a particular situation of the nation of Israel or in the church? Is it a personal letter to a single person? Is the audience before or after Christ came to earth? Figuring this out allows us to recognize what this verse would have meant to the original audience.

2. What is the larger passage talking about, looking at the verses before and after?

If we attempt to remove a single verse from its position, then its meaning can be significantly distorted. Conversely, if we consider what the surrounding verses are addressing, it will be easier to discover what the difficult verse is talking about.

3. What type of writing is this?

Maybe you're reading a personal letter, a narrative, or possibly a psalm of poetry. We certainly don't read a news article the same way we read a poem. We approach these writings differently because of their different genres. Scripture is the same way. Keeping the genre of the verse in mind will be beneficial.

4. What words are important?

Are there any conjunctions, like "and" or "because" connecting this verse to the earlier verse? Do you spot words like "if" and "then"? These words communicate connection or causation and will help you understand your verse and how it fits into the larger passage.

5. Where else does the Bible talk about this?

Some verses may also have parallel passages, like the stories in the Gospels or passages in the New Testament quoted from the Old Testament. Looking at these passages will also aid in your pursuit of the message in this verse.