

3. Context, Context, Context

2 Tim. 2:15 instructs us to: Accurately handle [rightly divide] the word of truth.

This implies that we can inaccurately handle & 'wrongly' divide the word of truth! One of the most effective ways to interpret the bible 'accurately' and 'correctly' is to **let the bible interpret the bible** as much as possible.

This mean we always need to look at scripture in context. In the immediate context of surrounding verses, in the local context, which is the general theme of the chapter or chapters*. And finally in light of the overall biblical context, in the light of what the scriptures have to say as a whole. Always ask:

What is the **Immediate** Context?
 What is the **Local** Context? And...
 What is the **Overall** Biblical Context?

One Example of Interpreting a Verse this way is:

Matt. 7:1, "Judge not that you be not judged,"
 So many stop there and interpret this verse in isolation because they want unconditional approval. But Jesus didn't stop there! *

The Immediate Context:

Matt.7:2, "for in the same **way** you judge others, you will be judged..."

Jesus often 'judged' righteously, and openly called out sin. Here in this context he is calling out hypocritical judgement. Matt. 7:5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to [judge righteously instead of hypocritically and] take the speck out of your brother's eye.

The Local Context:

Matt.7:15,16 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16 You will know them by their fruits ...**"

The Overall Context:

In John 7:24, Jesus said, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

[the greek word translated 'judge' here is the same greek word used in Matt. 7:1 above]

Matt. 18:15, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private..."

Lk. 17:3 "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him."

* punctuation, chapters and verses were not used in the original manuscripts, chapters were added in 1227 and verses in 1551

4. Avoid Assumption & Speculation

2 Tim. 2:23, refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they breed quarrels.

1 Tim. 6:3-4, If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine according to godliness **4** he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions (surmising).

Assumptions and speculation so easily result in error and are a very dangerous foundation.

No matter how convincing a presentation or an argument *seems* to be, always stick with the **clear** teaching of scripture!

Context, Context, Context Always Let the Bible Interpret the Bible

powerful life changing truths are waiting to be revealed

Other Bible Studies in our Teaching Series

- Church Structure - Team Ministry
- What About Repentance?
- Once Saved Always Saved?
- Assurance of Salvation
- Is the 'Secret' Rapture Biblical?
- What is the Abomination of Desolation?



we need to know
 what the bible is saying
 & we need to know
 what it **isn't** saying! So...

how do we interpret the Bible?

Be diligent
 to present yourself
 approved of God,
 as a workman who does
 not need to be ashamed,
 accurately handling
 the word of truth

2 Tim. 2:15

Which Translation is Best for Studying the Bible?

Bible Translation Comparison

Word for Word	Thought for Thought	Paraphrase
NASB AMP	ESV KJ NKJ HCSB	NRSB NAB
Interlinear	NIV NLT	NIV NIV GNT
		TLB MSG

Types of Translations

‘Word for Word’ Translations (Formal Equivalence)

Aim to be a literal translation that reflects the original text as closely as possible. By giving priority to what the original text actually said word by word, allows them to make fewer interpretive decisions.

‘Thought for Thought’ and Paraphrased Translations (Dynamic Equivalence) Aim to make the text modern and readable. It gives priority to what they believe the text is saying phrase by phrase which requires them to make more interpretive decisions.

Why we use ‘Word for Word’ Translation In our Bible Studies

Both translation methods have advantages and disadvantages. Paraphrased translations are a beneficial addition, but they are a poor substitute for more literal translations. We believe a ‘Word for Word’ is a much better option for all bible study purposes. It lets us know more closely, what the original text said.

The Translations We Recommend for Bible Studies

We recommend the NASB and the KJV. English words that have changed meaning in the 400 years since the KJV was written, are corrected in the MEV. But we don’t recommend the MEV or the ESV as they don’t use *italics* to indicate words that they have added, and we are left not knowing what the original text actually said.

A Clearer Understanding

For richer, clearer individual word meanings, Lexicons can provide word definitions and meaning of the original NT Greek & OT Hebrew languages. For example at : <https://biblehub.com/john/3-16.htm> - in the ‘Greek’ or ‘Lexicon’ links, the original word ‘number’ will take you to Strong’s, NAS & Strong’s Exhaustive Concordances.

Parentheses = (fuller meaning of Hebrew from Strong’s Concordance)

Brackets = [clarifying comments].

Words in *italics* are not in original text

1. Study Prayerfully with Humility And Expectancy

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us

1 Peter 1:22-23

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³ for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

James 1:22 is a Warning of Deception

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only. Otherwise, you are deceiving yourselves.

[If we are ‘deceiving ourselves’ we are opening ourselves up to even further deception.]

John 14:21 is a Promise of Revelation

”He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and I will reveal (manifest) Myself [the Word made flesh] to him”

Acts 17:11 says,

Now these [the Bereans] were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

The Bereans didn’t just take the word and teachings of even Paul the Apostle for itself. They personally examined the scriptures to make sure for themselves!

The Holy Spirit Himself Will Lead You into All Truth

John 16:13-14

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you”

We encourage you to study at home for yourself from an accurately translated bible. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit; not a church or youtube, but the Holy Spirit Himself would lead and guide us into all truth.

2. Never Interpret a Verse In Isolation

God can certainly speak to us, bless us and give us wonderful revelations from individual verses. But...

2 Cor. 13:1 says:

This is the third time I am coming to you. “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

This is an often repeated and important principle in scripture. Matt.18:16, 1 Tim.5:19, Deut. 17:6 & 19:5

Satan, the Cults & False Teachers All Isolate Verses of Scripture OUT of Context

Satan takes verses **out** of context
Cults take verses **out** of context and
False teachers take verses **out** of context

If Satan cannot pull us back, into sin, he will try to push us too far! He wants to deceive us and push us into error and into being scripturally unbalanced.

Satan used and twisted God’s word, to deceive Eve. He even used this same age old tactic against Jesus. Satan tempted Jesus with individual scriptures that were isolated and out of context, and out of harmony with other scriptures.

Cults & false teachers do the same and then they have to ignore or try to explain away conflicting scriptures.

One Example of Interpreting a Verse in Isolation

The Exclusive Brethren do not eat with outsiders & this is primarily based on one verse in isolation:

2 Cor. 6:14, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?

But Scripture also says:

1 Cor. 5:9-10, I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people ¹⁰ I did not at all mean with the sexually immoral of this world... for then you would need to go out of the world.

1 Cor 10:27, If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience sake.

Mark 2:15, Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house... and sinners were eating with Him and his disciples...