

# How to Read the Bible

## *Accurately Interpreting God's Word*

Chad Harrington, Digging Deep, Harpeth Christian Church

### **Main Goal**

To help you accurately interpret God's Word to be useful for devotions, disciple-making, and teaching.

### **Primary Objectives**

- Understand proper biblical interpretation methods, backgrounds, and strategies.
- Properly use the relevant tools at your disposal.
- Get amped about the task at hand of reading and teaching the Bible for your generation.

### **Core Competencies**

1. Pick a suitable translation for yourself and those in your care.
2. Conduct a book study.
3. Execute on a segment study.
4. Rightly complete a word group study.
5. Understand and explain why proper interpretation methods matter.
6. Comprehend and actively avoid fallacies of interpretation and of teaching.
7. Explain the journey of interpretation in four parts.
8. Use the relevant interpretation tools, both digital and physical.
9. Make observations and questions as you read the text.
10. Apply the central concepts of interpretation (like AIM and Context is King).
11. Recognize the importance of biblical genres when interpreting specific texts.
12. Yield to the Holy Spirit when you're reading.

### **Activities**

- Attend six class sessions.
- Certification candidates:
  - Read class text (see below).
  - Memorize ten memory verse (see below).

### **Main Class Text(s)**

J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays's *Grasping God's Word*, any edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001 [2005, 2012, 2020]). *Note: Each edition follows a similar outline; the older ones are less expensive.*

### **Recommended Books**

- David R. Bauer and Robert Traina's *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014 [2011]).
- Andreas J. Köstenberger's *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Kregel Academic, 2021 [2011]).
- Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2014 [1981]).
- D. A. Carson's *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996).
- N.T. Wright, *New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

## Recommended Memory Passages

*The following are in the NIV (1984) translation.*

- Psalm 1:1-3: "1 Blessed is the man // who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked // or stand in the way of sinners // or sit in the seat of mockers. // 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, // and on his law he meditates day and night. // 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, // which yields its fruit in season // and whose leaf does not wither. // Whatever he does prospers."
- Matthew 13:23: "But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."
- 2 Timothy 2:15: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."
- Isaiah 66:2: "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
- 1 Peter 1:20-21: "20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

## Digital Tools

- Bible Gateway ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)): For various translations and for word studies. Lots of translations. Great for conducting word searches (easy interface), plus a good audio Bible too. Known for its desktop version.
- YouVersion Bible App: <https://www.youversion.com/>: For various translations, plans, and devotionals. Great for word searches, plus reading in community and discussing as you go through the app! Good audio Bible too. Known for its mobile app.
- Blue Letter Bible ([www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)): For various translations, commentaries, and word studies linked to Greek and Hebrew from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. This is great for customized searches; solid and free commentaries; includes resources, like history tools, other online tools don't have.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Class 1: Translations, Tools, and Methods**

*Read Duvall and Hays Foreword through Chapter 2 (pages 1–44).\**

*\*Chapter and page numbers from Second Edition. For those with other editions, the outlines are close enough that you can follow the chapter numbers and be in the same ballpark. So still follow the chapter numbers, although page numbers will be different.*

### **Class 2: How to Do a Book Study and Principles of Interpretation**

*Read Duvall and Hays Chapters 3 and 4 (pages 45–86).*

### **Class 3: Identifying the Main Theme in a Book Study**

*Read Duvall and Hays Chapter 5–7 (pages 87–131).*

### **Class 4: Section Studies and Exegetical Fallacies**

*Read Duvall and Hays Chapters Chapters 8 and 9 (pages 132–174).*

### **Class 5: Word Studies**

*Read Duvall and Hays Chapters 10–13 (pages 175–226).*

### **Class 6: Exegesis, Application, and Inspiration**

*Read Duvall and Hays Chapters 14–17 (pages 227–304).\*\**

*\*\*Chapters 18–22 about the genres of the Old Testament are not required but advised!*

***Leadership and Ordination Track: Test, Memory Verses, and Reading Due***