



How to Read the Bible

Session 4: What it Means - Tracing the Message

DISCUSSION

1. What is something you learned recently from a book, article, movie, or youtube video?
2. How do you feel when your words are taken out of context?

TEACHING NOTES

Meaning: The message the author intended to communicate to the original audience.

I. Survey the Story of the Bible

II. Identify The Message of the Book

Survey the book to determine the following -

1. **WHO** wrote the book?
2. **TO WHOM** did he write the book?
3. **WHY** did he write the book?
4. **WHEN** did he write the book (in both history and the Biblical Story)?
5. **WHERE** did the author write the book/is the audience located?

Other Information to Identify

Genre - The genre determines how the author communicates his meaning.

Protagonists & Antagonists - Who is the author esteeming/who is he rebuking?

Application - The intended **response** of the **original** audience.

Creating a **message statement** for the book-

[WHO]wrote to the [TO WHOM] in order to [WHY] so that [TO WHOM] would [APPLICATION].

Ex: **Paul** wrote a **letter** to the **church in Philippi** in order to explain that **his imprisonment imitates Christ's suffering**, and **his confidence is in the righteousness of Christ** so that the Church of Philippi would **reject the teaching of the Judaizers**, **place their hope in the future resurrection**, and **join Paul in suffering, united together, for the sake of the Gospel**.

III. Identify the Message of the Passage

Determine how the passage you are reading contributes to the message of the book.

Context determines meaning. The closer the context, the more probable the meaning is correct.

CLOSEST CONTEXT - Same book of the Bible

1. Grammar (See Session 3)
2. Surrounding Passages
3. Developing Argument of the Book

FURTHER CONTEXT - Entire Bible

1. The Story of the Bible
2. Systematic theology

FURTHEST CONTEXT - Outside of the Bible

1. Extra-biblical Sources
2. Opinions

Example: Philippians 4:13 - *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13, ESV)

Creating a message statement (exegetical statement) for the passage - Paul explains that Christ has strengthened him to be content and endure both suffering and abundance well, in order that the church in Philippi might do likewise.

CLASS ACTIVITY: Create a message statement for the book of Titus.

Homework: Read Chapter 8 of Journey into God's Word