

STUDYING SCRIPTURE FOR TRANSFORMATION

Pastor Rigel Robinson

INTRODUCTION

Once I was browsing in a bookstore and came across a book entitled “Sermons for busy pastors.” I am still thinking that if a pastor is too busy to study the word, wrestle with its truth and be transformed by its power, that pastor is too busy to preach. It’s the equivalent of buying fast-food for your family every day because you cannot cook, too lazy to cook, or too busy to cook. That puts your family health at risk.

As leaders in the church, we have an obligation to be the first ones to be cross-examined by our sermons before we try to cross examine others with it. In Ezekiel 3, Scripture makes the connection between Bible study and preaching (*see verses 1-2; 10-11*). We will return to the passage shortly.

I have listened to several Sunday School teachers in different churches. Some simply taught the Sunday School **commentary**. Others talked about everything else except the Scripture or what was in the commentary. No matter how good the commentary may be, the teacher/preacher must be saturated with the **Biblical text**. We teach and preach **the word of God**.

I was browsing the internet and came upon this advertisement

“Context context context

It is the missing piece of the puzzle when people are trying to dig deeper into God’s word

A passage in isolation is just words

To understand the Bible on a deeper level, we need to look at the verses, themes, subjects, chapters and books surrounding the passage we are studying.”

OBJECTIVES: At the completion of this session, participants will

1. Understand the importance of personal Bible study
 2. Be able to study a Bible passage using a systematic process
 3. Be able to teach and preach with integrity from a given text
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- I. The premise of Bible Study
 1. Simon Since: Begin with the **why**. Why study the word?
 - a. For _____ of Covenant life
 - b. To learn Kingdom _____
 - c. For life _____
 - II. The Principles of Bible Study
 1. Prayer must precede practice (Luke 18:1)
 - a. Prayer of _____
 - b. Prayer of _____
 - c. Prayer for _____
 - d. Prayer for _____
 2. You cannot interpret what you have not _____.
 - a. Observe the text for details.

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- b. What does the text explicitly say?
 - c. Record your observation not your interpretation.
3. You cannot apply something you do not _____, and you cannot understand something you have not seen, heard or experienced.
4. Interpret **only** what you have seen.
5. Context has _____.
 - a. Pretext
 - b. Text
 - c. post text
 - d. No word or phrase has meaning outside of its context.
 - e. Words and phrases should be interpreted in the context where they are found.
6. Interpret what you have seen in its **own** _____.
7. A single word does not carry the _____ of a passage.
8. A word does not mean the _____ thing in every context.
 - a. In Romans chapters 1-8 the word death appears with five different meanings.
 - b. The word salvation does mean the same thing in Psalms as in Acts.
 - c. Redeem in Ruth does not mean the same as redeem in the Psalms or the New Testament
9. A sentence or a verse is not the _____ on the meaning of a passage.
10. A paragraph holds the whole _____.
 - a. Ephesians 1:3 does not carry the whole message God intends.
 - b. Verses 1-14 (the paragraph) gives the entire message of God's redemptive love.
 - c. The Bible teacher must teach from vs. 1-14 with emphasis on verse 3.
11. The literary genre dictates how you _____ a text.
 - a. Narrative
 - b. Poetry
 - c. History
 - d. Epistle
 - e. Legal document, etc.
12. _____ the truth before you try to sell it.
 - a. Ezekiel 3:1-10
 - b. Jeremiah 20:9

III. The Practice of Bible Study

One pastor under whom I served always reminded us to keep our well full. The reason why the river never runs dry is because the sky keeps the rain coming. The reason why the sea never dries up is because the rivers keep flowing. Dr. Hendrickson said, "I would rather that my students drink from a running stream than from a stagnant pool."

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When you have a meaningful **Word habit**, your teaching and preaching is like a running stream. When you are constantly being transformed by the Word, your teaching and preaching becomes _____.

Here are the four habits of Bible study that will make your preaching and teaching transformational:

- A. _____: Owning God's truth begins with investigating God's truth.
1. What does the text say exactly?
 2. What are the specifics written in black and white?
 3. Ask: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
 4. Note the order of events or arrangement of an argument.
 5. Note words that indicate a person's attitude. Take time to examine the text.
 6. Don't be in a hurry to craft a lesson or a sermon.
 7. Remember, you cannot interpret what you have not seen.
- B. _____: From your observations determine the meaning or message of the text.
1. What original message was the author trying to convey?
 2. What message would the original audience have understood?
 3. How should I understand this text considering my present situation?
 4. There is only **ONE** interpretation to a text, but there can be many applications.
 5. Whatever you claim is the meaning, your observations from the text should support it.
- C. _____: There is a point at which the Word must work its way into the student's heart to create character change (John 15:3; Psalm 119:9-11; Joshua 1:8; Colossians 3:16). Meditation is where your lifestyle meets God's truth.
1. What truth is God speaking to me in this text?
 2. How is my life aligning with the truth in this text?
 3. What adjustments do I need to make because of this truth?
 4. How can I make this text a principle in my life?
- D. _____
1. Does this text offer a _____ to claim?
 2. Does this text offer a _____ to follow?
 3. Does this text offer a _____ to heed?
 4. Does this text address a _____ I need to discontinue?

Until the word saturates you, it cannot transform you. Bible study is about life transformation. When we are transformed by God's truth, then we become agents of transformation in the lives of others.

Biblical preaching and teaching must be done from experience of a transformed life.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)