

# WHAT DID THE AUTHOR INTEND TO SAY TO HIS FIRST READERS?

## **OBSERVE** WHAT DID THE AUTHOR SAY?

### **See What Is There: CONTENT**

1. Survey the unit.
2. Title each chapter/paragraph.
3. Note proportions and sense the atmosphere.
4. Observe the literary type.

### **Look for the Design: RELATIONSHIPS**

—Look for basic structural relationships:

*cause-effect*

*contrast*

*introduction*

*climax*

*cruciality (the pivot)*

*question-answer*

*comparison*

*generalization / particularization*

*recurrence*

—Find the design. Look for relationships between phrases and sections, but also large structural relationships between whole sections or parts of the book/section you're working with.

—Probe relationships. Ask what they mean and why the author might use them.

## **INTERPRET** WHAT DID THE AUTHOR MEAN?

***Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?***

### **DEFINITION**

Who or what is this?

What is the meaning or significance of this?

### **MEANS**

How is this done?

How is the idea communicated?

### **REASONS**

Why is this so?

What is the purpose?

### **IMPLICATIONS / ASSUMPTIONS**

What is implied by this?

What does this assume?

### **Helpful Tools for Interpretation**

Cross references in your Bible!

Bible Dictionaries

biblehub.com/dictionary  
biblestudytools.com/dictionary

Concordance & Cross References

biblegateway.com  
(back of your Bible)

Original Language Word Meaning

biblewebapp.com  
blueletterbible.com

# WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH US AND OUR WORLD?

## EVALUATE WHAT PRINCIPLE IS BEING TAUGHT?

### **Keep the Sacred Story Straight**

Know what period of biblical history you're studying, and how the context affects interpretation:

*patriarchal*  
*Mosaic*  
*conquest*

*united monarchy*  
*divided monarchy*  
*exile*

*restoration*  
*life of Christ*  
*apostolic*

### **Separate the Local from the Universal (Regulatory vs. Revelatory)**

—Find the universal principle(s)

—Foundational passages for understanding Scripture's universal principles:

**Sermon on the Mount**  
(Matt. 5–7)  
**Love**  
(1 Cor. 13; Col. 3:12–17)

**Fruit of the Spirit**  
(Gal. 5:16–26)  
**Humility**  
(Phil. 2)

**Ten Commandments**  
(Exod. 20; Deut. 5)  
**God's Power and Glory**  
(Ps. 115)

## APPLY HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND?

### **Apply Principles First**

### **Be Specific and Concrete**

*money*  
*time*

*specific people*  
*specific activities*

*specific relationships*  
*specific possessions*

### **Get Started with Questions**

1. What sin should I confess and repent of in view of this passage?
2. What affirmations should I make in light of this Word—affirmations about God, about Christ, about myself, about others, about the world?
3. What should I thank God for in light of this passage?
4. What changes should I make in my investment of time, money, energy, or personal resources in view of the truth of this passage?
5. What prayer should I pray for myself or my family or my friends or my enemies in light of what I have seen in the Word?

ALWAYS

NOW