ARIZONA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION SUMMARY AND REVIEW

SUBMITTED TO BRIAN REED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
BIB 497 BIBLICAL STUDIES INTERNSHIP

BY
ANNE MUNSIL

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION SUMMARY AND REVIEW

The purpose of this document is to provide a synthesized, coherent *overview* and *review* of the

Arizona Christian University biblical interpretation curriculum. In addition to reviewing and

describing the steps involved in the process of biblical interpretation, this paper will also include

a step-by-step *illustration* of the process as it relates to Ephesians 5:21-33. In the investigation of

this passage, careful attention will be paid to two particular views regarding the passage:

egalitarianism and complementarianism. *Evangelical egalitarianism*, according to John G.

Stackhouse, argues that women are "…of equal worth, dignity, ability, and calling, and therefore

not to be discriminated against on the basis of sex where sexual difference cannot be shown to be

a relevant factor."[1] This essentially means that men are not automatically given authority in the

church or within marriage simply because of their gender, and in return, women are not

automatically disqualified from positions of authority just because of their gender. *Evangelical*

complementarianism, on the other hand, contends that although women are of equal status before

God in terms of salvation, they are not permitted to exercise authority over men, either in

marriage or in church.[2] The various elements of the biblical interpretation process will be used to

show the strengths and weaknesses of both positions and to depict how much disparity there can

be when interpreting even a single passage. The overview of the process will begin with a brief

---

[1] John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Finally Feminist: A Pragmatic Christian Understanding of Gender* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 19.

[2] John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "An Overview of Central Concerns: Questions and Answers," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991), 56-57.

review of the "Interpretive Journey"[3] followed by a discussion of the standard elements which

are involved in the process:

- **Observation** at the sentence, paragraph and discourse level
- **Historical-cultural background**
- **Literary genres and surrounding context**
- **Word studies**
- **Application**
- **Correlation**

Understanding how to interpret the Bible is essential to the Christian life because without

a proper interpretation, Christians face the danger of not knowing all of what they are called to

do. In addition, Christians are commanded to meditate on the Scriptures and apply them to their

lives, so it is imperative that the "truths" they apply are indeed truths. It also prevents Christians

from being taken in by false doctrine, as Paul warns against in several of his epistles (e.g. Rom

16:17; Eph 4:11-14; 1 Tim 1:3, 6:3-5; 2 Tim 2:14-19, 3:1-5). Not only that, in Acts 17 Luke

points to the Bereans as a positive example of people being willing to interpret the Scriptures for

themselves and not simply take the word of the most popular or respected theologian of their

day.

The Interpretive Journey

The metaphor employed by Duvall and Hays[4] to describe the process of biblical interpretation

envisages two *towns* separated by a *river* of differences. The original hearers of the letter, the

audience to whom it was written, live in *their town*. Christians today live in *our town*. The two

towns/audiences are separated by differences—culture, language, time, situation, covenant,

etc.—which, like a *river*, need to be crossed in order to apply the meaning of a text given to an

---

[3] J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005), 21-25.

[4] Ibid.

ancient audience to Christians today. A *principlizing bridge*—timeless truths which are relevant for all people in all times and places—allows the river of differences to be crossed.

In order to understand the meaning of a text today, the text must first be understood in its own context—a process which involves careful observation of what the text says and investigation as to what it meant to its original hearers. From the original situation, timeless truths are identified which are then applied to the situations of Christian readers today. This process may be related to the more mainstream terms[5] used in biblical interpretation as follows:

Duvall and Hays' Metaphor	Traina's Method
Step 1: Grasp the text in "their town"	**Observation** – What does the text *say*? **Interpretation** – What *did* the text *mean* to them?
Step 2: Measure the width of the "river" between "their town" and "our town" **Step 3**: Cross the principlizing "bridge"	**Application (General)** – What *does* the text mean today?
Step 4: Grasp the text in "our town"	**Application (Personal)** – What *does* the text mean *to me*?

Observation: What the Text SAYS

This is the first stage in biblical interpretation. According to Robert Traina, it "involves perception."[6] That is to say, when readers approach the biblical text, they must be conscious of what they are reading and be able to form connections between different words, sentences and paragraphs. This stage is characterized by interaction, from both a grammatical and contextual standpoint, with the biblical text. The reader starts by making observations at the *sentence level*,

---

[5] As used, for instance, in Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1952).

[6] Ibid., 31.

which include parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives that seem to stand out. For example, if a word is a common word such as "the," it is much less likely to be important to the passage. However, verbs such as "be subject" will probably have more significance. Next, one should look for important *connections between sentences, phrases, and paragraphs*. In other words, the reader must look for relations between terms. If the author keeps repeating a theme, such as Christ's relationship to the church, it is more likely to be important.

There are things that the reader can observe which may or may not have much bearing on the interpretation of a passage, and it is the job of the reader to determine which observations are important. Every single word in the text is inspired by God, but some things should get more of our attention simply because of their position within a sentence. Observations

Why is Observation Important?
• It grounds the reader's interpretation in what the text actually says
• It requires the reader to consider objective instead of subjective data
• It makes the reader slow down and see all the data
• It makes the reader consider all the data and ask questions they wouldn't normally ask
• It allows the reader to read "out of" (*exegesis*) instead of "into" (*eisegesis*) the text
• It helps the reader to overcome their preunderstandings

can and should be written down; it is often useful, if one is going to study a particular passage, to print out a larger copy of the text to write their observations on.[7] Most print in Bibles is too small to write much between the margins, and the paper is often delicate, so using an alternate copy is a valuable tool.

With regard to *what* a reader ought to observe in the text, it is generally preferable to find *as many observations as possible* and then to critically evaluate which of the identified observations would seem to be most relevant to the understanding of the passage. Additionally,

---

[7] Ibid., 72.

standard hermeneutics textbooks are helpful in suggesting which kinds of things are usually

more important than others; some examples—by no means an exhaustive list—include:[8]

Sentence-level Observations	Paragraph-level Observations
• **Repetition** of words, phrases, or ideas (these usually represent important topics in the passage) • **Comparison**s (look for *similarities* between items) • **Contrasts** (look for *differences* between items) • **Lists** (look especially for significance in the *order* of items as well as the *presence* or *absence* of certain terms) • **Cause** and **effect** • **Figures of speech** (metaphors, similes, etc.) • **Conjunctions** (and, but, for, or, yet, nor, so, etc.) • **Verbs** (look especially for the significance of: Tense [time of action] Voice [active or passive] Mood [*indicative*, *imperative* (command), *subjunctive* (wish, possibility)] • **Pronouns** (look especially for the *antecedent* [the word the pronoun stands in for])	• **Questions** and **answers** (literal and hypothetical) • **Dialogue** (two or more speaking together) • **Means** statement (states *how* or *by what means* something occurred; look for a phrase which explains *how* something occurred, often with "by") • **Purpose** statement (states *why* or *for what purpose* some action is taken; look for "that" or "so that") • **General** to **specific** (and vice-versa) • **Conditional** clause (an *if…then…* statement; it will always have "if" but may not have "then") • **Actions**/**roles** of **God** and **people** • **Emotional terms** (often indicate tone) • **Tone** of a passage (be *very cautious* with this—it is usually not clear) • **Cruciality** (everything centers around one point) • **Summarization** • **Explanation** or **analysis** • **Continuity** (repetition of similar, but not identical phrases) • **Continuation** (author builds on a previous point made in a different place in the text) • **Grounds** (explains *why* or *for what reason* something occurred, look for "for" followed by an explanation)=
Discourse-level Observations	
• **Connections** between paragraphs and episodes • **Shifts**/**pivots** in the story • **Chiasm** (usually follows the general pattern ABCBA) • **Interchange** (alternating or sandwiching elements of the text)	

The following is an example of how these items might be identified on a print-out of the biblical

text—the example here is from our example passage, Ephesians 5:21-33:

---

[8] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 30-37, 47-54, 67-75; Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, 33-68.

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33

who? to be subject to each other
wives - subject to husbands
church - subject to Christ
role of God → head of church

rep.
²¹and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

rep.
²²Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

conj. *f.o.s.* *rep.*
comparison → husband → Christ
²³For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the *wife → church*

church, He Himself being the Savior of the (body). *→ church?*

conj. *rep.* *rep*
²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to

their husbands in everything.

comparison
present active *rep* *past active* *past active*
²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church) and gave

Himself up for her,
cause → Christ gave himself *conj.*
cause - washing of water
effect - being cleansed/sanctified
active (church) *past active*
²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water
effect → sanctification of church
means - cleansed by washing
with the word,
purpose - cleansed so that he might present...
active
²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot
conjunction
or wrinkle or any such thing; (but) that she would be holy and blameless.
contrast → church in glory, holy and blameless vs. spot and wrinkle
active *rep.*
²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He
rep.
who loves his own wife loves himself;
comparison - husbands love wives as own bodies
explanation
conjunction
²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as
contrast → hating flesh vs. nourishing/cherishing
Christ also does the church,)
comparison - Christ to the church
explanation *person to their flesh*
³⁰because we are members of His body.
present active
Metaphor - we (the church) = members of His body

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33

One of the first things to notice in this passage is the **repetition** of the important verb: "be subject" (3x).This is used in 5:21 to refer to believers' relationships with one another and in 5:22 and 24, to refer to a responsibility of wives (to husbands) and the church (to Christ), respectively.

Since the **verb** "be subject" involves an action between two or more parties, it prompts the question as to whether the opening command in 5:21 ("be subject to one another") refers to a *mutual submission* (a typical evangelical Egalitarian view)[9] or whether some Christians—in this context, wives (5:21-33), children (6:1-4) and slaves (6:5-9)—are to be *one-directionally submissive* to a superior (a typical evangelical Complementarian view).[10]

The extended **comparison** of Christ to the husband and the church to the wife continues throughout the passage. It is obvious that Paul felt explanation was needed about how Christ related to the church and how husbands should relate to their wives. Paul repeats similar, but not identical phrases along the lines of the idea that wives need to submit to their husbands starting in verse 22, and repeating the idea in verse 24 and 33. He also expands on his original comparison of wives to the church and husbands to Christ in verses 23-24 in verses 25-33. This is also an example of both **continuity** and **continuation**. The continuity is the repetition of similar *phrases*, while continuation is the repetition of a similar *theme* throughout a longer discourse[11].

In addition, 5:25-27 provide an example of a **means** and **purpose statement**:

> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <u>so that He might sanctify her</u> [**purpose**], having cleansed her <u>by the washing of water with the word</u> [**means**], <u>that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory</u> [**purpose**], having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

In these verses, Christ's **purpose** for giving Himself up for the church was for the *result* that He "might sanctify her." The **means** by which He sanctified the church was through the "washing of water with the word." The end result, or **purpose**, that was achieved was the ability to present the church to Himself as "holy and blameless."

Another way to determine the motives of God and people is to see the **actions** or **roles** they assume within a passage. For example, in 5:23, Christ is described as "head of the church" and the husband is described as "head of the wife."

The surrounding passages identify the **breaks** or **pivots** within a discourse when there is a shift in subject from wives and husbands in 6:1 to children and parents. Another **shift** occurs in 6:5, to slaves and masters.

---

[9] E.g. I. Howard Marshall, "Mutual Love and Submission in Marriage: Colossians 3:18-19 and Ephesians 5:21-33," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (ed. Ronald W. Pierce, et al.; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 197-198.

[10] E.g. Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PNTC Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 398-405.

[11] Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, 50.

The purpose of observation is to see *what the text is saying*. The reader is not trying to make judgments about interpretation at this point, but merely to ask questions. What words or entire phrases did the author choose to repeat? What contrasts does the author make? What comparisons does the author make? Is there a theme that the author keeps repeating? What tone does the author use? What grammatical transitions does the author use? Does he use any figures of speech like metaphors or similes? Are there any cause and effect statements?

Of course, *every reader will weigh observations differently*, ultimately reaching different conclusions than other readers of the same passage. The following example shows how different conclusions could later be drawn from the passage, depending upon which observations are judged to bear the most interpretive weight:

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33	
Egalitarian	*Complementarian*
PRONOUN v. 21"One another" This observation is important to the Egalitarian position because it emphasizes that all believers are to be submissive *to one another*, which is a picture of *mutual submission* rather than one-sided submission	**COMPARISON** v. 23 "Christ is the head of the church" / v.23 "Husband is the head of the wife" v.24 "Church is subject to Christ" / v.24 "Wife ought to be subject to her husband" This observation is important to the Complementarian position because it is grounded in an unchanging relationship—Christ's role with the church. If being the "head of" someone *emphasizes authority*, this is an affirmation of *one-sided submission*: wives are to submit to their husbands just as the church submits to Christ

Historical-Cultural Context

The next part of the "interpretive journey" is determining the historical-cultural context of the passage. Historical-cultural context is essentially the background information that helps the reader understand what the passage *would have meant to the original audience*. It is important in the biblical interpretation process because the text *was written to them* and not to Christians

today. It would be unlikely that an instruction given to someone living over 2,000 years ago, on a different continent, in a different culture, who spoke a different language and who lived an entirely different way of life from contemporary readers would be *directly applicable* today without going through some "principlizing" process. Additionally, the text assumes that the readers will be familiar with language, references and situations *of the original audience* in their time. Knowing how ancient society functioned and the historical events surrounding the book, therefore, enrich the reader's comprehension of the text. Finally, this background information is *not normally explained by the biblical text*, and so a reader is forced to find it elsewhere—or else, not at all.

In every passage, there are several general items which can be asked: 1) who is the *author*, what are his circumstances and what is his relationship to the audience? 2) who is the *audience* at the time the passage was written and what was going on with them? In addition to these general issues, however, there are also some very specific issues which can be found in particular passages, depending upon the subject matter. Some of these types of issues include:

• Political issues (including national, international and local) • Religious issues • Economic issues • Legal issues • Agricultural issues • Architectural issues	• Clothing/textile issues • Dietary issues • Literary issues • Geographical issues • Military issues • Familial issues • Interpersonal (social custom) issues

It is important to remember that these are simply *illustrative* of the kinds of historical-cultural background issues which *may be present* in a given passage. Additionally, the issue(s) present vary from passage to passage.

Since historical-cultural background information is not normally explained by the biblical text, readers of Scripture will need to find it elsewhere. Fortunately, many excellent resources are

available to fill in such gaps in background knowledge. The following types of resources are particularly useful in helping to understanding historical-cultural context.

Bible Commentaries

A commentary is a step-by-step explanation and interpretation of entire books of the Bible. Commentaries provide general background information on a particular book, especially with regard to authorship, date, audience and setting. Such historical-cultural information is usually discussed in the *introduction to the commentary*. However, if one is looking for information related to a very narrow issue in a particular verse or passage, the *body of the commentary* will typically summarize the relevant information as it goes through the book verse by verse. Commentaries are generally written with a particular readership in mind (e.g. scholars vs. pastors or lay readers) and a particular focus (e.g. detailed exegesis of the original languages vs. application).

The best practice with regard to selecting and using Bible commentaries is to use recommended commentaries for particular books. One of the best ways to find a good commentary on a specific book is to look at a commentary guide. There are books written for this purpose,[12] but a great alternative can be found via two online bibliographies from the Denver Seminary which are updated yearly. The 2011 bibliographies, for example, are found at the following URL's:

http://www.denverseminary.edu/article/new-testament-exegesis-bibliography-2011

http://www.denverseminary.edu/article/annotated-old-testament-bibliography-2011

---

[12] For instance, Tremper Longman, III, *Old Testament Commentary Survey* (4th ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007), and D. A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey* (6th ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007). In addition to recommending specific commentaries, these works also discuss the important qualities of commentaries.

These online bibliographies are separated by subject matter; for example, on the New Testament page, there is a section for commentaries of each New Testament book, a section on Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, and primary sources. There are also sections on Paul, the Gospels, Hermeneutics, and New Testament theology. In addition, the creators of the bibliography have included asterisks by the books in each category which they believe are the best, although all of them are recommended or they would not have been added to the list. The Old Testament bibliography is organized similarly but is even more helpful because it is annotated (there is a brief description of each resource on the list).

In addition to the specific recommendations mentioned above, there are several well-known commentary series which are very good overall and a generally evangelical in their orientation. The list, roughly in order of increasing complexity and detail, includes:

- ***NIV Application Commentary (NIVAC)***
- ***Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (TNTC)***
- ***Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (TOTC)***
- ***Expositor's Bible Commentary (EBC)*** (in an original and revised edition)
- ***New American Commentary (NAC)***
- ***New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT)***
- ***New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT)***
- ***Pillar New Testament Commentaries (PNTC)***
- ***New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC)***
- ***Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT)***
- ***Word Biblical Commentary (WBC)***

Bible Dictionaries/Encyclopedia

A Bible dictionary or encyclopedia includes short articles which define people, places, practices, and events mentioned in Scripture. They expand on particular *subjects or topics* much more than commentaries, which tend to focus only on those issues which are relevant for either specific passages or the particular book. Bible dictionaries have more technical explanations, while Bible encyclopedias tend to have more biographical entries. For example, if one was looking for

information about Greco-Roman "household codes," they would search the Bible dictionary

under "H" and read the entry about household codes. Some recommended sources include (in

order of preference):

- ***IVP Bible Dictionary Series***
  Alexander, T. Desmond, and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003.
  Arnold, Bill T., and H. G. M. Williamson, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005.
  Evans, Craig A., and Stanley E. Porter. *Dictionary of New Testament Background.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000.
  Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992.
  Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.
  Longman, Tremper, III, and Peter Enns, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008.
  Martin, Ralph P., and Peter H. Davids. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997.
- ***International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)***
  Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.* 4 vols. Revised ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979-1988.
- ***Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD)***
  Freedman, David Noel, ed. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary.* 6 vols. New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992.
- ***Eerdmans Bible Dictionary***
  Myers, Allen C., ed. *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987.

One cautionary note is that some contributors to Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias are *not*

evangelical Christians, so readers will need to read critically. This is particularly true for the

Anchor Bible Dictionary.

<div align="center">Atlases</div>

Atlases are maps of historical places which are relevant to the study of the Bible; most of the

time they provide information on the *geographical location and also the significance* of each

place. This atlas is the best place to start when one needs to find out about certain geographical

locations:

- ***The Moody Atlas of the Bible Lands***
  Beitzel, Barry J. *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*. Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1985.

In addition, many Bible software programs and websites have map sets available.

Introductions and Surveys of the Old/New Testament

OT/NT introductions and surveys provide *basic information on each book* within the Old and

New Testaments. They are also good places to start to find the *author*, *audience*, and *date*, as

well as *themes* and *purposes* of books. They are usually structured around a particular Bible book

instead of subject. Generally, *introductions* spend more time on the background issues (author,

audience, date) and less time on the actual content of the books, while *surveys* spend more time

on the content and less time on the background issues. This means that if readers were looking

for information on the book of Ephesians, they would want to look up Ephesians in *both* an

introduction (for background issues) and survey (for an outline and discussion of the contents).

The following resources are highly recommended:

- ***Encountering the Old Testament***
  Arnold, Bill T., and Bryan Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. 2d. ed. Encountering Biblical Studies. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2008.
- ***A Survey of the Old Testament***
  Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. 3d. ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009.
- ***The New Testament in Antiquity***
  Burge, Gary M., Gene L. Green, and Lynn H. Cohick. *The New Testament In Antiquity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009.
- ***A Survey of the New Testament***
  Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament*. 4th. ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2003.
- ***An Introduction to the New Testament***
  Carson, D. A., and Douglas J. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. 2d. ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005.

General Considerations

All of these resources can be found in the reference section of the Arizona Christian University library, as well as many church libraries and the Phoenix Seminary library. Some of the necessary historical-cultural material can be found online, which makes for easier access, but such information is usually less reliable since it tends to be anonymous and has not been subject to any professional peer-review process like quality print resources. Internet sources can be helpful if the reader only wants a very basic overview, but *if one is looking for credible information, it is crucial to use books in print*. Even with print resources, however, it is important to look for works with *more recent dates of publication* as resources can be outdated. Of course, this does not mean that the newest source is always the most reliable, but it is usually a good start. One increasingly attractive alternative is *Bible software*, which often includes full-text books, concordances and maps. However, it is wise to be careful with free software alternatives (e.g. E-sword, Bible Explorer, etc.) as they typically only give study resources which are in the public domain because of their age—such resources are very limited in usefulness because they are out of date. Bible software for purchase (e.g. Logos, Accordance, etc.) contains up-to-date and credible resources, but it can be very expensive. It is well worth the cost if the student can afford it.

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33
The book of Ephesians has some debate about authorship; however, most conservative scholars view it as an epistle written by Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome.[13] Although in verse 1 it indicates that it is written to the church at Ephesus, many of the most reliable manuscripts omit that verse. This, along with the fact that the letter lacks the focus on specific issues within a

---

[13] O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 51.

congregation that characterize many of Paul's other epistles, lead many to believe that it was not directed specifically to the church at Ephesus.[14] Instead, it was meant as a "circular letter" that would be read to all the churches around Ephesus in western Asia Minor.[15] The idea of a circular letter is potentially an argument in favor of Complementarianism because it meant that Paul wanted *every church* in western Asia Minor to follow the instructions in Ephesians 5, and he was not speaking to *just a particular situation* in the city of Ephesus.

In the passage 5:21-6:9, Paul addresses Christ's relationship to the church, but also three types of family relationships: husband to wife, parents to children, and master to slave. These correspond to ancient "household codes;"[16] and they were meant to be practical instructions for the church, so it is important to understand what these relationships were like in the time period. From a Complementarian perspective, one would tend to conclude that Paul assumed and used Greco-Roman instruction where it coincides with biblical teaching, which in this case is the idea of men having headship over their wives. From an Egalitarian standpoint, one would tend to conclude that Paul was merely reiterating a pre-existing cultural concept so that Christians would not give offense to their non-Christian neighbors, but was showing how biblical teaching modified the Greco-Roman household codes to move toward gender equality.[17]

The first relationship of husband to wife is a source of endless debate among believers today; its original context is vital to interpretation and present-day application. In the time Ephesians was written, marriage was a contractual agreement, not a "sacred institution," as it is thought of by believers today.[18] It was between one man and one woman, and the husband possessed complete authority in all areas—from what religion the household practiced to legal issues related to all of its members.[19] Thus, when Paul said in 5:22 for women to "be subject" to their husbands, he was not calling for repression of women; he was merely echoing the established social order of the day.[20] Both Evangelical Complementarian and Egalitarian scholars find common ground on this point, but differ in the way they apply it to today.

Literary Context

The next step in the "interpretive journey" is to understand the passage in the light of its literary

context. According to Duvall and Hays, literary context relates "to the particular form a passage

---

[14] Clinton E. Arnold, "Ephesians, Letter to the," *DPL* 245; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1990), lxxiv.

[15] O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 47; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lxxvi.

[16] David L. Balch, "Household Codes," *ABD* 3:318.

[17] Craig S. Keener, "Man and Woman," *DPL* 588.

[18] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 363.

[19] Ibid., 398.

[20] Keener, "Man and Woman," 588.

takes (the *literary genre*) and to the words, sentences, and paragraphs that surround the passage you are studying (the *surrounding context*)."[21] Literary context is crucial for the biblical interpretation process because without it, the reader would not be able to understand the author's intention in the text.

Literary Genre

The Bible is a piece of literature, and like every kind of literature is read according to different "rules." *Literary Genre* relates to the different kinds of literature found in Scripture: letters, gospels, apocalyptic, narrative, wisdom, law, poetry, prophecy, etc. Duvall and Hays describe literary genre using the *metaphor of a sports game*: every sports game is played according to a different set of rules.[22] In the same way, *different kinds of literature are read according to different sets of rules*. For example, reading an Old Testament narrative such as Exodus is much different than reading a New Testament letter like Romans; the poetry of a Psalm communicates information much differently than does an apocalyptic book like Revelation.

When the author and the reader subscribe to a common understanding with regard to the type of literature, there is a much greater possibility that the reader can come to understand the author's intent. Identifying the literary genre is, therefore, a crucial element in the interpretive journey. The following chart identifies the main literary genres present in Scripture, identifies some key characteristics and suggests some practical strategies with regard to how to read each.

NT Letters	**Situational** – written in response to particular situations for the audience; involves the application of theology in practical ways	• Try to understand and reconstruct the situation that prompted the letter • Be careful not to conclude too much from any one letter—it may only reflect a localized problem
	Intentional – carefully organized and written; costly to produce	• Read the letter in entirety to see the whole picture • Try to trace the flow of thought through each section

---

[21] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 120.

[22] Ibid., 120-121.

		• Read and note themes "paragraph by paragraph"
Gospels	**Theological biography** – written to communicate the gospel to particular audiences; each gospel writer emphasizes different aspects of the gospel to paint a unique "portrait" of Jesus.[23]	• Read "vertically" (following the storyline of each Gospel) in an attempt to respect the integrity of each writer's story and understand his unique "portrait" of Jesus • Read "horizontally" (comparing the accounts) to identify common themes and theology
	Narratives/Stories (about Jesus)	• Read as a story (asking Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? questions) and identify plot, setting, characters • Read and note themes "episode by episode"
	Parables – intended to have two levels of meaning (certain details represent something else).	• Look for one main point per character (or group of characters) that Jesus' original audience would have understood.
Acts	**Sequel to Luke** – second part of the two-part work Luke-Acts	• Read in connection with Luke • Compare themes and structure with Luke
	Narratives/Stories (about the early church)	• Read as a story (asking Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? questions) and identify plot, setting, characters • Read and note themes "episode by episode"
	Descriptive (tells what <u>did</u> happen) **vs. Prescriptive/Normative** (establishes a <u>pattern</u> for the church throughout history)	• Look for what Luke intended to communicate to his readers • Look for positive (to be imitated) and negative (to be avoided) examples in the characters of the story • Read individual passages in the light of the overall story of Acts and the rest of the NT • Look to the rest of Acts to clarify what is normative • Look for repeated patterns and themes
Revelation	**Apocalyptic style** – concerned with God's final intervention into human history to overthrow evil empires and establish His kingdom; uses symbolic imagery	• First, try to find sources of the imagery in the book itself, as identified by John • Second, try to find sources of the imagery in the OT, particularly the prophets • Last, try to find sources of the imagery in the First Century Greco-Roman world
	Traditional approaches – determining if or how the events described relate to actual history	• **Preterist**: many/all events described were fulfilled in the first century • **Historicist**: events constitute an outline of what has happened throughout church history • **Futurist**: events are still future, usually directly preceding the end of history • **Idealist**: not connected to concrete events in history; relates to the ongoing struggle between good and evil in every Christian's and every Church's lives • **Eclectic**: combines different aspects of several views
OT Law	**Traditional approach** – divides the law into three parts: **Moral**: timeless truths regarding God's intention for human behavior **Ceremonial**: sacrifices, festivals, priestly activities **Civil**: laws related to the legal	**But…** • There does not appear to be any organization along these lines in the OT law codes themselves • No OT or NT writer makes distinctions using these or any other categories • There is no unambiguous process for categorizing any law into a particular category—it is a somewhat arbitrary decision

---

[23] Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007).

	system/governing of the nation of Israel	
	Narrative and covenant context **Narrative**: embedded into the story of Israel's exodus, wandering and conquest **Covenant**: related to the Mosaic Covenant, which is also connected with the possession of the land of Israel; it was a conditional covenant and is now obsolete	• Commandments relevant for the nation of Israel and its ethnic descendants are not applicable to Gentile Christians • When the historical / cultural / covenant particularity is stripped away, there may be some timeless principles which remain
OT Narrative	**Theological stories** – meaning largely derives from the actions of the characters.	• Read as a story (asking Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? questions) and identify plot, setting, characters • Pay particular attention to the <u>viewpoint of the narrator</u>
	Relate to the "Big Picture" – connect the particular events of the episode(s) within the context of OT history	• Read all the relevant narratives for particular episode (e.g. all the episodes related to Abraham for a study on Abraham) • Relate the story/episode to the overall plot of the book and the overall story of the OT
OT Wisdom	**Overarching purpose: develop the character of the reader** – godly living involves solid common-sense choices.	• **Proverbs**: basic approach to life; things that are normally true (not always) • **Job**: suffering of the righteous; rely on faith in the creator • **Ecclesiastes**: failure of the rational, ordered approach to provide ultimate meaning to life; only way to find meaning is to be in relationship with God • **Song of Songs**: irrationality of romantic love between husband and wife
OT Poetry	**Appeals to emotions** – use images to convey meaning, not propositional truth.	• Read figurative language for the emotional effect • Be careful in attempting to draw too much doctrine or theology from the figurative images
	Parallelism – one thought expressed by 2 lines of text (usually, can be 3 or 4 lines) • **Synonymous**: second line restates the first using different words • **Developmental**: second line develops the thought of the first line • **Illustrative**: second line illustrates thought of the first with an example or symbol • **Contrastive**: second line contrasts first line • **Formal**: lines joined solely by metric considerations	• Read "couplet by couplet"
	Psalms – "inspired models of how to talk and sing to God"[24]	

---

[24] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 363.

OT Prophets	**Foretelling**: proclaiming what will happen in the future; some of this is still future to Christians today **Forth-telling**: addresses the disobedience of Israel/Judah in the day of the prophet with an eye to the consequences; Israel/Judah's disobedience is often with regard to idolatry, social injustice, and/or religious ritualism	• Put the prophet in his historical-cultural context
	Prophetic timeline: near view/far view – all events are future to the prophet, but the prophet often does not indicate which are near or distant in time, often conflating them within the same passage or verse	• Recognize that the events described in the text may be blurred together and may be distant in time in actual history • Be careful to not immediately assume that the church fulfills OT prophecies (often, this depends on one's theological system)

Surrounding Context

Surrounding context refers to the words, sentences, paragraphs and discourses that come before and after a particular biblical passage.[25] These surrounding parts are crucial for interpretation because *context determines meaning*. An illustration of the importance of context can be found when two verses are taken out of context:

> Matthew 27:5 tells us that Judas "went and hanged himself."
> In Luke 10:37, Jesus tells us to "go, and do likewise."
> Conclusion: followers of Jesus should go and hang themselves (?!)

The reason that such a patently absurd conclusion can be drawn is by ignoring the fact that Luke 10:37 is *not at all* related to Judas' hanging. Jesus said "go, and do likewise" at the conclusion of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). One can make the Bible say whatever he or she wants by using such a strategy, but the intention of the text itself is defined by the flow of thought around it.

---

[25] Ibid., 122.

Duvall and Hayes describe the surrounding context in terms of circles of context, using the following diagram:[26]
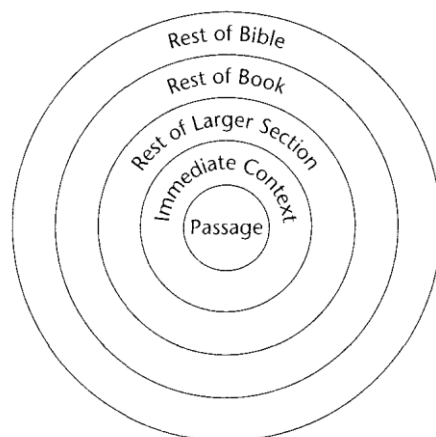
The center of the circle represents the passage, and the rings around the center illustrate, respectively, the immediate context (the text directly before and after the passage), the rest of the larger section of the book, the rest of the book, and the rest of the Bible.[27] Generally, *the most important ring of the circle for determining the meaning of a given passage is the immediate context*. Additionally, *the closer the "ring" is to the center, the greater the influence it usually has on the meaning of a passage*.[28] One important implication for interpretation is that it is best to find what a passage meant in its immediate context before attempting to explain it by referring to another passage elsewhere in Scripture.

Duvall and Hays suggest three steps for determining the surrounding context of a passage:[29]

1. **Identify how the book is divided into paragraphs or sections**
2. **Summarize the main idea of each section in about a dozen words or less**
3. **Explain how your particular passage relates to the surrounding sections**

---

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., 126-130.

The first step can be tricky since various Bible translations divide the text into paragraphs differently. While it is helpful to see how one's favorite Bible translation (and others) divide the text, it is wise to take such divisions with a grain of salt. It is more helpful to look for clues within the text that mark transitions from one thought to another thought, such as *conjunctions*, *change of genre*, *change of topic or theme*, *change in time/location/setting*, *grammatical changes*.[30] When the text is divided, surrounding context is described by relating the topics/themes of surrounding paragraphs to the passage with the goal of being able to articulate the *author's flow of thought*.

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33
With regard to literary genre, Ephesians is a New Testament letter, which means it was probably written in response to some particular situation. However, as the historical-cultural investigation identified above, the situational aspect of the letter is muted somewhat if it was originally intended to be a *circular letter* instead of a *specific message to the Ephesian congregation*. This would make it appear to be the least situational letter in the Pauline corpus.[31] As a general letter, it can be inferred that its instructions were understood to be relevant for all Christians, and not just written to correct a specific situation. With regard to structure, Ephesians exemplifies the intentional aspect of New Testament letters—and Pauline letters, in particular—with a two-part structure of 1) "theological" or "doctrinal" (chapters 1-3), and 2) "ethical" (chapters 4-6).[32]
With regard to surrounding context, Ephesians 5:21-33 is in the "ethical" section, in the second half of the letter. This larger section begins with exhorting believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (4:1) and then begins describing the unity within the church which should exemplify that call (4:2-16). The Christian "walk" is then contrasted with the "walk" of the Gentiles (4:17-24). Next, Paul presents some specific exhortations for living the new life, addressing a variety of attitudes and actions which are appropriate for the people of God and which include the discussion of the "household codes" of 5:21-6:9 (4:25-6:9). Paul concludes the letter by writing about the "armor" of God in the context of spiritual warfare (6:10-18) and giving his final greetings (6:19-24).
As indicated above in the discussion of historical-cultural context, the somewhat general nature of the exhortation leads Complementarians to see a timeless expression of God's purpose to all people in Eph 5:21-33.[33] Egalitarians, on the other hand, tend to see Paul generally

---

[30] Ibid., 128-129

[31] O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 49.

[32] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xxxvi.

[33] Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2004), 212-214.

upholding traditional Roman family values, but with significant adaptation that limits the wife's submission considerably.[34]

Word Studies

A word study is an important part of the biblical interpretation process because it helps the reader to understand more precisely what the original author meant by what he wrote. Words are the medium God chose to use to communicate to his people; they solidify the meaning of the passage. Because each word was inspired by God, they are all important to the text, but not all of them have a large impact on the *interpretation* of the passage. Many of the meanings of the words used in the Bible are easy to understand, so a word study is best used on a word that is *significant* to the interpretation of a passage, can have an *ambiguous* meaning within the passage, may be *repeated*, may be a *figure of speech*, or might need further *clarification*.

Words often have more than one meaning; they usually have a range of meaning ("semantic range") which is determined by *context*. This is true for all languages. A great example in English is the word "trunk." A "trunk" could refer any of the following:

- A part of a tree,
- An elephant's nose
- A storage space in a car
- A storage chest
- A generic term to refer to an animal torso

However, in a particular context, usually *only one* of these meanings is usually intended.[35] An English reader

> **Basic Steps in a Word Study**
> 1. Examine **every use of a word** in its context across a body of literature to see what the context indicates about the meaning of the term
> 2. Determine the **semantic range**, what a word **could mean**, by listing all of the ways it is used throughout this body of literature
> 3. Determine what the word **does mean in a particular context** by selecting which meaning in the semantic range makes best sense in the passage of interest

---

[34] Keener, "Man and Woman," 588-589.

[35] For more than one meaning to be intended would be a literary device involving a *play on words* or a *double entendre* , which intentionally exploits several different senses of the term.

is generally aware that "trunk" has such meanings, and he or she is, in essence, doing the same kind of activity involved in performing a word study every time the word is encountered in the text: knowing what "trunk" *could* mean (which is determined by how it is used throughout English literature and summarized in a dictionary), the reader reads a particular text and determines which meaning *best fits the context* of the passage he or she is reading.

Performing a word study in the biblical text is a bit more complicated because *the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek*. Any word study performed has to be done on the basis of the *term in the original language*. This also has some implications for the body of literature which needs to be examined. In order to determine the meaning of a *Hebrew or Aramaic word* used in Scripture, the word must be examined throughout the whole corpus of biblical literature in Hebrew (or Aramaic), in other words, the entire *Old Testament* text. Similarly, a word study of a *Greek word* must be conducted throughout the entire *New Testament* text.[36]

Word Study in the Biblical Text

1. Examine **every use of a word** in its context *across the OT (for Hebrew or Aramaic words) or NT (for Greek words)* to see what the context indicates about the meaning of the term
2. Determine the **semantic range**, what a word **could mean**, by listing all of the ways it is used throughout the testament.
3. Determine what the word **does mean in your passage** by selecting which meaning in the semantic range makes best sense in the particular context of your passage.

Identifying Every Instance of an Original Language Term

For readers who can read the original languages, the first step of a word study—examining every use of the term in its appropriate body of literature (OT or NT)—is the relatively easy activity of consulting one of the standard Hebrew/Aramaic[37] or

---

[36] Since the Old Testament Hebrew and Aramaic text was translated into Greek no later than the 2nd century B.C.E., word study on a <u>Greek</u> term *could also* involve study of how the term is used in this Greek translation, called the "Septuagint" and abbreviated LXX because of the Jewish tradition that the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek by 72 translators.

[37] For example, Abraham Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem, Israel: "Kiryat Sefer" Ltd., 1997).

Greek[38] concordances and looking up the particular word in question. Such a concordance will give a list of every passage in the Old or New Testament, respectively, where the word occurs. Then, the reader will be able to examine every use in context and make judgments regarding the semantic range (the second step of a word study).

For readers who cannot read the original language concordances, word study involves the additional step of *relating the English word to its corresponding original language term*. An effective way to do this was pioneered by James Strong in the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Through the use of a proprietary numbering scheme, every Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek term used in the KJV translation was assigned a number. That number was then coordinated with the English word which was used to translate the original language term. Therefore, by looking up the English word in the concordance and locating the particular passage of interest one could identify the "Strong's Number" which corresponds to the original language term. The *Strong's Concordance* featured a dictionary in the second part which identified *all the English terms used to translate the original language term*. Using these in conjunction with each other, any Bible student has the ability to generate a list of every place an original language term is used in Scriputre. Most free computer programs and internet sites utilize the same data conventions used by the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and require roughly the same procedure to do concordance searches with the original languages, albeit usually automating some of the steps. A step-by-step walkthrough of the procedure using a print NASB concordance is included in APPENDIX 1: PERFORMING A SUCCESSFUL WORD STUDY at the end of this paper. Understanding the theory behind this process ought to allow a student to use a web site or computer program which is based on the same procedure.

---

[38] For example, John R. Kohlenberger III, Edward W. Goodrick and James A. Swanson, *The Exhaustive Concordance to the Greek New Testament* (ZGRS Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995).

Determining a Semantic Range

After obtaining a list of verses which represent *all the uses of the term in the OT or NT*, it is necessary to look up every passage to see what the context indicates about the meaning of the term. The reader will try to discern what action/activity/item, etc. was intended by the use of the term in the particular context. Where the *context is not clear enough* to make any definite assertions, it may be necessary to suspend judgment and reconsider it later. Where *the context does indicate a meaning for the term*, the reader will establish a *category of meaning* (which is part of the semantic range of the term).

As the reader consults additional passages, he or she will ask whether the meaning in the new context falls under an *existing category* or whether a *new category* must be defined. There are no hard and fast rules as to how to establish these categories. Each reader is encouraged to establish categories that make sense to him or her and to try to keep the number of categories meaningful. *Too few* categories can obscure important differences in the meaning of a term, but *too many* categories are unmanageable and less helpful in actual practice.

Decide What the Word Does Mean In Its Context

Once every instance of the word has been examined and a comprehensive semantic range has been defined, the reader will then *select one of the meanings within the semantic range* which he or she believes *best fits the context of the original passage*. Such a decision involves the same process as discussed above with the English example "trunk"; knowing what the original language term *could* mean, the reader decides which of the *possible* meaning best fits the context of the passage at hand.

Decisions regarding the meaning of the term should be based on *how it is used in the passage at hand*. To assert some inherent "meaning" in a term apart from its use in a context is to commit a word study fallacy. Duvall and Hays identify some of the more common word study fallacies:[39]

1. **English-Only Fallacy** – engaging in word study with only English terms, even though the Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

2. **Root Fallacy** – assuming that the real meaning of a term is found in its original root.

3. **Time-Frame Fallacy** – reading a late meaning back into an earlier use of a term or assuming that an earlier meaning still holds.

4. **Overload Fallacy** – assuming that a word means all of the senses contained in its semantic range when it is used.

5. **Word-Count Fallacy** – assuming that what a word most commonly means is the default meaning in unclear contexts.

6. **Word-Concept Fallacy** – assuming that the meaning of a word contains the complete idea of an entire concept described by the word.

7. **Selective-Evidence Fallacy** – citing just the evidence that supports one's own favored interpretation and ignoring evidence that contradicts it.

In contrast to these unhelpful approaches, it is important to reiterate that a word *means a particular thing in a particular context*.

An important final step in the word study process is to compare one's results with results published in standard *theological dictionaries* or *theological lexicons*. The articles in such works are essentially word studies performed by scholars who often interact with a wider corpus of literature than just the biblical text. Some of the most helpful theological dictionaries/lexicons are listed below, along with a brief description of its theological bias. Details on how to find

---

[39] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 133-135. A classic thorough treatment of word study fallacies can also be found in D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 1996), 27-64.

specific words in these works may be found in APPENDIX 1: PERFORMING A SUCCESSFUL WORD STUDY.

For Old Testament:

- ***New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE)***

  VanGemeren, Willem, ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997. [generally evangelical]

- ***Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)***

  Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1980. [generally evangelical]

- ***Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (TLOT)***

  Jenni, Ernst and Claus Westermann, eds. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997. [somewhat liberal]

For New Testament:

- ***New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (NIDNTT)***

  Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1975-1985. [generally evangelical]

- ***Theological Lexicon of the New Testament (TLNT)***

  Spicq, Ceslas, ed. *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. 3 vols. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994. [somewhat liberal]

- ***Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (EDNT)***

  Balz, Horst, and Gerhard Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-1993. [somewhat liberal]

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33

21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. 22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the <u>head</u> of the wife, as Christ also is the <u>head</u> of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

The word "head" is a crucial term for the interpretation of Eph 5:21-33 in order to understand what Paul meant by the expression "A is the <u>head</u> of B" with regard to the husband being the "head" of the wife and Christ being the "head" of the church.

"Head" is a translation of the Greek word κεφαλή *"kephale,"* which occurs 75 times in the New Testament. 49 of these instances seem to refer to the **literal body part**, as in Matt 6:17 *But you, when you fast, anoint your <u>head</u> and wash your face*. In 5 instances, it is used in as an **expression in conjunction with "cornerstone"** in the New Testament citation of Ps 118:22 *The*

stone which the builders rejected Has become the <u>chief</u> corner stone.[40] An additional 5 instances seem to use **synecdoche in connection with "head,"** as when Paul exclaimed in Corinth, "*Your blood be on your own heads*," where he presumably intended to refer to their whole selves (Acts 18:6).

Where the meaning of "head" becomes difficult to determine are in the 16 instances in 1 Corinthians (11:3 [3x], 4 [2x], 5 [2x], 7, 10), Ephesians (1:22; 4:15; 5:23 [2x]) and Colossians (1:18; 2:10, 19). These uses are clearly **metaphorical**, but the nature and intent of the metaphor is hotly contended by complementarians and egalitarians. Generally, *Evangelical complementarians* conclude that "head" in Eph 5:23 means something akin to "authority over."[41] Paul, therefore, would be asserting that a husband has "authority over" the wife, just as Christ has "authority over" the church. *Evangelical egalitarians*, on the other hand, often conclude that "head" in this passage either means "source"[42] or emphasize that only multiple meanings are able to accurately explain the term—"*Preeminent, Foremost, and Synecdoche for a Representative Role*."[43] In either of these cases, Paul would be asserting that the husband is in some sense the "source" or "provider" for his wife, just as Christ is the "provider" of all good things for the church. An examination of the theological dictionaries yields similar contrasting conclusions.[44]

Interpretation – What the Text Meant to Its Original Audience

Observation involves seeing what the text *says*, while interpretation is seeing what the text *meant* to the original audience. Interpretation is the most important part of the entire Biblical interpretation process because it is impossible to have an accurate understanding of what the text means or how it applies to readers today unless one understands what the text *meant to its first readers*. The Bible was written by a specific author to a specific audience in a specific time using

---

[40] This is probably because the Hebrew text uses the curious expression   literally "the head of a corner."

[41] Wayne Grudem, "The Meaning of Kephale ("Head"): A Response to Recent Studies," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991), 424-25.

[42] As argued, for instance, in Linda L. Belleville, "Women in Ministry: An Egalitarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (ed. James R. Beck; Rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005), 99-101.

[43] Marshall, "Ephesians 5:21-33," 198, refers to the work of Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 821-822, to conclude that these three notions are "well founded" with regard to Paul's use of "head."

[44] Colin Brown, "κεφαλη," *NIDNTT* 2:160-162, opts for "source," while Michael Lattke, "κεφαλη," *EDNT* 2:286 sees the term to express the "dominance of the husband over the wife" with the conclusion that "κεφαλή is intended to express sovereignty."

specific language and literary forms, so the reader must look at the text through all of these "lenses" in order to develop an accurate interpretation and application of any given passage. The step of interpretation, however, involves some important preliminary considerations.

The *Locus* and Nature of Meaning

One important question relates to the location and nature of meaning: "What is meaning, and who controls it, the reader or the author?"[45] Up through the first half of the twentieth century, it was generally assumed that the *author* determines the meaning and that it was the reader's job to discover the meaning intended by the author (this perspective is often referred to as "*authorial intent*").[46] However, with the rise of postmodernism and its influence on the field of literary criticism—both in secular and biblical disciplines—many literary critics today argue either that the *reader* determines what the text means (this perspective is often referred to as "*reader response*") or that an author's results, the *text* itself, opens up a world of meaning for the reader (this perspective is often referred to as "*textual intent*").[47]

Who Controls Meaning?
Authorial Intent – the *author* determines the meaning of the text
Reader Response – the *reader* determines the meaning of the text
Textual Intent – the *text* establishes the boundaries of meaning

It is beyond the scope of this summary to thoroughly address all the relevant issues and offer a defense of the authorial intent perspective,[48] but there are at least two general reasons for

---

[45] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 175.

[46] Ibid., 176.

[47] For a historical survey of the "three ages of criticism" that reflect these different emphases, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1998), 43-196.

[48] For such discussion and defense, however, see especially E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967), and Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning* . Also helpful are E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1976), and Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981).

ascribing *the* locus *of meaning with the author*, instead of the reader. Firstly, it has been the case

throughout human history that most authors write texts using conventions of language which

exist between the author and his or her readers *in order to communicate a message to their*

readers. If an author intends to communicate a message and a reader ignores the author's

intention, a breakdown in communication occurs. Secondly, in the light of evangelical Christian

presuppositions that the Bible is the word of God and that its inspiration represents an *intention*

on the part of God to communicate a message to humanity, for biblical interpreters to ignore this

message is tantamount to rejecting the God who gives it.

There are several important consequences for the

process of biblical interpretation when adopting a

presupposition of *authorial intent*. Firstly, it means that

meaning itself "is that which is represented by a text; it

is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign

sequence; it is what the signs represent."[49] Therefore,

Consequences of Authorial Intent
• Any biblical text has **one meaning**—that which the **author intended**
• Biblical interpretation involves **discovering** the meaning the author intended
• There is **one meaning** of the text, but there can be **many applications** for the reader

any given biblical text generally has *one meaning*—the meaning that was intended by the

author—and the meaning does not change from reader to reader. Secondly, since meaning is

what the author intended, readers "*seek to discover the meaning that has been intended in the*

text."[50] Biblical interpretation involves discovering the meaning God has intended in Scripture,

and readers are only able to identify this meaning by understanding the grammar, syntax, word

meanings, literary context, historical context and literary devices of the human author who

---

[49] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 8. By "signs" he is referring to the different conventions of written language, such as grammar, syntax, word meanings, etc.

[50] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 178, (emphasis in the original).

communicated the divine message to us. Finally, what a reader *does* with the meaning—their response to the text—is a matter of *significance* or *application*.[51] The application of the text's meaning can vary from reader to reader and so there are many possible *applications* of a text's one *meaning*. For this reason, it would be best for a reader to say, "This is how the text *applies* to me," rather than, "This is what the text *means* to me."

Levels of Meaning in the Biblical Text

If meaning is defined as the *author's intent*, there is an additional consideration regarding meaning in the biblical text: is it possible that the Bible has different *levels* of meaning? The possibility that Scripture could have more than one level of meaning is suggested by evangelical Christian presuppositions regarding its inspiration: if the inspiration of the Bible involved *both a divine and human author*, then it is at least possible that each of these authors may have intended an equally valid but distinct meaning in the biblical text. Duvall and Hays note that, historically, Christian scholars acknowledged a "literal" meaning of the text, "but then encouraged the interpreter to look for the deeper, fuller, spiritual meaning below the surface of the text."[52] For example, Clement of Alexandria (*c*. 155–*c*. 220 C.E.) taught that Scripture, like a human being, has a *two-fold meaning*: body (the literal meaning), and soul (the spiritual, hidden meaning).[53] Clement's successor, Origen (d. 254 C.E.), argued that Scripture actually has a *three-fold meaning* which corresponds to the tripartite nature of human beings: body (literal meaning), soul

---

[51] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 8, prefers to use the term "significance" to describe the relationship between the reader and the meaning of the text, while Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 179, prefer the term "application."

[52] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 188.

[53] William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (rev. & exp.; Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 38.

(spiritual meaning) and spirit (moral meaning).[54] By the Middle Ages, interpreters regularly looked for a *four-fold meaning* in Scripture: the literal (historical significance), allegorical (doctrinal significance), moral/tropological (its application to the individual Christian life), and anagogical (eschatological significance) senses.[55] The underlying presupposition behind these schemes, however, was that *God* intended these various levels of meaning when he inspired the biblical writer.

Allegorical Interpretation and Spiritualizing

"Allegory" stems from the Greek word ἀλληγορία, which refers to "speaking one thing and signifying something other than what is said."[56] The Bible occasionally uses allegory,[57] and it can be argued that Jesus' parables involve elements of allegory when an element in a parable is intended to correspond to something beyond itself. *Allegorical interpretation*, however, is a method of *reading any biblical text with the intention of finding meanings other than the literal*. This method of interpretation arose in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, where the prominent Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (*c*. 25 B.C.E.–*c*. 40 C.E.), Neoplatonic philosophers and the early church fathers Clement of Alexandria and Origen employed it in their search for deeper meaning in written texts. This method of interpretation was a dominant form of interpretation until the revival of literal interpretation in the Protestant Reformation in the 16th Century.[58] Somewhat related to allegorical interpretation is what Duvall and Hays refer to as *spiritualizing*, the

---

[54] Ibid., 39.

[55] Ibid., 43.

[56] F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3d rev. ed.; New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43.

[57] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 189, for example, cite Isa 5:1-7 as an allegory which was intended by the biblical author.

[58] Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, *Biblical Interpretation*, 48.

tendency of readers to seek to "'discover' deep, secret meanings that the authors never intended."[59] This is directed more at the popular-level search for a "superspiritual" meaning that is often found in at the lay level of church experience.

These approaches to biblical interpretation are problematic for several reasons. Firstly, *they are inherently subjective*, as different interpreters may discover different non-literal meanings in the text and there is no objective external control over such interpretations. Secondly, they are functionally *unconcerned with the intent of the author*, which is expressed in the words he uses, because they assume that the author—whether God or the human writer— meant something entirely different than what he wrote. Thirdly, they are inconsistent with the normal rules of communication because they *ignore key elements of interpretation* identified above, such as grammatical relationship, historical-cultural context, and literary context. Finally, they seem to *have their origin more in the ingenuity of the interpreter* than the intention of the text.

Typological Interpretation

"Typology" stems from the Greek word τύπος, referring to a *"figure" or "pattern" in the Old Testament that prefigures or foreshadows something in the New Testament.*[60] Typological interpretation has been employed since the Apostolic Period (*c*. 30-100 C.E.) as a way to explain the connection between Old Testament prophecy and Christ. The apostles attempted to find "events, objects, ideas, and divinely inspired types (i.e., patterns or symbols) represented in the OT that anticipate God's activity later in history. The assumption is that the earlier

---

[59] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 187.

[60] Cross and Livingstone, eds. *Oxford Dictionary*, 1660-61.

event/object/idea repeats itself in the later one."[61] In typological interpretation, the Old

Testament element is known as the *type*, while the New Testament fulfillment is called the

antitype. For example, when Jesus said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the

wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14; cf. Num 21:9), the *type* is the lifting

up of the serpent in the wilderness in the Old Testament narrative, while the *antitype* is Jesus

being lifted up on the cross at his crucifixion in the New Testament.

       There is a diversity of opinion as to the extent of the correspondence between the Old

Testament element and a fulfillment in the New Testament for a "typological" relationship to be

inferred. For this reason, Duvall and Hays note that some scholars prefer to speak more

generically of "foreshadowing," which suggests general connections rather than correspondence

in the minute details.[62] "Typology," on the other hand, usually implies a greater

correspondence—perhaps even an explicit identification[63]—with the events in both testaments.

Additionally, there is diversity of opinion as to the degree—if any—that the Old Testament

writer was aware of the later fulfillment.[64]

Fuller sense (Sensus Plenior)

Sensus Plenior is Latin for "fuller sense," and it refers to the possibility that *God intended more*

in a human writer's words than the human author fully intended or understood when he wrote

them. Evangelical scholars are divided on whether this can even be a possibility, let alone as to

---

[61] Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, *Biblical Interpretation*, 32.

[62] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 195.

[63] Ibid., 197.

[64] See, for example, the ancillary discussion in Darrell Bock, "Part 1: Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New," *BSac* 142, no. 567 (1985): 210-223, and Ibid., "Part 2: Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New," 142, no. 568 (1985): 307-319.

the nature or extent of such a "fuller sense" of meaning.[65] However, these judgments often rest on doctrinal presuppositions regarding the inspiration of Scripture.

"Literary" Meaning

On the basis of the discussion above with regard to the locus and nature of meaning, it seems best to discover the one meaning—and one interpretation—that the author intended in the "literary meaning" of the text. "Literary meaning" is the term used by Duvall and Hays to refer to "the meaning the authors have placed in the text" which "reflects the type of literature used, the context, the historical background, the grammar, word meanings—basically everything we have been studying."[66]

The Role of the Interpreter in Interpretation

One final theoretical concern with regard to interpretation is the role of the interpreter in the process. One does not need to be a thoroughgoing Postmodernist to recognize that when readers approach the biblical text, they are *not by nature neutral or objective*. Every reader is a product of his or her geopolitical culture, family background, church experiences, and relationship with God.[67] Each of these contexts influences the way readers approach the text, from what basic understanding they bring to the text to their conscious decisions as to how to best approach the Bible on its own terms.

Preunderstandings

---

[65] Bock, "Part 1: Old Testament in the New," 210-223, discusses four major evangelical approaches to this question, ranging from an outright rejection of *Sensus Plenior* to cautious acceptance.

[66] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 187.

[67] Ibid., 90-94, develop and discuss these influences.

Donald S. Ferguson provides a succinct definition of *preunderstanding*: "Preunderstanding may be defined as a body of assumptions and attitudes which a person brings to the perception and interpretation of reality or any aspect of it."[68] Duvall and Hays supplement this by emphasizing that such assumptions and attitudes are generally "formulated, both consciously and subconsciously, *before* we actually study the text in detail."[69] It is important to recognize that *every reader of Scripture* comes to the text with preunderstandings in place, and if readers are either unmindful of their preunderstandings or uncritically accept them, they can seriously misinterpret the message God intended in the text.

Preunderstandings can be dangerous for several reasons. Firstly, since they are formed before a reader actually studies a passage, *they are usually wrong*. Even if they are correct, a reader will not know they are correct until he or she seriously studies the text. Vanhoozer emphasizes the "sin of pride" involved when a reader assumes that his or her preunderstanding is correct before making the appropriate effort to recover it: "Pride typically does not wait to listen; it knows."[70] Secondly, preunderstandings can drive readers to *approach the text with a theological agenda* already formulated, effectively "overstanding" instead of "understanding" the text: readers define the meaning of the text instead of seeking to discover what God meant in it.[71] Thirdly, preunderstandings cause readers to *think they know everything there is to know* about a passage—potentially causing them to miss something important in the passage.[72] Finally, since preunderstandings are often born out of a subconscious influence of one's culture, they

---

[68] Duncan S. Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1986), 6.

[69] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 89, emphasis theirs.

[70] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 462.

[71] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 89; Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 402-3.

[72] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 90.

tend to *establish artificial limits for understanding* the biblical text by defining what meanings are possible and impossible.

Fortunately, there are several practical steps which can help prevent preunderstandings from driving a reader to a wrong interpretation. Firstly, readers ought to *recognize that everyone has them*. This should prompt a healthy skepticism as readers approach the text and "think" they know what it means. Secondly, readers ought to *use a consistent, objective method* to obtain their interpretation. Thirdly, readers ought to *read alternative analyses* on the passage/topic to become more aware of the interpretive options. Fourthly, readers ought to *pray for the Holy Spirit* to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). Finally, readers ought to *come to the text with an attitude of humility*, recognizing their fallibility and being willing to look afresh at each passage.

Presuppositions

Presuppositions are different from preunderstandings in that they reflect unchanging assumptions *about the Bible as a whole* or *about interpretive methodology*.[73] These two elements go hand in hand, for a reader's judgment about what Scripture is will determine how he or she can best approach it. If the Bible were a book produced only by the will and ingenuity of human beings, it would undoubtedly be studied and applied differently than if it represented a communication from God to humanity.

Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard suggest several helpful presuppositions that evangelical Christians ought to adopt regarding the nature of the Bible. Firstly, "*the Bible is a supernatural book, God's written revelation to his people given through prepared and selected spokespersons by the process of inspiration*."[74] Secondly, "*the Bible is authoritative and true*," implying that it

---

[73] Ibid., 94

[74] Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, *Biblical Interpretation*, 144, emphasis theirs.

does not contain errors and proves to be trustworthy.[75] Thirdly, it is a "*spiritual document,*" in

the sense that it has an ability to change lives.[76] Fourthly, it is "*characterized by both unity and*

diversity."[77] Fifthly, it is an "*understandable document.*"[78] Lastly, the current canon of Scripture

is complete and the discipline of textual criticism has recovered texts which are very close to the

original documents of the Bible.[79]

Certain methodological approaches follow from these presuppositions. Firstly, since the

Bible is a book produced both by divine and human authors, it is likely that there is *both a divine*

and human element involved in its study. The historical, grammatical and literary methods

discussed above are all appropriate in order to explore the human element. An openness to and

intentional invitation for the assistance of the Holy Spirit is also appropriate in order to

apprehend its divine element.

Illumination

As indicated above, biblical interpretation is not *just* a matter of applying the right procedure

upon the biblical text. While it is true that using careful methods of interpretation can help a

reader understand the biblical author's intent—using the same methods would allow a reader to

understand the intent of virtually any author—the fact that there is spiritual dimension to the

Bible has some important implications for those who would seek to understand it. Firstly, using

basic, universal methods of interpretation will allow non-believers to understand much of what

---

[75] Ibid., 145.

[76] Ibid., 147.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., 149.

[79] Ibid., 150.

Scripture has to say, but they will not welcome and accept the truths expressed in the Bible (cf. 1

Cor 2:6-16; 2 Cor 3:15-18).[80] For believers, who accept that the Bible was inspired by the Holy

Spirit (2 Tim 3:16-17), there is a promise that the Spirit will guide them into all truth:

> I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
>
> (John 16:12-14)

However, the promises here—and others like it—are best understood as relating to the

application of Scripture in a believer's life, and not normally relating to the *interpretation* of the

Bible. Some helpful assertions about the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation can be found in

the chart below:

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics[81]	
1. The Spirit's ministry in proper Bible interpretation does *not* mean that He gives new revelation. (2 Tim 3:16; Eph 2:20; Jude 1:3)	7. The Spirit will not substitute automatic understanding for proper spiritual preparedness, discipline, and diligent study. (John 16:13; 2 Tim 2:15)
2. The role of the Spirit in interpreting the Bible does *not* mean that our interpretation is infallible. (2 Tim 2:15)	8. The Spirit's work in Bible interpretation does not rule out the use of study helps such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries. (Eph 4:11-16)
3. The work of the Spirit in Bible interpretation does *not* mean that the Spirit gives some interpreters a special ability to see under the surface of the text to detect truths that are not evident to any other dedicated Bible student. (Ps 19:7, 119:130)	9. The Holy Spirit does not ignore common sense and logic in Bible interpretation. (Acts 15:28)
4. The Holy Spirit's role in Bible interpretation means that unbelievers do not welcome and apply God's truth, though they are able to comprehend many of its statements. (1 Cor 2:14)	10. The place of the Holy Spirit in interpreting Scripture means that He does not *normally* give sudden intuitive flashes of insight into the meaning of a passage. (Eph 4:11-16; 2 Tim 2:15)
5. The Spirit's function in Bible interpretation does *not* mean that only trained Bible scholars can understand the Bible. (Ps 19:7, 119:130)	11. The Holy Spirit's illumination and interpretation ministry does not guarantee that all parts of the Bible are equally clear in meaning. (2 Pet 3:14-16)
6. The Spirit does not automatically provide insight; He requires diligent spiritual devotion on the part of the interpreter. (2 Tim 2:15; 2 Pet 3:14-16)	12. The Spirit's work in interpretation does not result in believers having a comprehensive and completely accurate understanding of the entirety of Scripture. (Eph 4:11-16)

---

[80] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 207.

[81] The points here are only slightly modified from Roy B. Zuck, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics," *BSac* 141, no. 562 (1984): 120-130.

The Process of Interpretation

Having discussed the theoretical issues related to the interpretation of the biblical text, the reader must now bring all of the insight gained from the various elements involved in the interpretation process and use them as "lenses" through which to view the passage and develop an interpretation of *what the text meant to the original audience*. The process can be illustrated as follows:

Interpretive Presuppositions	Historical-Cultural Context	OBSERVATION	Literary Context	Word Studies

INTEPRETATION
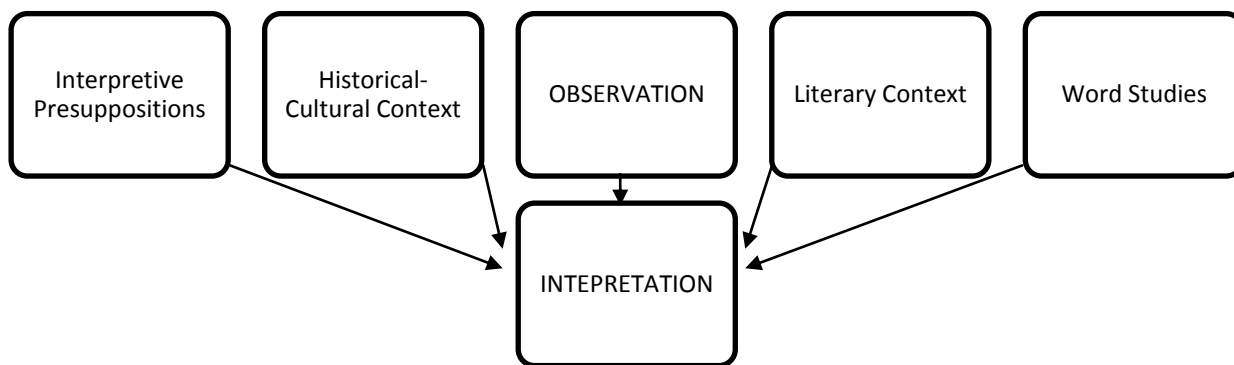
The reader needs to carefully *observe* the entire passage, examine *historical-cultural* and *literary context*, and complete *word studies* on important, ambiguous terms and be aware of appropriate *interpretive presuppositions* before attempting to determine its interpretation. Each one of these elements will yield insights into the interpretation of the passage. For this reason, an interpretation which uses most or all of these elements will usually be more true to the original author's intent than one which uses only some. However, the relative weight or importance of any specific element will vary by passage, and this becomes a matter for judgment on the part of the interpreter. In some cases, such as in Ephesians 5:21-33, two different readers can walk away convinced that their completely opposite interpretations are correct based on extensive research, good interpretive skills, and careful attention to the biblical text.

Practically, interpretation occurs as readers carefully *read the text*, ask *interpretive questions of it*, and then seek to *answer their interpretive questions* with insight gained from the other "lenses" applied to the text.[82] It is also important to remember that the *goal* of interpretation is to understand, as clearly and fully as possible, *what the text meant to the original audience*. In Duvall and Hays' terms, this is the activity of "grasping the text in their town."[83] When writing an interpretation, it is helpful to bring all these insights to bear and make a statement, in past tense (since it applied to the original audience), as to what the passage meant to this original audience.

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33 - Interpretation	
Egalitarian Interpretation	*Complementarian Interpretation*
In the context of a culture governed by patriarchal hierarchy, Paul's command to the Christian community to "be subject to one another" probably referred to *mutual submission*, which was different than the one-sided submission prominent in the culture.[84] The presence of reciprocal duties here between the husband and with children/parents and slaves/masters in 6:1-9 indicates that Paul had moved beyond Greco-Roman household codes of the day toward an egalitarian as opposed to hierarchical position.[85] The study of the Greek word *kephale* ("head") indicates it was simply a metaphor that Paul used as literary device to provide an example of how Christians were to be subject to one another in Christ.[86] Husband as "head"	In the context of a culture governed by patriarchal hierarchy, Paul's command to the Christian community to "be subject to one another" was probably understood to refer to "submission of someone in an ordered array to another who was above the first, that is, in authority over that person"[88] In the wider context of the passage, this is expressed through the household code as wives, children and slaves were to submit to their husbands, parents and masters—and never the other way around.[89] The study of the Greek word *kephale* ("head") in connection with the comparison between Christ and the husband each being the "head of" the church and wife, respectively, indicates that the husband had authority over

---

[82] This is essentially the method employed by Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, 93-200.

[83] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 22.

[84] Belleville, "Egalitarian Perspective," 94-95.

[85] Keener, "Man and Woman," 588.

[86] Cf. the discussion in Thiselton, *Corinthians*, 812-822.

of the wife indicated that the wife depended on the husband as the church depends on Christ.[87]	his wife just as Christ had authority over the church.[90]

As illustrated in this example from Ephesians 5:21-33, different presuppositions and differing judgments on the evidence can lead to contrary conclusions. It is at this stage that interpreters need to hold on to their humility: with two mutually exclusive interpretations of the same passage, both approaches *cannot* be right. Either one is correct and the other is wrong, or both interpretations are wrong and there is another option. Since godly men and women disagree, each interpreter should be willing to look afresh at his/her interpretation and be willing to avoid "overstanding" the text.[91]

Application: What the Text Means Today

This is arguably the most important step in the interpretive journey; it is the point where all the interpretation comes together and is turned into *practical knowledge* for the reader. It is one of the most important aspects of interpretation because otherwise the reader is just gaining knowledge, not actually implementing life changes. The changes made in their life are based on the interpretive principles they have discovered by observing the text and determining what the implications would have been for the original audience. The original audience would have had a specific interpretation and application of the passage since the text was *written to them*.

---

[87] Marshall, "Ephesians 5:21-33," 198.

[88] O'Brien, Ephesians, 401.

[89] Ibid., 404.

[90] George W. Knight, III, "Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991), 161. See also Grudem, "Meaning of Kephale," 469.

[91] Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 402-3.

It is imperative for the contemporary reader to "cross the principlizing bridge" between the two disparate cultures of today and that of the original audience and discover "timeless truths" that are as applicable in a modern context as they were in an ancient context—even if they are expressed differently.[92] In this sense, application can be both general and personal. General application refers to *timeless principles that all believers any time in history can apply to their lives*; personal application refers to a *reader taking a timeless principle and personally applying it to a specific situation in their life*.

One particular challenge with application is being able to determine which principles in the passage apply to all believers at all points in history ("timeless truths") and which are "culture-bound" and specific only to the original audience. The distinguishing between these two kinds of principles is the essence of what Duvall and Hays mean by "determining the width of the river" and "crossing the principlizing bridge." There are no hard and fast answers which work in every case, but there are several questions that can aid in the process:[93]

1. **Does the text present a broad theological or moral principle or does it give a specific manifestation of such a principle, which another book of Scripture elsewhere embodies in one or more different forms?**
2. **Does the larger context of the same book of Scripture in which the passage appears limit the application in any way or does it promote a more universal application?**
3. **Does subsequent revelation limit the application of a particular passage even if the book in which it appears does not?**
4. **Is the specific teaching "contradicted" elsewhere in ways that show it was limited to exceptional situations?**
5. **Are cultural conditions identified in Scripture or assumed by its authors that make it inappropriate always to apply a given text in the same way?**
6. **Is the particular cultural form expressed in the biblical text present today, and if so does it have the same significance as it did then?**

---

[92] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 216.

[93] Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, *Biblical Interpretation*, 485-498.

7. **Is the rationale for the application rooted in a creation ordinance, in the character of God, or in part of his redemptive plan for humanity?**

8. **Is the command or application at variance with standard cultural norms of the day?**

9. **Does the passage contain an explicit or implicit condition that limits its application?**

10. **Should we adopt a "redemptive movement" hermeneutic?**

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33 – Theological Principles	
Egalitarian Interpretation	*Complementarian Interpretation*
Christian marriage ought to involve a joining of equal partners in a relationship of mutual respect where each partner has just as much responsibility for leadership of the marriage as the other.	Christian marriage ought to involve a joining of partners who are equal in value, and yet God has placed the responsibility of leadership in the hands of the husband.

After identifying which principles in the text are "timeless truths" (and, therefore, still relevant today), application is nearing its completion. Duvall and Hays' final step in the Interpretive Journey, "grasping the text in our town," involves three steps intended to help individual Christians understand how to take the theological principles identified in the process and apply them in their lives:[94]

1. **Observe how the principles in the text address the original situation**
2. **Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context**
3. **Make your applications specific**

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33 - Application	
1. Observe how the principles in the text address the original situation	
Egalitarian	*Complementarian*
Marriage involving fully equal partners in mutual submission to each other was counter-cultural when Paul wrote this; nevertheless, it represents God's intention for Christian marriage.	Leadership in Christian marriage is the responsibility of the husband, which was similar to the hierarchical culture of the Greco-Roman world, but it should be practiced in a very different manner: that of loving responsibility.
2. Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context	
Egalitarian	*Complementarian*

---

[94] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 215.

Christian marriages today ought to involve fully equal partners in mutual submission to each other.	Christian marriages today ought to feature loving male leadership.
3. Make your applications specific	
Egalitarian	*Complementarian*
Christian singles of either gender ought to be looking for a potential spouse who holds to the same ideals regarding full equality in marriage. Christian married couples who have not yet achieved full equality in marriage ought to candidly discuss how this will manifest in the future in their marriages. Christian married couples who have embraced full equality in marriage ought to model and manifest the blessing it brings to their marriage for all to see.	Christian singles of either gender ought to be looking for a potential spouse who will live by the God-given leadership roles and responsibilities He intended in marriage. Christian married couples who experience a breakdown in God's pattern for leadership in marriage ought to take steps to get back to God's intention. Christian married couples who have embraced full complementarity in marriage ought to model and manifest the blessing it brings to their marriage for all to see.

Obviously, the last step of "Making Your Application Specific" will differ for every reader. The most important point is that it be something that contains *specific* steps which the reader can begin to implement immediately. Otherwise, the reader will not make a change, and God's word will not make a difference in his or her life.

Correlation: Developing a Biblical and Systematic Theology

One final step remains in the interpretive process if readers are to move beyond the exegetical insights in the particular passage they have studied: they must relate it to other passages which deal with the same topics. As Traina put it, "the goal of Scriptural study is the development of a vital Biblical theology issuing in a vital Christian philosophy of life."[95] One passage offers some insights and principles regarding the topic (or topics) it addresses. However, it is only when readers are able to study *other passages on the same topic* and identify both the common and

---

[95] Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*, 223.

consistent between one's original passage and that which is different and yet complementary to the original.

This activity has at least two benefits. Firstly, it allows a "check" on one's interpretation. Based on normal Evangelical Christian presuppositions about the unity of Scripture, if a reader's conclusions are *contradicted* by another passage in Scripture, there is a chance that one or both of the interpretations of passages in question are suspect. In this way, the activity of correlation allows Scripture to help interpret Scripture. Secondly, the ability to correlate what the whole Bible teaches on a particular subject is a common definition for the goal of *systematic theology*.[96]

Example: Ephesians 5:21-33 – Correlation
In order to develop a systematic theology of marriage, several other passages would need to be correlated to Eph 5:21-33. Space does not permit more than listing some such passages here: 　　　Gen 2:18-25 　　　1 Cor 11:2-16 　　　Col 3:18-19 　　　Tit 2:4-5, 　　　1 Pet 3:1-7.

---

[96] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000), 21.

The Biblical Interpretation Process at a Glance

| Interpretive Presuppositions | Historical-Cultural Context | OBSERVATION | Literary Context | Word Studies |

INTEPRETATION

APPLICATION

CORRELATION
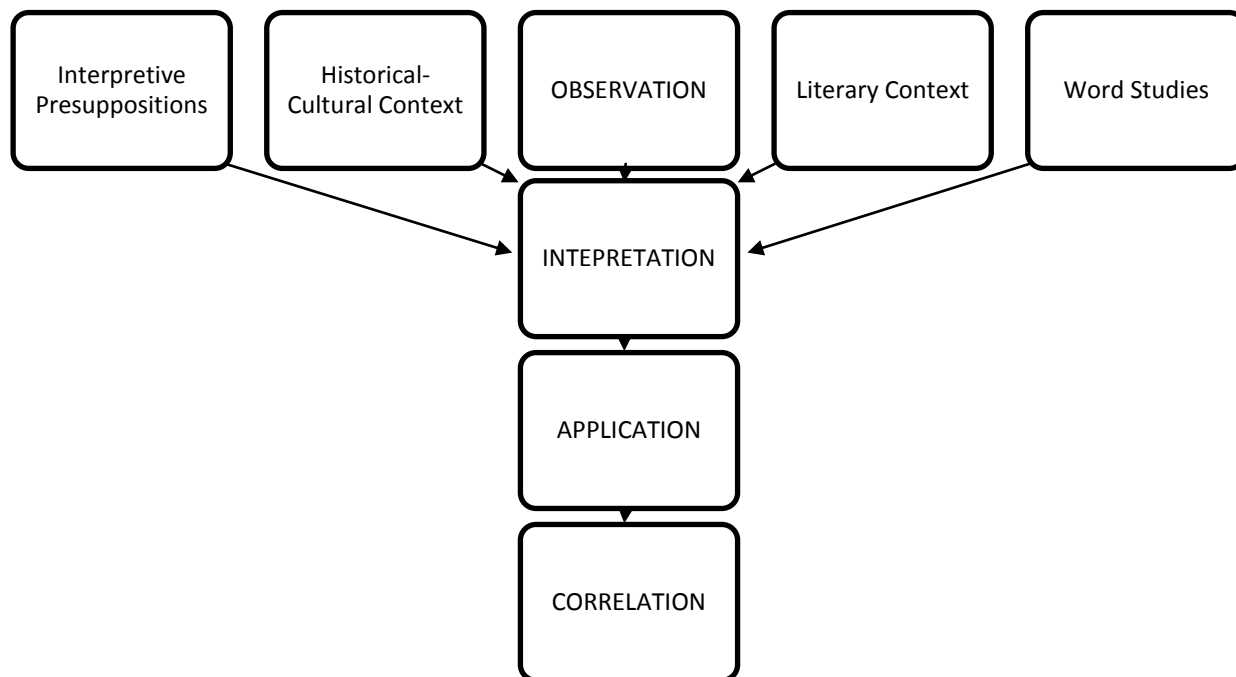
APPENDIX 1: PERFORMING A SUCCESSFUL WORD STUDY

Before beginning, it is essential to make sure you are using the **corresponding concordance for the English Bible** from which you are reading (e.g. NASB Strong's Concordance for NASB Bible, NIV Exhaustive Concordance for NIV Bible, etc.—you cannot get the necessary passage list if you mix versions).

Look up in the concordance **the exact form of the word** as it appears in the Bible text (e.g. "abominations" in Rev 17:4, not "abomination"). The entry will look as follows:[97]

(Word and context of verse containing it)	(Bible reference)	(Strong's Number)
ABOMINATIONS		
…		
and on the wing of **abominations** will come one	Da 9:27	8251
gold cup full of **abominations** and of the unclean	Rv 17:4	*946*
…		

A. Record the **Strong's Number** for the Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek term that lies behind the English word in the verse you are studying; it is the number in the final column.
   (In this example, the Strong's number is *946*.)
   i.   The Strong's Number for a Hebrew/Aramaic word is in plain font (e.g. 8251).
   ii. The Strong's Number for a Greek word is in *italic* font (e.g. *946*).

B. Look up the **Strong's Number** for the Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek term **in the NASB Dictionary** (located in the back of the NASB Concordance). The entry looks like the following (including an explanation of the various items, in order):

> *946.*   **βδέλυγμα bdelugma**; from *948*; *a detestable thing*:— abomination(3), abominations(2), detestable(1).

   i.   "*946.*" = the Strong's number (the italic indicates that it is a Greek word)
   ii. "**βδέλυγμα**" = the lexical form of the Greek word, spelled with Greek characters
   iii. "**bdelugma**;" = the transliteration of the Greek word (as it would be spelled with English characters)
   iv. "from *948*; *a detestable thing*:—" = a short definition of the term
   v.   "abomination (3), abominations(2), detestable(1)." **All the term(s) used by the NASB translation committee to translate the Greek word**. The numbers in parentheses after the English terms indicates the number of times the Greek word is

---

[97] All examples are from Robert L. Thomas, ed. *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Updated Edition* (Anaheim, Calif.: Foundation Publications, 1998).

translated into that particular English term. (In this example, for instance, the Greek word **βδέλυγμα** is translated "abomination" 3x, "abominations" 2x, and "detestable" 1x).

C. List **all the different English words** used to translate the Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek term. (In this example, **βδέλυγμα** is translated "abomination," "abominations," and "detestable")

D. Look up each word you identified in step C (e.g. "abomination," "abominations," and "detestable") in the NASB Concordance. **List each Bible verse which uses the same Strong's Number** (in this example, *946*). This step will produce a list of **every place in Scripture** where that particular Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek word is used. (See below for examples highlighted.)

ABOMINATION
...

an **abomination** to fools to turn away from evil.	Pr 13:19	8441
of the wicked is an **abomination** to the LORD,	Pr 15:8	8441
of the wicked is an **abomination** to the LORD,	Pr 15:9	8441
Evil plans are an **abomination** to the LORD,	Pr 15:26	8441
in heart is an **abomination** to the LORD;	Pr 16:5	8441
It is an **abomination** for kings to commit	Pr 16:12	8441
them alike are an **abomination** to the LORD.	Pr 17:15	8441
weights are an **abomination** to the LORD,	Pr 20:23	8441
sacrifice of the wicked is an **abomination**,	Pr 21:27	8441
And the scoffer is an **abomination** to men.	Pr 24:9	8441
the law, Even his prayer is an **abomination**.	Pr 28:9	8441
no longer, Incense is an **abomination** to Me.	Is 1:13	8441
He who chooses you is an **abomination**.	Is 41:24	8441
I make the rest of it into an **abomination**,	Is 44:19	8441
And My inheritance you made an **abomination**.	Jer 2:7	8441
because of the **abomination** they have done?	Jer 6:15	8441
because of the **abomination** they had done?	Jer 8:12	8441
mind that they should do this **abomination**,	Jer 32:35	8441
eyes to the idols *and* commits **abomination**,	Ezk 18:12	8441
abomination with his neighbor's wife and	Ezk 22:11	8441
will set up the **abomination** of desolation.	Da 11:31	8251
and the **abomination** of desolation is set up,	Da 12:11	8251
and an **abomination** has been committed in	Mal 2:11	8441
"Therefore when you see the **Abomination** OF	Mt 24:15	*946*
"But when you see the **abomination** OF	Mk 13:14	*946*
no one who practices **abomination** and lying,	Rv 21:27	*946*

DETESTABLE
...

is a **detestable** thing to the LORD your God.	Dt 17:1	8441
detestable thing has been done in Israel,	Dt 17:4	8441
the **detestable** things of those nations,	Dt 18:9	8441
these things is **detestable** to the LORD;	Dt 18:12	8441
and because of these **detestable** things the	Dt 18:12	8441
to do according to all their **detestable** things	Dt 20:18	8441
the **detestable** idol of the Ammonites.	1Ki 11:5	8251
for Chemosh the **detestable** idol of Moab,	1Ki 11:7	8251
the **detestable** idol of the sons of Ammon.	1Ki 11:7	8251
less one who is **detestable** and corrupt,	Jb 15:16	8581
Who eat swine's flesh, **detestable** things and	Is 66:17	8263
"they have set their **detestable** things in	Jer 7:30	8251
with the carcasses of their **detestable** idols	Jer 16:18	8251
"But they put their **detestable** things in	Jer 32:34	8251
defiled My sanctuary with all your **detestable**	Ezk 5:11	8251
and their **detestable** things with it;	Ezk 7:20	8251
things and beasts *and* **detestable** things,	Ezk 8:10	8263
they will remove all its **detestable** things	Ezk 11:18	8251
their **detestable** things and abominations,	Ezk 11:21	8251
lovers and with all your **detestable** idols,	Ezk 16:36	8251
of you, the **detestable** things of his eyes,	Ezk 20:7	8251
away the **detestable** things of their eyes,	Ezk 20:8	8251
the harlot after their **detestable** things?	Ezk 20:30	8251
idols, or with their **detestable** things,	Ezk 37:23	8251
as **detestable** as that which they loved.	Hos 9:10	8251
And their **detestable** things from between	Zch 9:7	8251
men is **detestable** in the sight of God.	Lk 16:15	*946*
deny *Him,* being **detestable** and disobedient and	Ti 1:16	*947*

ABOMINATIONS
...

in the field, I have seen your **abominations**.	Jer 13:27	8251
idols and with their **abominations**."	Jer 16:18	8441
of the **abominations** which you have committed;	Jer 44:22	8441
'And because of all your **abominations**,	Ezk 5:9	8441
idols and with all your **abominations**,	Ezk 5:11	8441
have committed, for all their **abominations**.	Ezk 6:9	8441
the evil **abominations** of the house of Israel,	Ezk 6:11	8441
bring all your **abominations** upon you.	Ezk 7:3	8441
you, and your **abominations** will be among you;	Ezk 7:4	8441
ways and bring on you all your **abominations**.	Ezk 7:8	8441
while your **abominations** are in your midst;	Ezk 7:9	8441
images of their **abominations** *and* their detestable	Ezk 7:20	8441
the great **abominations** which the house of	Ezk 8:6	8441
you will see still greater **abominations**."	Ezk 8:6	8441
abominations that they are committing here."	Ezk 8:9	8441
abominations which they are committing."	Ezk 8:13	8441
see still greater **abominations** than these."	Ezk 8:15	8441
to commit the **abominations** which they have	Ezk 8:17	8441
groan over all the **abominations** which are being	Ezk 9:4	8441
things and all its **abominations** from it.	Ezk 11:18	8441
their detestable things and **abominations**,	Ezk 11:21	8441
may tell all their **abominations** among the nations	Ezk 12:16	8441
your faces away from all your **abominations**.	Ezk 14:6	8441
make known to Jerusalem her **abominations**	Ezk 16:2	8441
"Besides all your **abominations** and	Ezk 16:22	8441
on top of all your *other* **abominations**.	Ezk 16:43	8441
ways or done according to their **abominations**;	Ezk 16:47	8441
haughty and committed **abominations** before Me.	Ezk 16:50	8441
multiplied your **abominations** more than they.	Ezk 16:51	8441
your **abominations** which you have committed.	Ezk 16:51	8441
penalty of your lewdness and **abominations**,"	Ezk 16:58	8441
He has committed all these **abominations**,	Ezk 18:13	8441
all the **abominations** that a wicked man does,	Ezk 18:24	8441
them know the **abominations** of their fathers;	Ezk 20:4	8441
Then cause her to know all her **abominations**.	Ezk 22:2	8441
Then declare to them their **abominations**.	Ezk 23:36	8441
rely on your sword, you commit **abominations** and	Ezk 33:26	8441
abominations which they have committed."	Ezk 33:29	8441
for your iniquities and your **abominations**.	Ezk 36:31	8441
their **abominations** which they have committed.	Ezk 43:8	8441
"Enough of all your **abominations**,	Ezk 44:6	8441
in addition to all your **abominations**.	Ezk 44:7	8441
their **abominations** which they have committed.	Ezk 44:13	8441
and on the wing of **abominations** *will come* one	Da 9:27	8251
gold cup full of **abominations** and of the unclean	Rv 17:4	*946*
HARLOTS AND OF THE **Abominations** OF	Rv 17:5	*946*

The complete list of verses which use the Greek word **βδέλυγμα** (*946*) is, therefore:

Matt 24:15, Mark 13:14, Luke 16:15, Rev 17:4, Rev 17:5, Rev 21:27

WORD STUDY STEP 1: Examine each verse in its context to determine what the context tells about the meaning of the term.

- Look at the passage and try to <u>ignore the English term the NASB translators used</u>—you will want to develop your <u>own</u> terms.
- At this stage, you are looking to see <u>what clues the context of the passage</u> gives you as to <u>what action/activity/item/etc. was intended</u> by the author.
- If the context is <u>not clear enough</u> to discern a meaning for the term, you will need to <u>suspend your judgment</u>. Put a "?" next to it and prepare to come back to it later after you have looked at the rest of the occurrences of the term to <u>reconsider it</u>.

WORD STUDY STEP 2: Categorize the meanings of the term in each context as you go along.

- If the context <u>is clear enough</u> to discern a meaning for the term, express the meaning with <u>a word or concise phrase</u>. This short definition establishes a <u>category of meaning</u> which will be part of your semantic range for the word.
- As you look at additional passages, ask whether the meaning of the term in that context falls under an <u>existing category</u> you have already defined, or whether it belongs in a <u>new category</u> (for which you will express a new short definition).
- There are no hard and fast rules as to how to break down these categories, the best guide is to establish categories that make sense to you and to try to keep the number of categories meaningful (<u>too few</u> categories can obscure important differences in the meaning of a term, but <u>too many</u> categories is unmanageable and less helpful in actual practice).
- The final goal of this step is to have approximately <u>one to six different categories of meaning (expressed by a word or short phrase)</u> which define all the ways the term is used in either Old or New Testament. Under each of these categories, you should list the instances (passages/verses) which fall under each respective category.
- After you have gone through the entire verse list, go through it again to make sure that the earlier occurrences fall within the right categories and reconsider those you put aside with a "?"

WORD STUDY STEP 3: Decide which meaning best fits the context of your verse. Be sure to give some concrete reasons as to why the particular meaning you chose <u>best fits the context of your verse</u>.

At the conclusion of a word study, it is always essential to check your work in a good **Theological Dictionary**. The two best for OT and NT from an evangelical perspective are, respectively:

VanGemeren, Willem, ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. **5 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997.**

Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1975-1985.

NOTE: For both of these theological dictionaries, you will need to find the article (if available) on your word by using the volume which contains the **index** to the work.

To find a word in the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (*NIDOTTE*), you can try to look through the **Index of Hebrew Words**, but since the *NIDOTTE* uses academic Hebrew transliteration, that can be very confusing to students who have not studied Hebrew. A better way is to look up entries by number. Unfortunately, the *NIDOTTE* uses a different numbering system than Strong's, so you have to go to the **Numbering System Indexes** to convert your **Strong's Number** to the **G/K Number** (Goodrick/Kohlenberger Number) which you then can use with the **Index of Hebrew Words** to find your entry. To find the Hebrew word (transliteration: *Tô'ēḇāh*, "abomination"), for example, you would take the Strong's Number (8441) and use the Numbering System Index to convert it to a G/K number:

STRONG	G/K
8439	9356
8440	9358
8441	9359
8442	9360
8443	9361

Using the G/K Number, one can now look at the Index of Hebrew Words and search by the G/K number (9359) to find the appropriate entry:

9352	*Tô'ăḏēṯ*	**4:**724
9357	*Tô'ēḇ*	**3:**1125
9359	*Tô'ēḇāh*	**4:**244
9360	*Tô'ēḇ*	**1:**1019
9361	*Tô'ēḇ*	**1:**1054

In this example, the *Tô'ēḇāh* is discussed in Vol. 4, page 244. This is not an article, but the *NIDOTTE* will often redirect you to the relevant article, if available. In this case, the entry on vol. 4, page 244 redirects you to another entry:

(*Tô'ēḇāh*), abominable, detestable, offensive (#9359)
See (#9493)

The term is then discussed in an article under the G/K entry 9493.

For the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (*NIDNTT*), you will want to use the **Index of Greek Words**. In this, you will find the word by searching for the Greek **transliteration** (how the Greek term would be spelled with English letters) in the index. To find our example, for instance, in the *NIDNTT*, you would look for the term "bdelugma" (you identified the transliteration in step 2 above) which would be found alphabetically as follows (note, that the "u" in Greek can be spelled with a "y"):

battalogeō **Vol. 2:** 795
bdelygma **Vol. 2:** 284
bdelygma tēs erēmōseōs **Vol. 1: 74f.**
    Vol. 2: 912
    Vol. 3: 1006, 1008
bebaioō **Vol. 1: 658f.**
    Vol. 3: 924

In the *NIDNTT*, a bolded **volume, page#** indicates an article which directly discusses the term; a plain-text entry indicates merely a mention of the term in another article. You will generally want to look only at articles, not passing references to a term. So, in the example above, there is a mention of "bdelugma" in Vol. 2, page 284, but no article.

Also good for OT, and from an evangelical perspective, is:

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. **2 vols. Chicago, Ill.: Moody, 1980.**

NOTE: in order to find a word in the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (*TWOT*), consult the index in the back of Volume 2 which lists the **Strong's number** and identifies the *TWOT* number for the entry (the *TWOT* uses its own numbering system). Use the *TWOT* number to find the appropriate article.

Another good dictionary for the OT, though coming from a more liberal perspective, is:

Jenni, Ernst and Claus Westermann, eds. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. **Translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997.**

NOTE: in order to find a word in the *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (*TLOT*), consult the index in the back of Volume 3 which uses the **Strong's number** to find the volume and page # of the relevant article.

Two other good dictionaries for the NT, though coming from a more liberal perspective, include:

Spicq, Ceslas, ed. *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. **3 vols. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.**

NOTE: the entries in the *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (*TLNT*) are alphabetized by the Greek word in Greek. If you can read or recognize words using the **Greek alphabet**, you can search easily for the alphabetical entry for your term by using the lexical form of the Greek term (item 2b above).

There is an index, in the back of Volume 3 which gives an alphabetical list of Greek words (in Greek) with the corresponding volume and page # of the entry. There is a second list of English glosses (one word definitions of a Greek term) with the corresponding volume and page # of the entry. Since it does not identify the corresponding Greek term, however, you will have to go to the article and compare the Greek term in the article with the Greek term in the NASB Greek dictionary to make sure you are looking up the right word. At the beginning of each volume there is a table of Greek words (in Greek) which includes an additional column for English transliteration of the Greek word and appropriate English glosses. In short, this resource requires some ability to recognize words using the Greek alphabet and can, therefore, be a more difficult resource to use.

Balz, Horst, and Gerhard Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. **3 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-1993.**

NOTE: the articles in the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (*EDNT*) are alphabetized by the Greek word (in Greek). If you can read or recognize words using the **Greek alphabet**, you can search easily for the alphabetical entry for your term by using the lexical form of the Greek term (item 2b above).

There is an index in the back of Volume 3 which is alphabetized by a one-word English definition which identifies the corresponding Greek term (in Greek) and gives the volume and page # for the relevant article. While you can search for an English term, you will have to be able to compare the Greek term in the NASB Greek dictionary with the Greek term in the table to make sure you are looking up the right word. In short, this requires some ability to recognize words using the Greek alphabet and can, therefore, be a more difficult resource to use.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnold, Clinton E. "Ephesians, Letter to the." Pages 238-249 in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.

Balch, David L. "Household Codes." Pages 318-320 in vol. 3 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992.

Balz, Horst, and Gerhard Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-1993.

Belleville, Linda L. "Women in Ministry: An Egalitarian Perspective." Pages 19-103 in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Edited by James R. Beck. Rev. ed. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005.

Bock, Darrell. "Part 1: Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New." *Bibliotheca sacra* 142, no. 567 (1985): 210-223.

---. "Part 2: Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New." *Bibliotheca sacra* 142, no. 568 (1985): 307-319.

Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1975-1985.

Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 1996.

---. *New Testament Commentary Survey*. 6th ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007.

Cross, F. L., and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.* 3d rev. ed. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005.

Even-Shoshan, Abraham. *A New Concordance of the Bible*. Jerusalem, Israel: "Kiryat Sefer" Ltd., 1997.

Ferguson, Duncan S. *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1986.

Grudem, Wayne. "The Meaning of Kephale ("Head"): A Response to Recent Studies." Pages 424-476 in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991.

---. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000.

---. *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2004.

Hirsch, E. D., Jr. *Validity in Interpretation*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967.

---. *The Aims of Interpretation*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

Kaiser, Walter C. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981.

Keener, Craig S. "Man and Woman." Pages 583-592 in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993.

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Revised & expanded ed. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2004.

Knight, George W., III. "Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church: Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19." Pages 161-175 in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991.

Kohlenberger III, John R., Edward W. Goodrick, and James A. Swanson. *The Exhaustive Concordance to the Greek New Testament*. Zondervan Greek Reference Series. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995.

Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Word Biblical Commentary 42. Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1990.

Longman, Tremper, III. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007.

Marshall, I. Howard. "Mutual Love and Submission in Marriage: Colossians 3:18-19 and Ephesians 5:21-33." Pages 186-204 in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*. Edited by Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004.

O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999.

Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem. "An Overview of Central Concerns: Questions and Answers." Pages 56-85 in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. *Finally Feminist: A Pragmatic Christian Understanding of Gender*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005.

Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus: An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007.

Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000.

Thomas, Robert L., ed. *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Updated Edition.* Anaheim, Calif.: Foundation Publications, 1998.

Traina, Robert A. *Methodical Bible Study*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1952.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1998.

Zuck, Roy B. "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Hermeneutics." *Bibliotheca sacra* 141, no. 562 (1984): 120-130.