

INTERPRETIVE GUIDE PART ONE

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Keeping these principles in mind as you read the Bible will illumine your understanding. Consider placing this sheet in your Bible.

SCHEDULE THE BEST TIME - Be intentional. Know your biological inclinations—when you are most alert and focused. Not everyone works best in the morning. Leave plenty of time.

THINK THEOCENTRICALLY - Place God at the center of the story. The stories of David, for example, do not highlight the man so much as they feature God's work in the life of man—His redemptive plan.

CONSIDER GENRE - Read and understand the text according to its type and style. Poetry reads differently than narrative, and prophecy applies to varied audiences, contemporary and future.

DIFFERENTIATE LITERAL & FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE - Related to genre, do not take everything literally. The Bible teems with symbolic imagery and figurative devices. Although, it all belongs to God's Word, each form holds its own place in interpretation.

KEEP CONTEXT IN MIND - Avoid taking single verses to heart without understanding the *local* context from which it comes. Also, consider the implications *regionally* as within a book or section. Further, understanding difficult texts requires a larger understanding of the *global* context within the message of the Bible as a whole.

GIVE PRIORITY TO ACTION - All language constructs revolve around the verbs, the person performing the actions and that which receives the action. Consider God's actions over all others. More, identify the main clause of a verse which controls the rest.

STUDY WORD CHOICE - Diction plays a key role in both the original texts and translations. Short of studying the original language, read multiple translations. Their choice of different words indicates that the original carries multiple potentials. Putting these together gives a fuller understanding.