

BIBLE 101 — Week 2

Meaning, Authorial Intent, and Why It Matters

Scripture Focus: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

KEY VOCABULARY — scan this before you watch

Term	What It Means
Meaning	What the author originally _____ to communicate
Significance	Your personal _____ to the text’s fixed meaning
Authorial Intent	The single _____ the original writer had in mind
Dual Authorship	Scripture is both fully _____ and fully human at once

I. THE PROBLEM

Two sincere people read the same passage and reach completely _____ conclusions.
 If Scripture can mean anything to anyone, it effectively means _____.
 It loses its authority, its power to guide us, correct us, or _____ us.

II. TWO KEY WORDS

The key that unlocks everything is the distinction between **meaning** and **significance**.

MEANING	SIGNIFICANCE
What the author _____	Your personal _____ to that meaning
Like a _____ — sealed in by history and language	Where your life, situation, and _____ come into play
_____ — does not change	_____ — can change over time

We get into trouble when we _____ these two up.

III. THE AUTHOR’S INTENTION IS OUR NORTH STAR

The meaning of any text is _____ into what the original author intended.

This means meaning is NOT:

- What we _____ it said
- What _____ says it means
- What just _____ in the moment

To find it, we dig into the _____, the _____, and the _____.

II PAUSE & REFLECT

Think about the last passage you studied. Were you looking for the author’s original meaning, or were you reading your own feelings into the text?

IV. DUAL AUTHORSHIP

The Bible is at the same time fully _____’s word and fully the words of _____ authors. God worked through real people so that their intended meaning was also _____’s intended meaning. This makes interpretation not just a literary exercise — it’s deeply _____.

V. ONE MEANING, MANY APPLICATIONS

A biblical passage has one fixed _____, but countless faithful _____.

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances...”
— 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV)

The one meaning: Maintain a constant attitude of _____ and keep an open line of _____ with God.

The same meaning, applied differently:

- A busy parent: _____
- Someone in grief: _____
- Someone battling depression: _____

VI. THE THREE-STEP TOOL

Step 1 — Observe: What does the text actually _____?

Step 2 — Interpret: What was the author trying to _____ to their audience?

Step 3 — Apply: Now that I get the meaning, what does this truth mean for _____?

Critical rule: Only move to **Apply** after completing **Observe** and **Interpret** first.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a time you confused meaning with significance in your own Bible reading? What happened?

2. Why does it matter that a passage has one fixed meaning? What would we lose if meaning could change?

3. Pick a verse you know well. What is its one meaning? Write two different personal applications.

