BIBLE 101 — Week 3

How Context Changes Everything

Scripture Focus: Nehemiah 8:8 · 2 Timothy 2:15

KEY VOCABULARY — scan this before you watch

Term	What It Means
Grammatical-Historical Method	A time-tested approach that focuses on _____ and _____ to find the author's meaning
Grammar (pillar)	What the _____ on the page actually mean and how sentences are built
Historical Context (pillar)	What was going on in the _____ when the text was written
Wooden Literalism	Ignoring poetry, metaphor, and figures of speech — _____ the text
True Literal Interpretation	Reading the text the way the _____ intended it to be read

I. THE PROBLEM

One person reads a verse as literal, another says it's symbolic, and a third finds a meaning you never _____.

To find the true meaning, we have to get back to what the original _____ intended to say.

The challenge: these texts were written _____ of years ago in cultures worlds away from ours.

II. THE SOLUTION: TWO QUESTIONS

The grammatical-historical method is built on just _____ core questions:

Question 1: What do the _____ say, and how does it all fit together?
Question 2: What was _____ when this was written?

"They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read."
— Nehemiah 8:8 (NIV)

III. THE TWO PILLARS

GRAMMAR PILLAR	HISTORY PILLAR
What did the words mean _____?	Who was the person _____ this?
How are the _____ built?	Who were they writing _____?

Look for connector words like "_____" or "but"	What were the _____ norms and customs?

Understanding their world stops us from pasting our own _____ world onto the text.

IV. WHAT "LITERAL" REALLY MEANS

WOODEN LITERALISM	TRUE LITERAL INTERPRETATION
Ignores poetry, metaphors, and _____	Reads the text the way the author _____
_____ the text — makes it rigid	If it's a song, read it like a _____
"Raining cats and dogs" = _____	"Raining cats and dogs" = it's raining _____

> ⏸ **PAUSE & REFLECT**
>
> Think of a verse you've always read one way. Could the original author have meant something different than what you assumed? What would change if you asked the grammar and history questions?
>
> _____

V. WHY THIS METHOD IS THE ANCHOR

Other approaches and their dangers:

- **Allegorical method:** Searching for secret _____ meanings behind every word
- **Reader-response:** "What does this mean to _____?" — the Bible becomes a mirror for our own ideas

The grammatical-historical method keeps us _____ — tied to what the author wanted to say.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."
— 2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)

The Greek behind "rightly handling" has the idea of cutting a _____ line — like a carpenter making a precise cut.

VI. THE FOUR-STEP PLAYBOOK

Step 1: Pick a _____.
Step 2: Ask the grammar question — What do these words actually _____?
Step 3: Ask the history question — What was going on _____?
Step 4: Put it together — What did the author intend to _____?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been in a discussion where people disagreed about what a verse means? How would the two pillars (grammar and history) have helped settle it?

_____

_____

2. What's the difference between wooden literalism and true literal interpretation? Why does this distinction matter?

_____

_____

3. Pick a passage you know well. Try the four-step playbook on it. What's one thing you notice that you hadn't seen before?

_____

_____