

BIBLE 101 — Week 18

Observation · Interpretation · Application

Scripture Focus: Philippians 4:13 · Nehemiah 8:8 · 2 Timothy 2:15 · Acts 17:11

KEY VOCABULARY — scan this before you watch

Term	What It Means
Observation	Step 1 — Asking "What does the text actually _____?" — looking at the words, grammar, and structure
Interpretation	Step 2 — Asking "What does it _____?" — discovering the author's original intent using context
Application	Step 3 — Asking "How does this truth apply to my _____ today?" — only after observation and interpretation
Eisegesis	The trap of treating the text like a _____ that reflects our own ideas instead of a window into the author's meaning

I. THE INTERPRETATION TRAP

So many common misunderstandings come from one simple, almost invisible _____ in how we approach the text.

We have a tendency to read the words on the page and then immediately leap to asking what it means for our own _____.

When we do that, we skip the most important step in the _____ — and that's what sends us down a path of getting it wrong.

Eisegesis — making the text a _____ that reflects our own ideas instead of treating it like a window into what the author was actually trying to say.

How the trap works:

- We read a verse and feel that spark of _____
- We immediately ask, "What does this mean to _____?"
- That's a super important question — _____ — but asking it first is the shortcut that leads straight into the trap
- It completely bypasses the real work needed for genuine _____

II. THE THREE-STEP SOLUTION

The solution is a simple, disciplined three-step workflow: **Observation** → **Interpretation** → **Application**
The order is absolutely _____.

You can't _____ something you haven't interpreted. And you can't interpret something you haven't even properly observed.

Step	Question	Focus
1. Observation	"What does the text actually _____?"	Words, grammar, _____
2. Interpretation	"Based on that, what does it _____?"	Context, author's original _____
3. Application	"How does this truth apply to my _____ today?"	Personal relevance — only after steps 1 & 2

III. SEEING IT IN ACTION: PHILIPPIANS 4:13

You've seen this verse everywhere — on coffee mugs, athletic apparel, social media posts. It's usually held up as the ultimate mantra for personal _____.

	Pop Culture Meaning	Context-Driven Meaning
Theme	Achieving personal _____	Finding spiritual _____ through hardship
"All things"	Any goal I set my _____ to	Enduring specific _____ with contentment
"Strength"	Power for personal _____	Supernatural _____ when life gets hard

Step 1 — Observation: What does the text literally say?

- The author, Paul, is writing this letter from a _____ cell
- In the verses right before it, he says he's learned the secret of being _____ — whether well-fed or starving
- The "all things" he can do isn't about winning — it's about _____ these specific situations with contentment

Step 2 — Interpretation: What does it mean?

- The strength Paul gets from Christ isn't for acing a job interview or building a _____
- It's the spiritual power to stay _____ and faithful no matter what his circumstances are — palace or prison

Step 3 — Application: How does it apply?

- This verse isn't a blank check to claim superhuman power for our own _____
- It's a profound call to trust God for supernatural _____ when life gets really hard

⏸ PAUSE & REFLECT

Think about Philippians 4:13. Before today, how did you understand this verse? How does walking through the three steps — observation, interpretation, application — change the meaning for you?

IV. AN ANCIENT, PROVEN PATH

This three-step workflow isn't some modern invention. It's rooted in the way people have faithfully read these texts for _____ of years.

"They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read."

— Nehemiah 8:8 (NIV)

The workflow is right there:

- "They read" → _____
- "Giving the meaning" → _____
- "So that the people could understand" → _____

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

— 2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

- "Rightly handling" in the original Greek literally means to cut a _____ path
- A picture of precision and _____ — not swerving off into our own opinions

"Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

— Acts 17:11 (NIV)

- The Bereans didn't just passively _____ to a teaching
- They welcomed it eagerly, then went home and _____ the Scriptures daily to check if it was true
- The perfect blend of a passionate _____ and a careful mind

V. THE BIG TAKEAWAY

The Observation → Interpretation → Application workflow isn't some restrictive formula designed to kill the _____ of reading.

It's a _____ — it keeps us on the road, protecting the integrity of the text and protecting us from the trap of making it say whatever we want.

The closing question:

Of these three steps, which one do you tend to _____?

- Are you impatient with _____?
- Do you rush through _____?

Being honest with yourself about that is the first step toward a much deeper, richer _____.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Of the three steps — observation, interpretation, application — which one do you tend to skip or rush through? What would it look like to slow down on that step this week?

2. Pick a verse you know by heart. Try running it through all three steps this week: What does it actually say? What did it mean to the original audience? And only then — how does it apply to your life?

3. The Bereans combined a passionate heart with a careful mind. Which side do you lean toward — eagerness or examination? How can you grow in the other?
