

Tools for Understanding God's Word – Week 5

This week

- Copycat tool
- “So what” tool
- Retrospective
- Potential pitfalls

Copycat tool:

Sometimes we are to follow the example of people in the Bible → but not always!!

Consider 4 different events:

Daniel 6; 1 Sam 3; Hosea 1; 2 Sam 11

Which are examples to follow?

We must distinguish between what the Bible **describes** and what it **prescribes!**

Copying Biblical characters is not always wrong (see Phil 3:17; 1 Cor 10:6)

How to distinguish descriptive from prescriptive:

1. Does it fit with what is said in the rest of the Bible?
2. What was the author's purpose? Did he intend it as a prescription?

Example of Gideon – Judges 6:36-40

Descriptive or prescriptive?

Exercise in groups: Acts 4:32-37

Descriptive or prescriptive?

“So what” tool:

Copycat, Bible timeline and Who am I tools encourage us not to apply too fast. → Must understand first! ***But we must apply!!*** James 1:22-25

- What response was the author looking for?
- Work out the application to our lives
 1. Do I need to stop doing something? Is there some aspect of my behavior that must change?
 2. Is there something new that I should start doing?
 3. Is there a way in which I should change my pattern of thinking?
 - Motivations
 - Worldview

Examples of clear actions: 1 Cor 6:18; Col 3:13; John 13:34

Not only actions, but motives: 1 Cor 6:18-20

Changing our worldview: Rev 21:1-4

- Do I really believe the world is heading to this wonderful future?
- Does this certain future give me a wonderful sense of hope and joy?
- Am I looking forward to this day?

In view of the author's purpose (Rev 1:9):

- How does Rev 21 change the way I view suffering in the present?
- Is there someone in the church that I could encourage with these verses?
- Am I looking forward to this day?

Retrospective:

Tools for determining the meaning:

Author's Purpose Tool
 Context Tool
 Structure Tool
 Linking Words Tool
 Parallels Tool
 Narrator's Comment Tool
 Vocabulary Tool
 Translations Tool
 Tone and Feel Tool
 Repetition Tool
 Quotation/Allusion Tool
 Genre Tool

Tools that help us properly apply:

Copycat Tool
 Bible Timeline Tool
 "Who Am I?" Tool
 "So What?" Tool

Potential pitfalls:

Quotation/Allusion tool

- False allusions!

Example:

Serpent in Genesis 3:1ff

Bronze serpent in Num 21:8-9

Genre tool

- Misidentifying the genre

Examples:

Taking something as literal that is not meant so: Matt 5:29-30

Confusing a proverb for a promise: Prov 10:4; Prov 22:6

"Who am I?" tool

- Reading oneself in improperly

Example:

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things . . .

Copycat tool

- Taking a description as a prescription

Examples:

Hos 1:2 - Marrying a prostitute

Judges 6:36-40 - Putting out "fleeces" to determine God's will

Bible timeline tool

- Ignoring where we are on the Bible timeline

Examples: Obeying OT laws

Reading recommendations:

Dig Deeper: Tools to unearth the Bible's treasure, by Nigel Beynon & Andrew Sach

ISBN: 978-1-84474-431-2

(The bookstall has a few copies)

Other helpful resources:

40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible, by Robert L. Plummer

ISBN: 978-0-8254-3498-3

Dig Deeper into the Gospels, Andrew Sach and Tim Hiorns

ISBN: 978-1-78359-200-5

Dig even Deeper: Unearthing Old Testament Treasure, by Andrew Sach and Richard Alldritt

ISBN: 978-1-84474-432-9