

Review Questions on Principle II: Observe the Context

Observe the Context

"One real danger in bible study is to get lost in the single phrases and verses of the Bible passage and never really understand the entire message the author was trying to communicate... We must beware of getting too involved in words and phrases, no matter how interesting and meaningful they are. We need to observe the words and phrases in relation to the whole chapter. We need to understand the relationship of the single truths in the verses to the entire message in a chapter or book. Otherwise we will not fully understand the message of the author.... Let us imagine that I invited you out to see my new house. When we arrived, scattered all over my yard were the various parts that would make up my house. There were the window frames and windows, the doors, the walls, the bricks, etc. Were I to say to you, 'Here is my house,' you would no doubt retort, 'I see the parts that make up your house, but I still don't know what your house looks like.'

"So it is in Bible study. It is not enough just to see the parts, even to understand the parts. You must see the parts in relation to the whole, how they contribute to make up the whole message." -Oletta Wald, *The Joy of Discovery in Bible Study*

Verse stealers pick and choose verses out of the Bible to fit into or prove their beliefs. Note the context of the following statements. Circle the letter before those statements where "verse stealing" is occurring and indicate which context (immediate, boo, Bible) is being violated.

"Hey, let's all go get drunk. After all, the Bible says, eat, drink and be merry." (Luke 12:16-21)

"Nobody who sins is going to heaven, because the Bible says no one who is born of God practices sin." (I John 3:9)

"We do no physical work on Sunday, because Scripture says Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:8)

"If you would give 10% of your income to God, He has promised to pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need." (Malachi 3:10)

"The life-verse of that evangelist was Matthew 10:8, Heal the sick."

"This newspaper prints all the news - as even the Bible states, you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

"If a person, once saved, doesn't keep walking with the Lord, he may lose his salvation - remember what Jesus said, He who endures to the end, it is he who shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13)

"Son, you had better clean up your room! The Bible says, let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner." (I Corinthians 14:40)

"I know you didn't ask for my advice, but I thought I'd give it anyway since the Bible commands, do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4)

"I figure God wants us to get rid of those who are so old or weak they can't contribute positively to society. I mean, the Bible says, if anyone will not work, neither let him eat." (II Thessalonians 3:10)

"I'm sure going to get even with him, just like the Bible says, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." (Deuteronomy 19:21)

"I decided to go on welfare when I realized that the Bible taught me to not worry yourself to gain riches." (Proverbs 23:4)

"Your honor, the reason we stole these things was due to the teaching of the Bible - stolen water is sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." (Proverbs 9:17)

Respond to the following, basing your answers primarily on contextual factors. Accompany each answer with an explanation of why you concluded as you did.

Is it proper to define a church as where two or three have gathered in My (Jesus) name (Matthew 18:20)?

In Philippians 2:16 should the Greek verb epecho be rendered holding fast or holding forth?

Who are the "builders" in view in I Corinthians 3:10-17?

Is spiritual or physical healing the predominant idea in I Peter 2:24?

First person plural pronouns (we, us, our) in the New Testament epistles often refer to the author and his readers (and thus, by implication, to Christians generally). to whom do the first person plural pronouns of I Corinthians 1:10-4:13 refer?

Could the statement of Nehemiah 2:18, let us arise and build be properly used as the basis for a church building program?

Zeloute in I Corinthians 12:31 can be understood as either an imperative (a command, earnestly desire) or an indicative (a descriptive statement of reality, you are earnestly desiring). Which is a better rendering?

May I Samuel 12:23, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you, be used to stimulate Christians to pray?

Who was caught up to the third heaven (II Corinthians 12:1-10), Paul or someone else?

Should the witnesses in Hebrews 12:1 be understood as observing or testifying?

A Bible study leader taught a lesson on leadership (emphasizing qualities such as alertness, prayer, organization, delegation, sensitivity, persistence) based on Nehemiah 1-6. Was he using the Scriptures in an appropriate manner?

Should I Thessalonians 4:4 be understood to direct that each one is to possess his own vessel (NASV) or that each man is to take (acquire) his own wife (Williams)?

In seeking to spur on a person who seems to be "stuck" on a spiritual plateau would it be appropriate to cite Deuteronomy 2:3, you have circled this mountain long enough (compare also Deuteronomy 1:6)?

Can the behavioral maxim "govern your behavior by always first asking 'would Jesus do this?'" be properly based on I Peter 2:21?

Does the discussion concerning entering rest in Hebrews 3:7-4:13 support the observance of a Sabbath day?

A text taken out of context is a _____.

Select (by circling the appropriate letter) the three contexts of any statement in Scripture.

a. Immediate b. Psychological c. Bible d. Theological e. Book f. Historical

A "house-rule" by which God governs His world is called _____.

T F All the promises in the Bible are mine.

T F Some statements in Scripture should not be interpreted in a plain-literal manner.

T F Different dispensations have different ways to obtain salvation.

T F The Bible includes some statements that are real contradictions but none that are apparent contradictions.

The second principle for interpreting the Bible is _____.

What does a person need to look for to determine a change in the "house-rules" by which God runs His world?

1.

2.

3.

Write out from memory:

II Timothy 3:16,17

Matthew 4:4

Galatians 6:1-5

Special Project:

Read Galatians through three times using the following outline as a guide to the general development of thought.

1A Introduction 1:1-10

2A Apology: Personal Defense of His Authority

1;11-2:21

1B The source of Paul's gospel 1:11-24

2B The confirmation of Paul's gospel by the apostles at Jerusalem 2;1-10

3B Paul's rebuke of Peter's inconsistent conduct 2:11-21

3A Argument: Demonstration of Justification by Faith 3:1-5:1 (The failure of legalism)

1B The inconsistency of their personal experience 3:1-5

2B The Old Testament example 3:6-14

3B The limitations of law 3:15-22

4B The coming of mature faith 3:23-29

5B The contrasted positions under law and faith 4:1-7

6B The rebuke for their declension 4:8-11

7B The appeal from his relations to them 4:12-20

8B The appeal from the contrast of bondage and liberty 4:21-31

9B The concluding appeal 5:1

4A Appeal: Demands of the Gospel 5:2-6:10 (The life of liberty)

1B The consequences of legalism 5:2-12

2B The definition of freedom 5:13-15

3B The individual believer's "walk", 5:16-24

4B The body of believer's corporate "walk" 5:25-6:10

5A Conclusions 6:11-18

Now read Galatians 5:2-6:10 five times (you may want to read it in another translation some of these times). Then write a brief synopsis of the section.

Now, write a thought-for-thought paraphrase of Galatians 5:25-6:10

5:25

5:26

6:1

6:2

6:3

6:4

6:5

6:6

6:7

6:8

6:9

6:10