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## Exegetical Bible Study Methods

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Into Thy Word Ministries [www.intothyword.org](http://www.intothyword.org)

This curriculum is designed to teach you how to study the Bible with the tools a good pastor would learn to use in a top level seminary.

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

The Bible is a collection of books in various literature forms, written over a 1500 year period to people 2000 years ago; it speaks to history, and it speaks to our inner soul. To get the most out of our reading and teaching, we must learn to use the tools needed to dig out these precious prospects. This is called the science and art of *Exegetical Method*.

What is *Exegetical*, *exegesis*, *xo...*what? *Exegesis* or the *Deductive Approach* to Bible study simply means “to lead out” or “draw out,” extracting objectively, in a systematic study, what a text is actually saying to its original intended readers in their language, culture, and setting before we can discover what it means. In practice with the Bible, it is finding the true meaning of the passages of Scripture from word meanings and context. It is a tool and a discipline which enables us to get more out of what we read, so we can see a text in its background and then gain a better grasp of it by knowing the intended meaning, rather than just what we want it to mean. As a tool, it is an examiner and a detective that interviews a passage in a comprehensive, extensive, and serious manner. This enables a better understanding of the Bible that helps draw out more of the meaning for our personal understanding and spiritual growth. In this way, we can better internalize a passage for our personal conviction and explain it better to others, too. In other words, *I want to know Him and His Word, what He is saying to me.*

The Exegetical method or *exegesis* does not mean going to a passage with a presupposition, idea, or agenda and looking for it, although sometimes in preparing a topical study, one may do this. However, it is always, always best to go to the passage to look for what it actually says and not what we want to find. We never want to try to get from the passage what is not there, and then think we have found something. This is what the cults and false teachers do!

Why should I bother with this? Because, we can gain so much more from His Word, precepts, and call if we just desire to take the time to learn more of His Word. No serious Bible student wants to be naïve or wants things boiled down to only the basic, simple, non-convicting bullet point; we want meat and depth that can be applied to life and taught to others as God has called. Exegetical Bible

study is learning how to systematically analyze and apply the Bible for all its worth with our best efforts. You can be a person who is skilled in learning His Word, something that must be done before engaging in teaching people the Word. If we do not know how to dig out the meaning and then apply it to our own lives, how can we ask others to do it for their lives?

There is also a counteraction by some who cry “foul” to Exegetical study, saying it liberalizes God’s precepts or neuters the Spirit. But, it is my intent to show you that this is not the case. Those who are critical to the Bible use these tools, too. The knife that cuts a hand or stabs a person also carves a work of art or helps us eat our dinner. A tool is as good or as bad as the intent of the person who uses it.

### **The Exegetical Process**

*And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:10*

It is of the utmost importance that we are honest and humble in our encounters with God’s Holy Word! The Bible is to inform us in order to allow the work of the Spirit to bend us and conform us to God’s will and standards. We do not dare seek to bend His precepts to fit our ideas or agendas.

To be honest careful students of His Word, we must be willing to dig and do the research in order to perceive what the text says before we say to others what it says! It is not about what we think it says; it is about what it really does say! We do not want to be the objects of discussion from 2 Peter (false teachers); rather, we want to honor and glorify our Lord. To read, study, and then teach what the Bible honestly says is so much more impacting and effectual than anything we can make up or assume!

### **These are three crucial areas or rules of *exegesis* that we have to know before we can interpret correctly:**

- We must be aware of our nature, as we are filled with sin and desires that do not mach up to His Word.
- We must be aware of the nature of Scripture and the Divine Author’s intent.
- The Bible was written by the words of people through their cultures, languages, times, and histories, while at the same time all divinely inspired.

Thus, when we are aware of this “tension” between the Bible’s language, history, literature, and our perceptions and limited understanding, then we can be

careful interpreters so that we are focused on Christ and His Word and not ourselves or our ideas.

**Step 1: Select and Identify your Passage.** (This step can be incorporated in the “Inductive Bible Study Method” in the first steps of preparation)

For Bible Study and preaching, it is always best to stick to two to six verses unless it is a narrative passage, such as Genesis or Chronicles. This is to make your learning and your teaching more manageable and understandable. You do not want to be overloaded or overload your people with information; at the same time, you want to learn and enable them to be able to give the overview and the “meat” of the passage, making it “hit home” with them, as it relates and applies both to your and their lives. If you are going through the Bible exegetically, as in verse-by-verse through a whole book, outline it first, and then break down your messages into sub-categories. This is for better clarity and understanding, not just for you, but for those to whom you are communicating.

Make sure you are using a good translation and not a paraphrase. Stick to one main translation to work from; even if you are using the Greek text, have the NASB handy and use it as your baseline because you will have to communicate your work so others who may not know Greek can understand and relate. (However, this curriculum is designed for those who are not using Greek.) Only read and refer to a paraphrase to gain more insights; do not study from it unless that is all you have.

- Start by browsing the whole book to see the whole picture of what is going on.
- Then carefully read the chapter of your passage, then, reread it very carefully and slowly in a good translation.
- Keep in mind the inductive question, “what does this passage say?”
- Remember to be in a state of prayer and humbleness before the Father!

By the way, I have found most people hear very little Greek from the pulpit unless it relates to the preacher’s point or is used as an illustration. It is always best to do your work and then communicate so people can understand; speak and preach to their level of understanding and not over them! People do not care how much you know if you do not love and care for them and teach in an humble manner.

**Step 2: Explore the General Meaning of the Passage.** (This step can be incorporated into the first steps of the inductive method on “What does it say”)

Your objective is to seek the broad-spectrum meaning, the overarching structure of your passage, and clarify it. Thus you observe the structure to see

what is going on and report it. In this way, you can understand it then you can communicate that understanding to your people. You can ask, *what does the biblical author mean and what is the intent and objective of the passage? What are the basic and essential elements? What did the original readers see in the passage? What are the general precepts and principles being presented?* At this point, try not to look at the specifics before you have the general idea firmly in your mind. Paraphrase the passage. Diagram and/or outline it. Remember, you are to engage the Bible by examining the general meaning, seeking the parts of it, and then bringing them all together for understanding and application; whole, to parts, to whole.

- The primary goal of interpretation is to find the “plain meaning” of the Bible so it can be used in your life, church, and community!
- What is it? Who is the author? What is the intent, the language, the *genre*....
- What does the passage say? What does the general overview of the passage really say? Ignore what you have been told or what you presume; the point here is to do your own deductive analysis to determine, in context and as accurately as possible, what God is saying in the passage you are studying.
- What is the major theme?
- What is the storyline?
- Start an outline of the passage. I suggest an inductive order in three to four sections.
- Good *exegesis* means we write down what God is actually saying not what we want Him to say.
- Good *exegesis* means that God has control of what is being said and we do not, we are to hear and perceive what He has for us.

**Step 3: Explore the Specific Meaning of the Passage.** (This step can be incorporated into the middle steps on the inductive method on “What does it mean?”)

In this step, our idea is to explore more of, “What is it?” Who is the author? What is the intent, the language, the *genre*, etc.... Thus, the task is to isolate and then inspect and analyze specific words and phrases to better determine what is going on in the passage. What are the concepts being presented? Start to lay out the specific precepts and principles being presented. Start to do your outline if you have not already, and then add to it in a logical, systematic way what you have discovered. Do this verse-by-verse; under each verse, list the points and principles. Look at each sentence and notice the words. First, look at the key

words such as nouns and verbs; then, what is supporting them, and then the adjectives and structure. Remember the context and never divorce specifics from general context or *visa versa*.

- How is the passage arranged and set up?
- What is the sentence structure? The sequence of thought? What is the subordination (how things are supported) and logic, and how are they presented?
- What are the contexts and/or background?
- Look at the grammatical structure; this is the big clue to what is going on! Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and their person and number are crucial to the who, what, when, where, how, and why of the passage.
- What are the word or phrase meanings? Examine the significance of the individual words and phrases. Be aware of idioms, metaphors, hyperbole, and such. When you get to a phrase, seek to determine what is contained in it, the thoughts, precepts, etc...
- Look at other translations and paraphrases.
- What are the maxims, subject, and theme? What is their relevance?
- What are the intentions and propositions?
- What are the problems and solutions?
- Cause and effect?
- Are there any theological terms and ideas that need to be researched and explained?
- What are the arguments and points? What is the flow of the argument, or how is the case presented?
- Good exegesis means we are to seek what God is saying, and not what we want Him to say. We are to dig out His principles—not read in ours!

Note: when you use other resources such as commentaries, there is always a bias from the human author. Be aware of it and remember; human works are not inspired and can be very fallible! God's Word is inspired and is infallible! The problem is in how we interpret it, our predispositions, agendas, and limited reasoning skills. Thus, be humble when you approach His Word!

**Step 4: Explore the Context.** (This step can also be incorporated in the middle steps of the inductive method on “What does it mean?”)

This is where you examine how the passage relates to the surrounding passages, the book and chapter. Remember, the Bible is a library of 66 books written over 1,500 years by many human authors all inspired and directed by God. Within it, there are many language and literature types that give us idioms, metaphors, phrases, and words that mean something different depending on whether it is a narrative (story), poetry, or Apocalyptic. Also, the surrounding passages help determine the meaning of the precepts and the individual words, just like any modern language does today. Even the specific meaning at the time of the writing may have changed or have been translated inaccurately or incompletely.

There are two main areas of “context” we always need to be aware of and ask the text, “What are the historical, and what are the literary settings?” (That is the content of what is going on in the text.) What is going on preceding and after our text? What are the type(s) of literature, and the various cultural factors? What was going on in that time in history? What is the point? The train of thought?

1. **The Historical Context:** This is about the time period and culture of the people who God used to write it and the people they are writing too. Such as the locations, such as the travels of Paul and Jesus, and the time and sequence of events. This refers to the occasion and purpose of the author’s intention, how and what it meant to them, and how and what it means to us. Such as, *what was the personal background of Isaiah? What was his position (job)? Who was he writing to? What were the people like (culture and customs)? What were their expectations?* These are some of the key questions to ask in order to know what is going on. Carefully reading the text plus the use of Bible encyclopedias, handbooks, and dictionaries will give you those insights. But, make sure you make your own observations first!
  2. **The Literary Context:** This is the type of literature *genres* that refer to the meaning of the words; the Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives—both the meaning of the word(s) itself as well as what they mean in their context of sentence structure and surrounding passages. You can do this quite simply by comparing the word you wish to “dig” out by looking at a concordance and at various translations. How is it used in other places in Scripture such as the word “denarius” in the Gospels? You may automatically think it is money. And, you are right—but what kind of money? What was it used for? What was the amount and what was its worth? These are critical questions to help you understand the meaning of the passage. Also, be aware that the verse numbers, paragraphs, and chapters are not part of the original text!
- What comes before and after your passage?

- What is the historical background—the circumstances surrounding the events, cultural concerns, and social considerations?
  - Ask what language the book was written in. Most of the Old Testament is in Hebrew; parts of Daniel are in Aramaic—a dialect of Hebrew—and the New Testament is in Greek. Thus, the passage was originally written in another language than you are reading. We have to realize that it is a translation and investigate the meanings accordingly. This gives us more profound insights into the passage!
  - Who was the author and what does he bring to the passage? What about authenticity and genuineness? Is he using an “amanuensis” (using a secretary to dictate to, as Paul often did)? Is he revealed as in “pseudonymity” (such as the author is not clearly revealed as in Mark) or “anonymity” (the author is unknown, such as Hebrews)?
  - When was the book written? This is significant, such as in Revelation, as to how it is interpreted.
  - Where was the book written? The geographic location tells a lot of culture and insights.
  - To whom was the book written? The book’s destination—who is receiving and reading it—gives a lot of insights too.
  - Why was the book written? What was the occasion (circumstance) and purpose (reason and intent)? For example, Paul, to the Corinthians, is responding and addressing their questions and concerns and straightening out their misguided beliefs.
  - What are the cultural considerations? (This is where a background commentary or Bible dictionary would help.)
  - What are the relationships to other passages such as theological and “synoptical” (relations of the Gospels to one another) issues? This is where a cross reference work helps (the verses that are in the margins in most Bibles) or a concordance to see how the word or principle is used in other passages; Scripture helps to interpret Scripture.
  - What are the facts? How do they compare to your opinions? This is how we are challenged so we can learn and grow; when you explain this to others, do so in love and reverence to God because we are all learners of His Word!
3. **What is the Genre Context?** How does the literary type or wording in the passage effect the interpretation? In English, we have story, comedy, tragedy, novel, lyric poem, and epic to name a few. In the Greek and Hebrew, we have

narrative, law, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, parable, epistle, and even romance. This is very important, as this helps us interpret the meaning of the text and whether it is literal or figurative.

This is important when determining if we will take a word or phrase as literal. Some are just common sense. When the Bible is referred to as a *rock*, we do not garden with it; when the Bible is called a *mirror*, we do not shave with it; when Jesus says He is the *Bread*...well, you should get the point. Some words are not to be taken literally, but the Bible is still communicating the literal Word of God. How do we determine if something is figurative, a metaphor, or a poetic figure? Usually, the Bible gives a clue in context, such as two or more words that do not go together like *LORD* and *Rock*, in Psalm 18:2, *The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer*. In this case, it means “unfailing strength,” as God is our Strength who does not fail. In this situation, you may need to look it up.

### **The Basic Genres:**

- **History or Narrative:** There are stories and the epics and include Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, and Acts.
- **Law:** These are the instructions and precepts of God given to us through Moses, such as Leviticus and Deuteronomy.
- **Wisdom:** These are the literature of maxims and sayings such as Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.
- **Poetry:** These are the prose and rhymes such as Psalms, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations.
- **Prophecy:** These include both major and minor prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
- **Apocalyptic:** These are combinations of narrative and prose written in vivid imagery and poetic phrases that are intended to exaggerate for a purpose such as Daniel and most of Revelation.
- **Parable:** These are the sayings of Jesus that are narrative and instructional, contained in the Gospels.
- **Epistle:** These are the letters written to a specific audience that are practical for us today such as Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, Peter, John, and the first three chapters of Revelation.

- **Romance:** These are narrative, written also as love stories, such as Ruth and Song of Solomon.
  - Then, ask how the type of *genre* (type of literature) shows you the significance and implication of the general overview?
  - How does the type of *genre* contribute to possible meanings of specific words and then the point of the passage?
4. **Dealing with Metaphors, Symbols and Figures of Speech.** This is taking what is said and finding out what the text means—how to interpret what is literal, and what points to something else in the correct context. That is, we never take out of God’s Word what is not there, or read in our will as His. In understanding *genre*, within most all of Scripture there is *genre* within *genre*. In a narrative, there is poetry as well as figurative languages such as metaphors (meaning something different such as, a “bull market” does not mean a bull is in a market, it means the stocks went up). A metaphor such as *salt of the earth* or *this is my body given...* can also be an illustration such as when Satan is referred to as a lion, an idiom (expression) such as Jesus’ words to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:27, or a hyperbole (exaggeration) such as Jesus saying a *camel through an eye of a needle*. Are all in the metaphor categories, even Jesus’ parables.

When we encounter a word that does not seem to fit or is out of character, we must say “what is it,” “why is it there?” Such as, is it instruction or is it poetry; is it a story, is it doctrine, is it an exaggeration, such as when Jesus said “a log in your eye,” or “a camel through an eye of a needle.” Does He want us to put a log in our eye or try to get a camel into a needle? You may find it tiresome after the first hump; thus, that is probably not what He means. It may be a point, a metaphor, or an illustration. If you do not understand the *genre* or the type of wording, you will come to a word such as when Jesus says He is the “bread of life” and not realize that He does not come from a bakery. Most do not make that error, but we do it with other words such as “living water,” a “good eye,” “the son of man,” “the beast,” or “being caught up” all of which have meanings very different in the original language than what many think they mean in English today. In Philippians 3:2, we are warned about *dogs*. Is this the K-9 variety or does it mean something else? The context gives us the clue. If you do not get the clue, then get a book and look it up. I do that all of the time and have been for over 25 years with all kinds of initials after my name. I do not presume to know; I check it out, and you should too.

**Step 5: Explore the Contents.** (This step can also be incorporated into the middle steps of the inductive method on “What does it mean?”)

In this step, you will want to carefully examine all the parts of the passage, define the key words, and compare the passage to other similar ones. You have done the overview; now it is time for the specifics. This is where you can incorporate Inductive reasoning and questions to pull out more information, acting like a detective to see what is going on in the text and determining its impact. Delineate, as in define, what the parts of the passage mean. This step is not to be done mechanically; rather, it is to be done with reverence to God and His Word. At the same time, be willing to discover His wonders and accept challenges. Then, make sure your interpretation is correct, but check other credible resources to make sure you are on the right path.

- Good *exegesis* means we look to what the passage actually means, not what we want it to mean.
- What are the different topics that are involved and how do they relate? Such as, how does topic “x” support topic “y;” how are they interrelated, illuminated, supported, what are the conclusions, and so forth?
- Are there any assertions (statements, proclamations...)?
- Are there any words or phrases repeated? If so, why?
- Re-read the passage in other translations and in its context.
- What are the ethical teachings?
- What are the precepts?
- What are the theological ramifications?
- This is where the word studies come in. Look up key words in lexicons (see our *Bible Aids* channel), and Bible dictionaries to discover their meaning. One word from the Greek can have several sentences of meaning and give you more insights and precepts into a verse. This is why translating a Bible is so daunting, doing it word for word (literally), meaning to meaning (dynamic), or somewhere in between. Then, incorporate to the context and *genre* for more developed and logical understanding and thought.
- What do you recognize and what do you need to look up? Never assume you know! Use an English dictionary to make sure you know what the meaning is; do not assume!
- Itemize each word and phrase in a logical or verse-by-verse order, and then write out the meanings of them from your examinations. Use inductive questions, and then exegetical resources such as commentaries and other

tools to expand on it and explain it to yourself and then to those whom you teach.

- What do you not understand?

For advanced study there are parallels to other ancient works, such as the Jewish books, Mishnah, Talmud, apocryphal literature, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Greek works (remember the Apostles and most of the early Christians were fluent in Greek and were immersed in that culture. Paul, John, and others used a good amount of borrowed material, for illustration sake, that they knew but we may not know so well) to gain more insights. Remember, these works are not inspired but human based to give more clarity by showing how the same word or phrase is used elsewhere. This gives us clues to more meaning and sometimes more confusion. Of course, always compare Scripture to Scripture first!

- Now, write out in your own words, and in a meaningful and fruitful way, what the main words mean.

**Step 6: Put it all Together.** (This step can be incorporated into the final steps of the inductive method on “How does it apply?” and “Charting”).

This is where you reconstruct your work for the intended purpose for Christ’s glory. Now, go back to your paraphrase and add what you missed; and, if needed, subtract what you got wrong or rework what needs to be clarified, and start to polish it up.

You can have an *exegetical* paper, sermon, or Bible study that looks like this: Your paraphrase is about a paragraph or two that explains the general meaning of the passage in a way that you and your audience can clearly understand. Then, you can write out a short paragraph explaining the context or background of what is going on in and around the passage. Write out what you have learned in your explorations, such as using bullet points on each main word meaning or precept in verse order. Then, clarify what you are saying so it is simple and concise and make an application that you have lived out before asking others to do so (this is how most of the *Into Thy Word* Bible studies are done; look at any of the James or Peter studies for example.)

- Smooth it out; add further explanations, questions, and illustrations, depending on how you will use it.
- Make sure you do not spiritualize something that is not there, such as telling people to allow a snake to bite them because Paul did.
- Make sure you do not go by your experience; rather, seek His experience. Be an humble learner of His Word and an humble teacher too! Pride has no place either in the pulpit or in the Kingdom of God!

- Make sure you do not rationalize your behaviors or ideas by seeking a passage to justify them, usually out of context or intent.
- Make sure you do not make dogmatic assertions when it is not justified, such as a way of dress, one style of preaching as better than another, or a minor doctrine like tongues. Major on the majors; minor on the minors.
- Make sure you do not rationalize the passages or bring into His Word your way of theological thinking. Rather, allow Scripture to dictate your theological views.
- In preparing a “topical study,” follow the same procedures, as it is always, always best to go to the passage to look for what it says, not what we want to find. Thus, use a concordance to look up all the passages related to your topic and then *exegete* the pertinent ones; develop an outline and logical flow from your *exegetical* work and you will have a topical study!

### **Hermeneutical Questions to Ask Yourself to Help Prepare Your Lesson:**

- How can you best take what the Bible is saying and bring it to the people you are teaching?
- Your goal is to write and/or teach so your audience can understand and apply His precepts to help them learn about and then lead transformed lives. In prayer, ask God how you can do this and do it better.
- Ask what the implications are and how you can understand and communicate them.
- What do you want your audience to understand?
- *What can I do to make God's Word real in the lives of the people in my care? What will be my church's response? How will I handle people's negative opinions and objections to growing and learning, and do so in kindness and love?*
- Good *exegesis* means that the precepts we have dug out are to be applied and not set aside.
- To grow in Christ, we need to be equipped by His precepts and be ready for His service. (2 Tim. 3:15-16)
- Remember, the Word of God's purpose is to transform us into the image of God—to model His character! And then, we can show and tell others.

- Pray and ask God how to implement His truth in you before you ask others to do so.
- The Word of God should lead us to model the character of Christ, and to form us in the image of God. How should we carry out these changes and then communicate to others how to do so?

### **You Can Do it!**

The Bible is not a difficult book to interpret (Some passages and books like Revelation present some challenges because the *genre*, word meanings, and phrases are not what we are used to and may have meant something entirely different to the original readers than they do in the English today), yet many gifted scholars over the centuries have taken very different views of various passages. This has caused divisions and conflicts that were needless and without purpose that, ironically, only served to give glory to the devil's ways while distracting us from its main purpose of allowing us the opportunity to know about God, learn His precepts, and then to apply them to our daily lives. To escalate the conflicts between scholars and interpretive approaches, many current sensationalists like to reinterpret the Bible as they see fit and suit it to their erroneous agendas and their corrupt whims. Thus, they lead people off course, far away from the treasures and wisdom they could have had!

I do not take my venture into God's Word lightly. In fact, having studied His Book intensely for over 25 years, all my degrees, readings, research, and experience has not prepared me for the *exegetical* quest. I am a sinner with my own fallibility coming before His Wondrous Holy Word. To think otherwise would be significantly arrogant. I approach His Word as a learner and as an humble student, and I suggest you do so too. Our intention at *Into Thy Word* is to stimulate your thinking and provide you with an honest and open look into God's Word from an *exegetical* and inductive perspective. We seek to honor the science and art of careful biblical interpretation and analysis. We have discovered that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God has given us something that is very important and clear for us to understand today.

I challenge you to be a faithful, honest student of His Word, whether you are still in high school, in seminary, or have decades of pastoral experience behind you as well as advanced degrees, to come to His text without preconceived, theological agendas or personal viewpoints. Rather, research carefully; do word studies (look for original meaning), conduct searches, and use sound reason and logic. In addition, do not forget the historical examination as well as context and comparisons with other passages in the Bible. This may sound like too much or seem overwhelming, but you can do it. You may discover that what you thought you knew fails to compare to what you can further know that will enhance your teaching too. God indeed has a deeper purpose for you to

observe, build, dig out, manage, and apply His Word into your daily lives and thus, serve your churches better!

Make the commitment to be a good *exegete* to His Word. Do not assume; rather, come to the text without your theological bias even if it is a good one. If your theological bias is good, then what you discover will back it up, help you understand it better, or show you how you need to modify or change for the better. Do not just state the usual perspectives in your teachings, seek the trends of the day, or try to argue your view without careful evaluation of the facts. And, never, ever twist Scripture to fit your ideas or just go by your theological education or lack thereof or even your denominational agendas. This is what false teachers and cultists do! Rather, challenge your thinking by seeking Christ and His facts and honestly examining what God's inerrant Word says, in context and in truth, through the Spirit.

My other intention is to challenge my, and perhaps your thinking, too, concerning biblical thinking and theories, and to seek sound reason and Scripture—not myths, traditions, or popular theorems. However, I want to state up front that whatever theory or theological framework to which you or I subscribe is not as important as our love for the Lord and our desire for His Truth and authentic, spiritual growth. These are the things that are truly and eternally important! Arguing over conjecture or spurious, elusive doctrine does not bring glory to Christ; it only proves Satan!

*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17*

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