

When you read the Bible, you are either going to read stories or statements. And there is a way to approach both of those.

So when reading a story, you can ask

What are key events in the story? You know it is a key event because the story went in a definite direction because this event occurred. Either positively or negatively.

So as you are identifying these key events, you want to ask this question.

“Is the story trying to teach me something about God at this moment, or is it trying to teach me something about man?”

When the story is focusing much attention on activity of God, ask, “WHAT am I to learn about God?”

If the key event occurred primarily because of a decision by a man, then ask this question:

If the key event was positive because a person or people trusted God then ask:

What am I to learn about how people faithfully follow God, so that I can faithfully follow God?

If the key event was negative because a person or people did not trust God, then ask, What am I to learn about how people fail to follow God that I might respond differently to those areas where they stumbled?

So that’s the basic way to approach stories, and of course as you read the story, you are going to be asking these questions a number of times in the story as you look at all the events that connected the story together.

The other type of things that you read in the Bible are statements:

With portions of Scripture that contain a lot of statements, we are to look for KEY words. A key word is a unique word, a special word. It stands out. It’s a difference maker in the sentence. In other words, if it were NOT there, the sentence would lose its impact. Those are the type of words that you circle or underline.

In reading the sections of the Bible that contain statements, we also want to learn to ask certain questions. The first is question is : WHAT am I reading: That is, WHAT is the main thing that is being conveyed here?

Is it a command?

Is it a promise?

Is it a warning?

And let me say that one of the best ways to approach statements is through the use of five words that will become your best friends when reading the Bible.

WHAT, WHY, HOW, WHEN, and WHERE. (Some of those words, not all of them everytiem, but some of them will always be helpful)

The what is you start because that helps you know the main thing that is being talked about. And the rest of the questions help you know how to live out out this main thing that is being talked about. In other words the WHY and the HOW and the WHEN and the WHE RE help you understand mroe fully the WHAT.

Think of it this way, I am reading a portion of the Bible that is commanding to do something, then if I look around that command, I will find other statements that will cause me to more fully understand and obey that command.

For instance, I might ask the question, "WHY" Why should I obey that command. Or I might ask the qesiton, HOW, How can I obey that command.

If the Bible makes a statement that is a promise, then I know the what is, "Believe this promise". But there may be more to just believing that promise if I ask a question such, "When should I believe this promise, Where should I belive this promise.

Take for example the passage we will look at next week in Ephesians 6 as we beagn to conclude our series on spiritula armor by looking the final piece of spiritual armor that Paul mentions as we prepare to do battle against the forces of darkness that wage war against our soul - that piece of armor being prayer

Ephesians 6

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

So whenever I am reading a part of the Bible that has a lof statements, I do like to start with what. What is the main thing, the most obvious thing taht is being spoken of here. And in this case it looks to me like the what is prayer. Not only is it mentioned repeatedly, but its part of sentences that look like commands.

So if I were to just look for the commands in those sentences, I would see three of them:

Pray in the Spirit

Pray for all Lord's people

Pray for spiritual teachers

So the WHAT is a command to pray. And then all the other questions help me understand more fully about the what - which in this case is a command.

For instance when if were to ask the question HOW about this passage, I would see that answered very quickly in the passage. How do I pray? In the Spirit. We will talk about that next week, but that's a start

WHEN do I pray? On all occasions.

WHY should I pray? Because spiritual leaders need to be bold. There is no way to have a bold church if you don't have bold leaders.