

The Bible Part 5: How to Study God's Word

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[0 : 00] Dear Lord, gracious Heavenly Father, we just come with great thanks and thanksgiving for the God that you are. We thank you for the Son that you sent.

And we thank you for our souls that you save. Father, I pray just as we come to your word and understanding of how to study it, how to read it, how to apply it to our lives, I pray that just through your power of the Spirit we would be able to do so, Father.

I pray that if anyone has any questions that they will be answered. Some of the questions will be answered, at least in some of the sermons. I pray that sometimes people are in fear of your word, O Father.

I pray that that would dissipate, that some people think your word unclear. I pray that they see that it is indeed clear. It is indeed truthful. It is indeed pure in its righteousness.

So, Father, as we come with this worship, I pray that you'd be a part of this again as we come under your word and the message today. We ask these things in your gracious and heavenly name.

Amen.

[1 : 05] So, please take out your Bibles to Psalm 19. Psalm 19. If you're new or visiting, welcome.

My name is BK. I have one of the pleasures of being the improvising pastor here. So, we've been in a series.

We're kind of going through this series. We're going to probably go through it for much of the summer. It's about what we believe and why we believe it. We're kind of looking at our statement of faith. If you are young, if you're in high school or whatever, and you're kind of grown up and you've grown up at this church, and you kind of wondered, what do we really believe?

And now you're starting to come to ask these questions. This will be the service, this series for you. If you're new, visiting, deciding whether this is to be your home.

This is the type of things that we believe in. I hope that will inform you to help you make the best decision for you and your family. So, if you want to turn with me to Psalm 19, 711, today's sermon is going to be very, very different.

[2 : 15] It's a very practical sermon. And really what I want to do is I want to cover two specific things. First, I want to give you three principles for understanding God's Word.

Three principles for understanding God's Word. And from there, ten rules, ten practical points of application that you can use for reading the Bible.

Because we definitely want you to understand what God's Word is, what it says, and understand what it means. And we believe that as we are a part of making disciples, disciples know how to feed themselves, desire to know what God has to say.

Okay, so in this text of Psalm 19, the psalmist simply tells us truths about God's Word.

Just take a look at verse 7. It makes this declaration. The law of the Lord is perfect. What does it do?

[3 : 17] It revives the soul. It tells us that the testimony of the Lord is sure, which makes wise the simple.

Verse 8, The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous all together.

When we look at that text, just see what it does when we commit ourselves to God's Word. One, it revives the soul. By reviving our soul, it makes us wise.

By knowing God's truth. Verse 8, notice it says, It rejoices the heart. Not only do we have revived souls, do we live in wisdom, but that wisdom brings joy, amen?

[4 : 21] Does not bring confusion. To know that we are indeed walking, living in God's Word. Yes, Mary. Psalm 19. Psalm 19.

Thank you. And then we get to verse 9, where it endures forever, so that the precepts, these teachings of the Lord, aren't just good for a short amount of time, but it's forever.

And then we see that they are righteous all together. And the psalmist adds in Psalm 10, More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, moreover, by them is your servant warned, in keeping them, there is great reward. So the last four weeks, we've been looking at the inspiration of Scripture.

And I'll use the theological terms that we use it. And we've talked about it, how God through the Holy Spirit inspired the writers to give us our Scripture. We understood that because it's God speaking, God created us, he has authority over us, and he gives us his instructions in God's Word.

[5 : 44] And because it's God's Word, it has authority over us. We studied last week of what it means, the topic or the subject of inerrancy.

And what does it mean for a perfect God to say perfect words to us? And then we also learned about what's called the preservation of Scripture, that God through time did not just call these men to write these words, but to preserve these words for his church, for God's people to know.

And here we are. Wow, some of the writings are over 5,000 years old, and we have them still to this day. It's an incredible work of the Lord.

Now, truthfully speaking, a lot of us who go to church, we tend to have good thoughts about the Bible. Amen? We think positively of the Bible. We believe it's God's Word.

You're not going to get much of an argument. But some people do struggle that God's Word is actually authoritative over our lives. And that happens for different reasons.

[6 : 53] For some of us, we're still kind of living in the 60s. No authority, no how, right? Don't want any authority over us for one reason or another. Another reason might be just because of what I said.

It's a book that's 2,000 years old since the last part was added to it. Some of it goes back 5,000 years. How in the world could a book from that far off have any relevance to me today?

Okay. The other one, and this is one of the more common arguments that I hear about Scripture that struggle with the authority, is they'll simply state that there's a lot of really good Christians disagree on different interpretations of Scripture.

So they kind of give up on it, right? Like, ah, if there's one guy over there who says this and that, it just has to be too confusing. So I am not going to bother with it.

If theologians can disagree, what hope do I have? And some, when you read it, last week I talked about the doctrine of clarity.

[8 : 02] You're reading a passage. You might find yourself in Ezekiel or Isaiah or even Revelations. That is not a narrative. It's not so clean in its instructions.

Draws confusion. And you just kind of give up. So what happens is you're going to hold up the Bible as God's word, but you're really not going to bother with it beyond that.

Does that make sense to anybody? I think there's been one of those scenarios. We've found ourselves at one point in our lives. But my friends, as we've talked about this in these last couple of weeks, God has indeed given us his word.

And it is what we call special revelation. It needs to be read. It needs to be studied. It needs to be understood. So this morning, what I want to do is I want to give you some helpful applications to help you do that.

If God has something to say to us, best we put ourselves in a position to listen and understand. Amen? That we would truly know what he has to say.

[9 : 25] So let me just give you five quick principles why to know the Bible. 2 Timothy 2.12, it says to be approved by God. To be approved by God.

That we would know how to act, how to think, how to worship. 1 Peter 2.2 tells us it's to grow in salvation. To grow in a deeper knowledge of our salvation.

Psalm 119, verse 11, simply says, it's so we can know not to sin against God. A lot of people make foolish decisions not knowing that they're sinning because they do not know what God has to say on these things.

Psalm 119:38 says, knowing God's word produces reverence for God. And ultimately, Psalm 119:105 tells us that the Bible is a light unto our path.

It's guidance. And we need guidance. Guidance. And the fact of the matter is, there is much danger in getting the Bible wrong.

[10:36] Wrong understanding leads to wrong thinking, leads to wrong actions. Those things tend to corrupt our faith. They cause us to make poor decisions.

Poor decisions in a Christian life ultimately lead to spiritual depression. Spiritual depression often leads people to walk away from the faith.

Or living a faith that is so mixed up that it's impossible to fulfill our mandate to make disciples as God has commanded us to do.

So this morning, like I said, I'm just going to give you guys three overriding principles to understanding your scripture and ten rules for interpreting God's word. Make sense?

So if you're doing an outline, just put three and then another ten. So the first principle, what I'm talking about is called hermeneutics, which is the art and science of understanding.

[11:37] So theologians have come before. They've kind of written out these rules to help us understand. So the first principle of hermeneutics is what's called the analogy of faith. And you guys have heard me talk about this before, the analogy of the faith.

And essentially that means there is a consistency from Genesis to Revelation that we understand that God inspired the writing of this book, that there is going to be no inherent contradictions.

God's got one word, one thing to say. This means quite simply that no part of scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere.

Make sense? So for example, a given verse is capable of two meanings or interpretations. It means we need to dig down more and look for other ones to make sure there is harmony.

Because we know as God's word is inspired, it's been preserved, it's inerrant, it is to be consistent and coherent. So here's the verse that really gummed me up when I was a kid.

[12:45] All right? I'll just share the verse. It was Acts 2, 38. So when I was growing in high school, we kind of did what we were doing. We brought a couple of churches together. We kind of had this youth group. And one guy came to the youth group and he says, well, and I think it was like grade seven or something like that, but he was challenging us that if you weren't baptized, you weren't saved.

We're like, what? You know, I never really heard that. And they believed. No, you had to be baptized. So they took us to Acts 2, 38. And I'll just read it to you. It says, And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So when I'm looking at that verse, that sounds pretty clear, right? Like, holy cow. Maybe my church has this wrong. Maybe these are the things that have been going on, wrong in my church.

So I'm kept thinking, was this, have we been doing it right? Was my church teachers wrong on this? Did I not understand it? Because right here, the foundation of the church in Acts 22, 38, it's saying to be repent and baptized.

I remember going to my youth leader. Hey man, what gives? And he just simply, in all of God's wisdom, just flipped over the Bible and the truths that I already knew. John 1, 12, it says, To all who did receive him, being Jesus, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

[14:17] Wow, there was no mention of baptism there. Then he took me to Galatians 2, 16. Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus.

So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith and not by works of the law. Wait, no mention of baptism there either.

You know, Ephesians 2, 8, 9, for by grace you have been saved through faith in baptism. Whoops, no, not there. Right, so it was just some of those simple things that a young man is working through. So some of those things are more complicated as we get older, we struggle with. So that means we got to struggle through those texts. But we, the whole thing is a consistent message from beginning to end.

So that is the principle of the analogy of faith. So how do you explain that text? What is he meaning there then? So that means there's a, there's another meaning that's going on in Acts 2 that we need to explore.

[15 : 29] And that comes with understanding context, what's the surrounding passage, and what was the actual command Peter was giving them. It's true that Peter had already called them to repent.

He had called them from their old lives. But the way they were thinking in their Jewish faith was works had merit, right? So it was this automatic thinking that they were going away. Their old ways of earning merit with God. But one of the things that he said, one of the ways baptism is a sign of an inward reality that through repentance in, and salvation in Jesus Christ, so he was commanding them, you need to prove it.

Prove that salvation by being baptized. So that's the first principle to keep in mind. Second principle for understanding God's word is to interpret the Bible literally.

To interpret the Bible literally. Now this might seem kind of strange to us, but I'm certain many of you have been asked by someone who doesn't know, do you really interpret the Bible literally?

[16 : 37] Anybody been asked that question? I have been many times. Right? Right? The question is usually asked in such a way that we would be complete, you lunatics, to complete something that seems so abrasive at times.

So here's a perfect example. It's Pride Month, right? So a lot of people have got their signs out, and they're showing that Leviticus 20, you know, death to homosexuals.

And then someone pointed out that the same chapter says that children should be killed for cursing their mom and dad.

Right? Then there's another one who's got a placard that says, adultery, death to adulterers. Right? So all of a sudden everybody's like, whoa, wait a second, maybe I don't want to say that.

And it's because they don't really understand what the literal interpretation is going on there. It's kind of interesting that you see apparently reporters know Scripture just as much as the people they're contradicting.

[17 : 44] So can we take the Bible literally? And the answer is yes. It means the Bible should be interpreted according to what's known as the literal sense.

And the best way I explain this to people, and if you're young, you're not going to understand this, but you remember a newspaper? Right? If you read the newspaper and the very front was the big news of the day, which is kind of the narrative that we find in Scripture, the Gospels, what's going on, what's the news.

You'd turn it over and there'd be an opinion piece. That opinion piece is like the epistles that Paul, Peter, Jude, you know, all those other talks, the horoscopes, right?

That'd be revelation for us. So you knew when you're reading a newspaper, you knew instinctively that each section that you're reading, you're supposed to read with a different tenor.

You know what I'm saying? And the sports section was Songs of Solomon when we grew up, right? We were just so excited. Anyway, and then of course you'd have Ann Lander's section, which was Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, right?

[19 : 04] So you knew in each section of your newspaper you read differently. You don't read a business letter the same way you read poetry, right?

Imagine getting a letter and it says, hey, you're fired and you're reading the letter, you get it from your boss, someone firing you and then you're like, well, that really didn't rhyme with you're a really bad employee, right?

You're not trying to value the rhyme and reason of it. It's the message that it's sent from before you. Here's a perfect example. It's Matthew 17, 20.

It says, Jesus said to them, because of your little faith, for truly I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to the mountain, move from here to there and it will move and nothing will be impossible for you.

I'm certain there's some really good Christians in this church that pray all the time. Has anybody ever literally moved a mountain? No, it's never happened, right?

[20 : 15] So some people have come across and they try to argue against Christianity. Look at the insanity that it's trying to tell you here. But we understand there's a principle.

If you were hearing Jesus for the first time, you would have heard or in his time, a mustard seed was a very, very small seed, but it could grow to a plant about this big quite quickly and produce really big leaves.

So just from a tiny seed, it could grow to a big plant quite amazingly. And the message is, God can accomplish a lot through prayer. Amen?

Imagine moving a mountain. You'd have every environmentalist against you because you would have wrecked some bird or some animal's home, right? They would be hating us Christians if we could do that.

Anyway. But these are some of the arguments that I've heard in the past, right? So, just like in John, and Jesus says in John 10, 9, that he is the door and anyone who enters through him will be saved.

[21 : 23] It's a metaphor. He isn't literally a door. Sadly, a lot of early Christian writings included a lot of really bad commentaries, and what they liked to do was allegorize everything.

They tried to spiritualize. So, when someone said, I'm going up to Jerusalem, they didn't literally mean he was traveling up to Jerusalem. It meant that they were going to do something so heavenly and holy instead.

Or, in, they were talking future tense. Someone said, well, you know, Bill went up to Jerusalem. It meant he went to heaven. He died. They just started to allegorize and add these different spiritual meanings.

And if there's one point, and you guys have heard me say it again and again, we do live in an age, and it still exists today, people will say, well, light candles when you pray.

Or, they're going to try to lean on something from the past that gives us a different emotion, a different sense that we can somehow enter into a blessed spiritual place where we can experience the grace of God.

[22 : 35] You know what the Bible tells us? It tells us to love one another. It tells us to bear one another's burdens. That's what spiritual actions are.

It's coming together as a group of people and loving one another as God has called us to. Because that is when we fulfill the law.

That is when we fulfill what we have been created for. And if I would have had more time, I could have written down every one another in Scripture. There's a ton of them.

Forgive one another. Be patient with one another. Those are spiritual things that help us grow in God.

Amen? Now, don't, don't, I'm not discounting prayer. prayer. And a lot of people take the spiritual disciplines, which are really great. And then what happens is when we get overcompensated with the spiritual disciplines, which are prayer, devotion, reading your Bible regularly.

[23 : 48] So when we get to a different part of Scripture and it's saying do these spiritual things, people think, oh, I got to do my devotions more or I need to be praying more. And what the writer is actually saying, no, no, no, you have to be more compassionate.

You have to have a compassionate heart. You have to be obeying by loving your neighbor. You need to turn the cheek. Do you understand like there's certain actions that God has taught us which are actually spiritual things.

Here's two of the great ones. Raise your kids in the admonition of the Lord and love your spouse. Those are spiritual actions.

So don't over-spiritualize. Read it literally when you come to your Bible. Don't over-spiritualize your certain things and look to obey it for we have been created for good works.

And the third principle that I'm going to give you is what's called when we read our Scripture here and we interpret and not only myself but Dave and any of the pastors we bring in, we believe in what's called a literal historical grammatical interpretation of Scripture.

[24 : 58] And that basically means when I'm reading the Scripture I'm thinking what did the original author mean to the original people? That's the key. One interpretation.

And the only time that's corrected is if in the New Testament often sometimes some passages will be corrected otherwise. so the way we say it there's one interpretation but many applications.

Right? So there's only one way to understand it but it can be applied in a host of different ways. It's kind of like a beam of light hitting a prism. Goes in and then it comes out multicolored.

And you guys if you were here when Rob Provost spoke he had a great sermon on Jeremiah 29.

You guys remember that? He talked about you know that's one of the most misunderstood misapplied pieces of scripture.

It says for I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a future and a hope. That wasn't meant for us.

[26 : 02] That was meant for these people who lived in exile in Babylon. And if you were here you would have heard that God did plan to use them and many people to this day continue to be blessed as they followed the Lord in that foreign land.

So those are the three overriding principles that I want you to think about. The analogy of faith it's going to be consistent. Take it literally which means reading that passage of scripture for what it says.

And then third try to figure out what the original intent of the author is to that original meaning. Make sense?

All right. Here's a perfect example in that last passage. When you know the literal historical grammatical you have to know grammar. One of the first things we did when we went to seminary is we took a basic grammar class.

And in the States it was interesting they've done diagramming. Do you guys ever do diagramming? You basically mark a verb mark a noun a pronoun all those things.

[27 : 12] Which was kind of fun for me because I grew up French so I didn't even know all these English terms the same way. But here's a perfect example. Matthew 28 19 that's at the very end of Matthew Jesus talking to his disciples and it says go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

Well if you know your grammar go is in the passive tense. It's not a command because a lot of churches take that as their mission statement. The actual command is make disciples.

That's the imperative. And it's just simple know your grammar. So a lot of churches we get really excited hey go therefore let's send out missionaries and that's actually not what it means.

It says make disciples as you go. As you live your life no matter where it is. Because it's not just missionaries who make disciples is it? No we all supposed to. Doesn't matter what all part of life God hasn't called everybody to be a missionary.

And those are just some of the things we need to think about. So like I said there's three principles analogy of faith take it literally and understand your grammar and historical method.

[28 : 19] So here's ten practical reasons. Some are long some are short. First one read your Bible like any other book except pray to understand it. And let's be honest we read a lot of books that I still need to pray to understand it right?

There's a lot of things that are confusing. I'm really glad a lot of books have that little topic. You know they have the chapter title on every page because I get so caught up in the words. What is this guy talking about again?

But it's the same with scripture. Just do that. Sometimes we need to pray and because we understand it's a holy book we need to have our spiritual eyes enlightened. and remember it's that our personal conviction of scripture.

Scripture is true not because there's external evidence that proves scripture is true but we have the in working of the Holy Spirit that reveals that it's true and we talked about that principle a couple weeks ago.

The spirit himself bears witness to our human spirit that the scriptures are indeed the word of God. So when we study we begin by praying and we ask the Lord to help us understand the significance of this word.

[29 : 32] And what we need to pray for is how to make practical applications to our lives. So as we do our due diligence to study what it really means we're going to understand.

So a couple of ways we do that is we get a study Bible. It's okay to have a study Bible. Some people are afraid to have a study Bible. I recommend you do get a study Bible and there's two that we primarily recommend here.

We recommend the NIV study Bible. We probably need to get some of those out there. And the John MacArthur study Bible. Those study Bibles provide you the history, the understanding of what's going on in the background.

The second rule that I want to give you is read your Bibles to apply it to your life. Don't just read it to fill your head. Read it to understand how to apply it.

But we have to understand the story is not us. But sometimes, remember in the life of Christ, how easy it was to insert ourselves in the story and how much more powerful it became?

[30 : 37] When we looked at what was going with Jesus when he was confronting people, we saw how desperate people were to have them touch him. And even though Jesus, you know, we looked at how he tried to escape to get with the disciples to teach them, but crowds followed.

And you just simply have to ask the question, would you not have done that if your child was sick? If you knew they were going to die, would you not move heaven and earth to get them in front of Jesus?

Right? And there's a certain compassion that we see that our heavenly father, even though he's got one goal to accomplish, you see him desiring how his heart is for us.

So when we come to the Lord God in prayer, do you ever ask, is God really listening to me? Not only is he, does he want to? Well, as we've read from the gospels, how does God respond to those who call out to him?

He answers them, amen? Those are the things we need to apply to our hearts, to think that God isn't so far off, he doesn't hear us or he doesn't care.

[31 : 53] One author says, by trying to put ourselves in the life situation of the characters of scripture, we can come to a better understanding of what we are reading.

This is the practice of empathy, feeling the emotions of the characters we are studying. Such reading between the lines may be regarded as part of the text of scripture itself, but it will aid us in understanding the flavor of what is happening.

So when Jesus showed up to heal Lazarus, he didn't need to cry, he knew he was going to raise him. But because of his love for his sisters, he wept with them.

And the other thing I say is don't be afraid to ask questions. You guys, I'm going to read you this story, and this is the story that perplexed me probably more than any other story of scripture.

And the story is found in 2 Chronicles 13 and it's 2 Samuel 6. So David did not have possession of the Ark of the Covenant, and he wanted the Ark of the Covenant back in Jerusalem.

[33 : 08] So these people were to bring it from this other town, and it says, and when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, which is a city, Uzzah put out his hand to take hold of the Ark for the oxen had stumbled.

So basically the Israelites had put the Ark on this oxen, and it was moving, and it fell, and Uzzah stopped, put his hand out to protect the Ark from falling on the ground.

But it says, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he put out his hand to the Ark, and he died there before God.

And David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-Uzzah to this day.

And David was afraid of God that day, and he said, how can I bring the Ark of God home to me? So David did not take the Ark home to the city of David, but he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite.

[34 : 27] The Ark of God remained in the household of Obed-Edom in his house for three months. And it says, and the Lord blessed the household of Obed-Edom and all that he had.

It seems somewhat capricious, right? Like why? Like Uzzah really meant to do something good. He didn't want the Ark of the God.

He was having reverence for this Ark that was going to fall on the ground. So why would God do it? Well, when we understand the story better, we find that God had actually designed the Ark to be carried by four priests using a long pole.

So even if one went down, it would still stabilize the Ark. But somewhere along the line, they said, well, we want to get the Ark here quicker and easier. Let's just put it on an oxen cart and get it over here.

And this is what happened. And I'll tell you, I'm convicted about this passage even when I was studying it because how easy it is for us to presume upon God.

[35 : 37] I did it with the right heart, right? You thought your motivations were correct, but sometimes you were kind of taken to slide. Well, you know, it's okay to lie over here because, you know, someone's feelings won't be heard over there.

Right? We compromise along the way. And it made me think that when it comes to the areas of worship, it's best that we listen to God and how he wants to be worshipped.

Amen? Just recently, I'm reading a book. I've been asked to review it. I'm reviewing the book. And the book is talking about an issue in the church. But it says, listen, it's not a salvation issue.

Who cares? Well, there's a story of Aaron who was the brother of Moses and he had two sons and they were high priests and they offered what was strange fire unto God and God killed them both. It wasn't a salvation issue, but it mattered to God. Amen? Because we know that God is good, he's holy, he's righteous, and just. Just because it's not a salvation issue doesn't mean it's not important for us to know the truth.

[36 : 59] So that's the second rule. And the third rule, it's called interpret the historical narratives by the epistles.

What I mean by this is, if you've ever heard some people say, they're red letter Christians. That means, and it's the red text in some of our Bibles, Jesus' words are written in red. Those red words are more valuable than what Paul or Peter or one of the other authors of the other epistles are. Well, we know they're all inspired by the Lord. Amen? The Holy Spirit inspires all of it. But historical narrative, sometimes it's very difficult to interpret the meaning.

Sometimes we just read it for what it is, and we let the teaching tell us what it is. So it's kind of like that first, that example about the newspaper. Front page is just the news.

[37 : 56] You know, a city blew up, or a gas tank blew up, and some village burnt down. But you would turn the other page, and it might be opinion and say, you know, it's been a long fight because they illegally placed these pipelines underneath villages, and when it blew up, it burnt down the village.

Right? Like, it just, it tells you the information of why such a thing. One is just the events. So a lot of people try to place a heavier weight on the narrative, even when it contradicts what is clearly taught. What is taught is usually over the narrative. You with me on that? So that's one of the other rules. And that's why some people say, well, don't do doctrine.

And, you know, I was at a church, and they asked me not to teach biblical doctrine. And I just asked them, what does that mean? Do you understand what that means? It's the teaching of the Bible. How could we, well, doctrine divides. We don't want division. Well, then why are we here? Is it just because if you're people, that's enough? Or we believe that chairs are comfortable, that's why we gather?

[39 : 07] No, we believe certain truths of the Bible, that what God says, and that is what brings us unity, not because we like comfy chairs on a Sunday morning. Right?

So those are the things that matter. The fourth rule, and this is a simple one, interpret what is said rather than what is not said.

And I'm going to give you guys a perfect example, and some of you guys know exactly what I'm talking about, some of you not might. On the issue of salvation, you may have heard there's Calvinism and there's Arminianism.

And when some of the people are trying to figure out God's word on the subject, they come to this passage in Romans. It's Romans 8, 28, 30, and I'll read it. And it says, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of God, in order that he might be the firstborn among many believers.

[40 : 15] Brothers, this is the verse I want you to pay attention. Those whom God predestined, he also called. Called is another word for elected. And for those whom he called or elected, he also justified, which means saved.

And those whom he saved, he also glorified. So there is a doctrine that the Bible teaches that God calls people to salvation.

Now what other people are going to conclude that that means God elects people to hell. Right? They're just, if the scripture says God calls people to heaven, that must mean God elects people to hell.

But that's actually not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that people go to hell is because of their unbelief. Their choice in not believing God.

So we have to make sure when we're deriving principles from scripture, we're not just automatically taking the opposite. R.C. Sproul's biggest beef, I think, is Mark 12, 25, when it says, in heaven we will not be given over to marriage, for we shall be like the angels.

[41 : 29] So people have concluded that must mean all angels are men. And that they're sexless, so that there is no woman angels. When scripture doesn't really say that, even though every record,

that appearance of an angel appears in a male-like form, scripture actually doesn't say that.

You with me on that one? Kind of confusing in some way, but go with what scripture says. Don't, you can make wrong, you can be wrong in trying to reason the opposite.

But not like, do not lie. Oh, that means I can lie. No, that's not true. All right, rule number five, words matter. Words matter. The words that God chose actually matter.

And the reason they matter is they help us speak with precision. Often you hear me state, you know, this is a word that theologians use, and sometimes we wonder why they're so complex. But there's a reason for it. Who here has been to an emergency room? All right. When you walk in, there's this intake clerk for better.

[42 : 43] When they say what's wrong, you don't say, I don't feel so good. Right? All right, go on in, right? No, they're going to ask you questions. They have to get down to a specific, oh, my left leg fell off.

Okay, that's something we can work with. But the I don't feel so good, that doesn't really get us through the doors to see the doctor, right? And it's the same thing with scripture. Words matter. Precision matters. There's certain words in the Bible that people get really upset about because it seems that they're contradictory understanding.

But you always have to understand that there's a context which helps us with the meaning. So that's rule number five. Words matter. So if you've got a word, you don't understand it, take the time to study it.

Rule number six. Proverbs aren't law. Proverbs aren't law. Some people take Proverbs as a moral absolute. They are not.

[43 : 43] In fact, they're truisms. You know what I truism? By and large, this is a true fact. They reflect principles of wisdom for godly living.

So let me explain to you a couple of verses. Proverbs 26 says, Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will also be like him.

Well, verse five then says, answer a fool as his folly deserves, that he not be wise in his own eyes. So wait a second. So wait a second.

Solomon, do I answer him or do I not answer him? Right? And they're truisms. And sometimes, you're going to find out in life, sometimes a fool is to be ignored.

Just don't even engage. Right? We know those people. They want to talk. Don't even talk to them. But there's just some need to be corrected. So it all depends on the case.

[44 : 43] So the whole point is, Proverbs aren't law. They're truisms. Doesn't mean if you do exactly what it says in that moment, it has to happen. It's a principle of life.

Rule number seven. Observe the difference between the spirit of the law and the letter of the law. And what I mean is, remember the Pharisees?

They looked for loopholes. They were kind of following God. They knew they could only walk so far on the Sabbath. So the day before, or they would have someone put a piece of bread that would allow them to walk the maximum on that day.

But if they ate there, it was considered a household. So they could go that opposite, that extra amount of distance. Do we really think God's fooled by that?

But people think that sometimes. You know, it's kind of like, if you remember Bill Clinton, and the scandal that went down with him back in the, is it 80s or 90s?

[45 : 54] They asked him, did you have sexual relations with that woman? No, I didn't. He did. You know what he did? He just didn't think it was. He thought he found a loophole around it.

God knows. Let's be honest. We're all looking for loopholes. When we really want to do something, we justify it in our minds. So we say, well, I'm not breaking the law, but we know in our hearts we are breaking the spirit of the law.

I might not be murdering that person, but I hate him. Do I really think I'm any more honorable in the eyes of God just because I didn't murder him, but I hate him?

These are real things. These are real principles we need to think about. Here's the one that really got me when I was young.

What's holiness? You know, a lot of people think holiness is, and every parent knows exactly what I'm talking about when you're talking to your teens about dating guys or girls, right?

[47 : 04] Just what's yes, what's no, you can hold hands, but don't hug or whatever, right? So some people say, how close to the line can I get before what I'm doing is sin?

And let's be honest. You don't need to be a parent to know what I'm talking about. But holiness is the opposite. It's how far away can I get away from that line?

Do you understand what I'm saying? It's not trying to get as close to the line as possible. It's staying as far away from that line as possible so that we can even say there is no appearance of evil.

Rule eight, when he gets to parables in the Bible and you're trying to figure them out, let me just tell you right now, parables are tough. In fact, a lot of parables, there's only one meaning and Jesus usually tells us what it is.

I always warn people not to form some deep theology out of a parable. Just go with what Jesus was trying to say. It's rule eight, number nine, always be careful with prophecy.

[48 : 18] A lot of people, and you guys know them, I know some people that get so involved with prophecy and they've had to restate their understanding multiple times over. I came from a church background.

They love prophecy. Anybody who's in computers, remember 1999? Oh man, at our church, they were telling us to get a whole bunch of extra water and food and hiding away because the whole world was going to shut down and nothing was going to work for us anymore.

Come on, you guys remember that, right? And that was my church was teaching me at the time.

Nothing happened. The clock just switched over and it was 2000. Computers didn't explode. And the last rule that I want to give you guys is interpret the Bible with a spirit of humility.

A spirit of humility. Don't come to prove a point. Come to have the point be proven to you through the eyes of scripture. Theologians call this the difference between exegesis and eisegesis.

Exegesis is letting the text say what it is. Eisegesis is taking my point of view and trying to jam it into that Bible verse to say what I want it to say. And it's hard.

[49 : 37] We all have different backgrounds, different beliefs we've come from, different churches we grew up. All those things factor into our life. But I really believe it's coming to God's word with a spirit of humility and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts to understand what God says.

As Luther said, the Holy Scriptures require a humble reader who shows reverence and fear toward the word of God and constantly says, teach me, teach me, teach me.

I think it's a scary place. I think Dave understands and those who preach understand there is a weight that comes when we teach this word.

And there was a prayer that Spurgeon has, which is the prayer that I usually pray when I come to speak God's word, is that God would strike me dead if I were to lead his sheep astray.

I would never want to do that, to lead you in an erroneous way that would lead to destruction. But my prayer is every time when I'm pulling something out of Scripture, that I can lead you to new life that is found in Jesus Christ alone at the cross alone.

[50 : 57] Amen? So anyhow, I know today was a little bit of a different type of sermon. I hope it didn't bore you to death. But I thought as we were just finishing those whole areas of the Bible, I thought I'd give you this practical application for those of you who desire to please the Lord.

And studying God's word pleases the Lord. If that's not a motivation, I don't know what kind of motivation you need. But to study his word, to know that you're in right standing with him.

And I absolutely pray. It's like a sword that is sharpened. And that God can use you in a magnificent way in the lives that, in the life that you have and the lives that are around you.

Let's pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, I know there's so many different walks of life that are here. I think there's some testimonies in here of people who can honestly say they ignored your word and life took a different direction than they had intended.

Others have seen your wonderful providence and blessing as they have followed after your word and have applied it rightly to their lives.

[52 : 09] Father, but mostly I give you thanks for this church. Where when we come to study God's word, we're not on our own. Not only do we have pastors and elders, but there's disciple makers here.

There's people who have lived this Christian life who have wisdom that they have learned over decades of the faith to ask, to be instructed by.

The idea of being confused is really diminished to just a few small areas. But for the most part, we can have full confidence that we can truly understand your word and know how to act in response to what you're teaching us, O God.

I am... How do I say it, Father? It's remarkable that every time I pick up a passage or a book that I've read it, hundreds of times I feel that there's still more treasure, more gold there for me to learn. Like it's just an inexhaustible supply. Supply. And I know the temptation. Well, I've read through my Bible many times. But it's not just to be read over.

[53 : 26] It's to be meditated upon. It's to be sought through. It's to be depended on. It's to look for instructions like the scripture says.

It's a light in the darkness. I think these truths rang true so much for us when we just heard this parenting conference and how real Chris just made simple, biblical truths come to life in an everyday way just with parenting our kids.

Father, I give you thanks for the eyes that you open and the hearts that you mend and the souls that you restore by those who come to your eternal truths which are found in your Bible.

So God, I pray that everyone who makes that effort to understand your word, may you give them confidence in your word and a blessing to be had.

We ask these things in your gracious and precious name. Amen. Amen.