

Interpreting The Bible -- Introduction

Introduction

- * The average Christian approaches the Bible in one or two ways:
 1. Reading and interpreting it according to whatever they've ***always been taught***
 2. Reading and interpreting it according to "**what does it mean to me?**"
 - * The essential function of hermeneutics is the basic question, "*do you understand what you are reading?*" **Acts 8:26-30**
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What is hermeneutics?

- * Hermeneutics (from the Greek word **hermēneuō / ἑρμηνεύω** which means to interpret or explain) is defined simply as **the process of *interpreting* Scripture or determining the *meaning of* Scripture.**
 - * **Luke 24:27** -- *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
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Why is hermeneutics important?

- * Because we need (and should want) to handle the Scriptures ***accurately***.
 - * **2 Timothy 2:15** -- *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*
 - * There are three clear implications regarding hermeneutics in this verse:
 1. It takes **effort** in study (*do your best*)
 2. God's **approval** demands it (*as one approved*)
 3. It requires **competency** (*no need to be ashamed*) See **1 Timothy 1:6-7** *Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*
 4. There is a **right** and **wrong** way to interpret Scripture
 - * Examples of *bad* hermeneutics
 1. **3 John 2** - the "prosperity gospel" interpretation
 2. **John 12:32** - the "praise and worship" interpretation
 3. **Matthew 18:20** - the "small-group/home church" interpretation
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