

MODULE 7: SESSION 3

APPLIED THEOLOGY HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Observation Part 2: Cross Reference and Word Study

1. AGENDA TODAY: Cross references, word studies, getting rid of dead weight in your observations
2. Bible Study as a Treasure Hunt
 - a. There are not 3 - 5 magical resources that give you all the answers. If that were the case, theological libraries wouldn't have hundreds of thousands of volumes and tens of thousands of journal articles.
 - b. AND resources take work to learn and to get familiar with!
 - c. I've told you the basic resources to use, but as you deepen in your study desire and ability, you will want to continue to refine and look for more resources.
 - d. Another good one--- www.biblestudytools.com. Can use it for cross-references as well if you don't want to buy physical books.
 - e. Remember that there is a great deal of art to this – not creative license to make Scripture mean what you want it to mean, but which observations you really key in on.
3. Cross-references (Scripture interprets Scripture)
 - a. General Approaches to Cross-References
 - i. Shot-gun approach –
 1. Key word in sentence – will take you to many verses, most of which will not be necessarily helpful
 - ii. Sniper-rifle approach – use cross references found in Study Bible notes, commentaries, and margin notes in your Bible
 - b. Where/How do you find them?
 - i. By general topic – generally by key word
 - ii. In the margin of some Bibles
 - iii. Your hand-written notes in your Bible from sermons (do this! – someone has done the work of cross references for you!)
 - iv. Subject index in the back of some Bibles (this is not exhaustive but a sample)
 - v. Concordance – basically a dictionary of Bible words and where they are found
 - vi. www.biblegateway.com
 1. Under the “Study” tab, go to “keyword search” and follow the directions. Quick and useful, but still a shot-gun approach

2. NOTE: You can also look instantly at other English translations from here under the cross reference you choose.
- vii. Commentary which mentions cross references (these are often rich as the author has narrowed down relevance)
- c. Types of Cross References from the WEAKEST to STRONGEST
 - i. WEAKEST--Same word which does not mean the same thing in context
 1. "world" in John 3:16 means "people." "World" in 1 John 2:15 means the Satanic system of godlessness which should be shunned and not loved
 2. This is weakest because it can make you now have to define two different concepts rather than clarifying the meaning in your particular text.
 3. Just reading off a bunch of verses with the same word in it does not really prove anything or strengthen a point or argument you are trying to make.
 - ii. WEAK--Same word(s) which mean the same things in different contexts
 1. "patience" is the same in Gal 5:22 as it is in Eph 4:2.
 2. This is better in that it shows how the same word is used the same way elsewhere. It *can* but not always add depth to your understanding of the use of the word in your passage. At the very least, it confirms the strength of how the word is used in your passage.
 - iii. STRONG--Conceptual Cross reference. The same basic concept occurs elsewhere although the wording may be different
 1. Spiritual fruit is seen in Galatians 5:22 - 23 and in 2 Peter 1:5 - 7.
 2. Return of Christ in Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19.
 - iv. STRONGEST --Parallel Cross-Reference
 1. Conversion of Saul/Paul in Acts 9, 22, and 26. Put together, they give the most comprehensive account.
 2. The resurrection of Christ--the accounts in all four gospels put together the whole picture.
- d. Questions to Ask of a Cross Reference:
 - i. Does it help clarify or add to the idea of my chosen text?
 - ii. Does it exactly reiterate the same idea thus giving more weight to my observation?
 - iii. Does it keep me from forming a faulty conclusion or doctrine?
 - iv. Does it illumine earlier Revelation or give the basis for later Revelation?
 1. EX: Ephesians 5 instructions on marriage illumine Gen 2:24 basic instruction while Gen 2:24 gives the basis for Ephesians 5

- v. Does it add a different context to the same concept to show another aspect of the truth that can be applied?
 - 1. Forgiveness in 1 John 1:9 is anytime any situation. Forgiveness in James 5:15 is for a specific situation of a physically ill believer who may be in sin.
- vi. Does it help illustrate my chosen text?
- e. Cautions in Cross-Reference – IMPORTANT enough to take some time on it
 - 1. Lack of proper context in cross references is what leads to bad, theologically inaccurate topical sermons, Bible studies, and books.
 - a. RULE for TOPICAL STUDY: You may use a variety of Scripture references but you may NOT violate the various passages in their original intended contexts.
 - b. THEORETICAL EXAMPLE:
 - i. GOOD EXAMPLE on topic ABC
 - 1. Passage 1 – MAIN thought ABC in context of ABCDEF – ABC stays intact
 - 2. Passage 2 – MAIN thought ABC in context of ABCDEF
 - 3. Passage 3 – MAIN thought ABC in context of ABCDEF
 - 4. RESULT: Accurate Topical Study
 - ii. BAD EXAMPLE on topic ABC
 - 1. Passage 1 – MAIN thought RAQFGPK
 - 2. Passage 2 – MAIN thought GBJFTV
 - 3. Passage 3 – MAI thought DHQCRT
 - 4. RESULT: “ABC” eisegetical inaccurate topical study – stringing together contextually unrelated thoughts to prove a point
 - ii. EXAMPLE of stringing together cross references to make your made-up point – (You don’t get to relax that standard just because it is not your main passage.)
 - 1. This is a MAJOR error called “proof-texting” -EXAMPLE:
 - a. Main Point trying to make: “Christians should be casting demons out of people”
 - b. POINT 1: Christians are commanded to cast out demons from other Christians and not unbelievers
 - i. Matthew 12:43-45 (ESV) – 43 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. 44

Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation."

- ii. CONTEXT: Jesus is using this as an illustration of the danger of trying to REFORM your life through good works without coming into right relationship with Christ.
 - iii. Use Psalm 44:5 (ESV) – 5 Through you we push down our foes; through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. – We are commanded to cast out demons
 - iv. CONTEXT: Psalm 44 is a lament for a wayward nation and the first few verses are speaking of when God USED to fight for Israel but v9 "now you have rejected and disgraced us."
- c. POINT 2: Authority to cast out demons is given to all believers
- i. Ephesians 2:6 (ESV) – 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
 - ii. Ephesians 1:20–21 (ESV) – 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
 - iii. SO: Since CHRIST is far above all rule and authority and power seated as God's right hand and since WE are seated with him in the heavenly places, THEREFORE, WE have authority over all rule and power (demons)
 - iv. That is faulty reasoning which places us in the place of Christ and doesn't differentiate between being IN Christ and BEING Christ
- d. POINT 3: Rescue from demons is only for those in covenant with God

- i. Matthew 15—a Canaanite woman with a demon-oppressed daughter begs Jesus for help
 - ii. Jesus told her, Matthew 15:26 (ESV) – 26 And he answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”
 - iii. Their point: Rescue from demons is not meant for the unbeliever
 - iv. BUT CONTEXT:
 - 1. Jesus DID rescue the girl
 - 2. The POINT was that Jesus was sent first to the Jew then to the Gentile
 - iii. Importance of Proper Context: EXAMPLES
 - 1. Matthew 7:1 (ESV) – 1 “Judge not, that you be not judged.
 - a. USUAL interpretation: “You have no right to say anything to me.”
 - b. CONTEXT: Jesus is preaching sermon on the mount and saying that the one who will not repent of and acknowledge sin in his own life is hypocritical when pointing the same sin out in others.
 - c. CROSS REFERENCE to HELP: 1 Corinthians 5:12 (ESV) – 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?
 - 2. 2 Chronicles 7:14 (ESV) – 14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
 - a. USUAL interpretation: Often a theme of National Day of Prayer and a call to “return America to being a Christian nation.”
 - i. FIRST: no such thing as a Christian nation—
 - ii. CONTEXT: This is God’s message to King Solomon after the temple in Jerusalem was finished. It was simply a reiteration of the Mosaic Covenant that if Israel will obey from a humble heart, God will bless. It is NOT a general promise to all nations
 - iii. LESSON; Israel did NOT obey—God is faithful to His Word and we can be certain that He ALWAYS does what He says He is going to do.

4. Word Studies

- a. NOTE: This is different than your initial common-knowledge or English dictionary definition of key words done in earlier observation – the WORD study will TEST those definitions and add clarity to them –
- b. EXAMPLE method: Strong’s and Vine’s together as an example. This is based on individual words---you are fishing in an ocean for one fish –
 - i. Use STRONG’S to find the exact word used in your reference. It will have a number assigned to it.
 - ii. Use VINE’S to look up the English word and find the exact number which corresponds to STRONG’S
 - iii. REASON: different Greek/Hebrew words translated into the same word in English at times
 1. “crown” in English is either *stephanos* or *diadema* which have different meanings and nuances (victory crown and kingship crown respectively)
- c. EXAMPLE method: www.studylight.org/commentaries/vnt (Vincent’s Word Studies--brief but helpful)
- d. Commentaries will often be a help with this, but again, we are avoiding the commentary as long as possible!
- e. How to Use Word Study:
 - i. Compare/contrast how the word is used in different contexts (this overlaps significantly with Cross Reference)
 - ii. It may lead you to looking in a Bible dictionary or a manners and customs book to help you understand how a word is used in its original context.
- f. 10 Cautions on Word Study:
 - i. Pride: Getting Greek/Hebrew definitions is NOT the definition of “knowing Greek and Hebrew.” It is NOT the comprehensive definition of exegesis. Exegesis involves doing all that you have learned thus far, but also includes specialized skill in the language such as verb forms, sentence construction, noun forms/uses that are all beyond the scope of this short “how-to” guide. Also, the resources you have access to as an English reader do not have all the detail that technical resources will have. Give up the notion that you have exhausted the entire body of knowledge about a given word. Entire articles and even books are written on single words by experts.
 - ii. Beware of basing doctrine and major meanings solely on a word definition. Word meanings are just part of the equation.
 - iii. Beware of cherry-picking your favorite definition that gives the verse a whole different meaning that no one else has ever seen before.

- iv. Beware of using words in a way they were not used in the time they were written. CLASSIC WORST: “dunamis (power) is where we get “dynamite.” –
 - 1. Makes no contribution to the meaning of a text
 - 2. The original writer was NOT thinking about dynamite, which was patented in 1867 by Alfred Nobel.
 - v. Beware of looking for the most exciting meaning rather than the meaning most likely given the context.
 - vi. Beware of etymology (study of word origins) containing the “secret” meaning to a word. The important thing is ACTUAL USAGE of the whole word, not the individual parts.
 - 1. IE: “nice” derived from Latin *nescius* – IGNORANT
 - 2. IE: “Nicolaitans” from Revelation chpt 2 – Greek *nikao* (to conquer, win, overcome) and *laos* (people). Some have surmised that these were powerful church members trying to conquer the people of the church through bad doctrine or power plays. The TEXT and the CONTEXT doesn’t tell us this, though. This is PURELY a showy means to look like you found secret meanings.
 - vii. Beware of the faulty “law of first reference” – that the first time a word is used in the Bible settles and establishes its meaning
 - 1. IE: *ruah*--“spirit” – Holy Spirit, human spirit, wind, breath, disposition
 - viii. Beware of bringing your personal theology or belief system to a word, wanting it to be defined the way you want it.
 - ix. Beware of dismissing what many others have said about a word (pride).
 - x. Beware of assigning random figurative meanings to literal objects (the five stones of David’s sling representing wisdom, truth, purity, faith, and humility)
5. OPTIONAL: Getting Rid of Dead Weight Observations (a quick process)
- a. Go through your observations and mark out the ones that are (a) repeating one another and (b) don’t really add to your understanding of the text
 - b. Go through your observations and highlight, asterisk, etc the ones that really open the text up for you – you will keep returning to these as you interpret.
6. YOUR ASSIGNMENT as part of observation assignment: (Note that we are developing this as we go so the assignment has been intentionally vague to this point)
- a. Find 3-5 helpful cross references for major words or concepts – these may replace the initial English definitions you did earlier
 - i. Give a couple sentences about each one considering the context and the helpfulness.

- b. Find more precise meanings/uses for some of your most important words
- c. OPTIONAL Go back and get rid of dead weight observations if you feel this helps you

7. EXAMPLE:

- a. Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV) – 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- b. Reminder of the questions we are asking about Cross References
 - i. Does it help clarify or add to the idea of my chosen text?
 - ii. Does it exactly reiterate the same idea thus giving more weight to my observation?
 - iii. Does it keep me from forming a faulty conclusion or doctrine?
 - iv. Does it illumine earlier Revelation or give the basis for later Revelation?
 - v. EX: Ephesians 5 instructions on marriage illumine Gen 2:24 basic instruction while Gen 2:24 gives the basis for Ephesians 5
 - vi. Does it add a different context to the same concept to show another aspect of the truth that can be applied?
 - vii. Forgiveness in 1 John 1:9 is anytime any situation. Forgiveness in James 5:15 is for a specific situation of a physically ill believer who may be in sin.
 - viii. Does it help illustrate my chosen text?
- c. Cross references:
 - i. Colossians 3:12 (ESV) – 12 Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, **kindness**, humility, meekness, and patience,
 - 1. This helps to see what other concepts are listed with kindness.
 - 2. In context, Colossians is a very similar letter to Ephesians and both my passage and this verse are in the second half of their respective letters which are the responses to sound doctrine.
 - 3. “Put on then” compels me to look back at what Paul said previous.
 - 4. SO: This reiterates the same idea AND gives more color to what “kindness” consists of and around (compassionate hearts, humility, meekness, patience)
 - ii. James 4:11 (ESV) – 11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.
 - 1. Cross reference for “clamor and slander” in Eph 4:31
 - 2. In context, James is speaking of proper behavior in the church.

3. In context, James is saying (from next verses) not to put yourself in the position of God by deeming someone unworthy of forgiveness – THUS this is a FABULOUS cross reference as it does the following:
 4. Illustrates my text, illumines the need for forgiveness, helps confirm the interpretive direction I am headed, and gives a specific meaning for “slander” and “clamor.”
- iii. Psalm 25:11 (ESV) – 11 For your name’s sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great.
 1. Cross references the concept of forgiveness.
 2. This helps APPLY the text as it is a reminder of “as God in Christ forgive you.”
 3. Reminds us that WE were in the position of begging mercy from God and this humbles us as we consider how to view and treat fellow believers.
- d. Word Study Examples:
 - i. “bitterness” – Strong’s # 4088
 1. Vine’s pg. 68 – “*pikria* (pikria, 4088) denotes ‘bitterness.’ It is used in Acts 8:23, metaphorically, of a condition of extreme wickedness, ‘gall of bitterness,’ or ‘bitter gall;” in Rom. 3:14, of evil speaking; in Eph. 4:31 of “bitter” hatred; in Heb 12:15, in the same sense, metaphorically, of a root of ‘bitterness’ producing ‘bitter’ fruit.”
 - ii. “kind” – Strong’s #5543
 1. Vine’s p. 343 “*chrestos* (crestoj, 5543) ‘serviceable, good, pleasant (of things), ‘good, gracious, kind” (of persons), is translated ‘kind in Luke 6:35, of God; in Eph 4:32, enjoined upon believers. See BETTER, EASY, GOOD, GOODNESS, GRACIOUS.”
 2. Note: When Vine’s says “See other words” it means the same Greek/Hebrew word is translated in other ways in other contexts.”
 3. IE: By looking up EASY we find that the SAME word for KIND in Eph 4:32 is what Jesus said Matthew 11:30 (ESV) – 30 For my yoke is easy[KIND], and my burden is light.”
 4. INTERPRETIVE PREVIEW: We are to be KIND in the same way that Jesus was KIND to us – THAT is the standard!!
8. Getting Rid of Dead Weight in Observations
 - a. EXAMPLE:
 - i. What is happening?
 - ii. What is the flow of the passage?

- iii. What is the argument being made? You must put off the sinful and put on the righteous
 - iv. #3 says #1 and #2 in the best sense
9. **AGAIN: YOUR ASSIGNMENT** as part of observation assignment: (Note that we are developing this as we go so the assignment has been intentionally vague to this point)
- a. Find 3-5 helpful cross references for major words or concepts – these may replace the initial English definitions you did earlier
 - i. Give a couple sentences about each one considering the context and the helpfulness.
 - b. Find more precise meanings/uses for some of your most important words
 - c. OPTIONAL Go back and get rid of dead weight observations if you feel this helps you
10. Reiterate:
- a. Explore www.biblegateway.com all over the site
 - i. EXAMPLE: The entire IVP New Testament Commentary series is FREE on this site, but you have to look under Study→More Resources→Commentaries
 - b. Explore www.biblestudytools.com all over the site