



WRIGHT TRACK MINISTRIES

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WRIGHT TRACK VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY

WTVU Bible Lesson #4

Section 1

Lesson Objectives:

1. To introduce the student to the terms "exegesis" and "hermeneutics" and to provide a basic set of rules for a teacher to follow when interpreting the Bible.

Exegesis and Hermeneutics

I can think of no better Bible teacher to refer to than Dr. J. Vernon McGee. The following is a short excerpt from his book, "Guidelines for the Understanding of the Scriptures".

Exegesis: The explanation or interpretation of a text, especially a Biblical text.

Hermeneutics: The science or art of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" - II Timothy 2:15

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." - II Timothy 3:16

There are several rules that should be followed as we attempt to interpret the Bible:

1. **The Overall Purpose** of the Bible should first be considered. It is important to take into consideration all verses that are related to that subject.
2. **To Whom the Scripture is Addressed** should next be considered. All Scripture is not **to** me, but all Scripture is **for** me.
3. **The Immediate Context** before and after a Scripture should be observed. What is the passage talking about? And what other passages of Scripture deal with this same thing?
4. **Discover What the Original Says.** To accomplish that you may have to refer to several Biblical translations....^{*} (See note below.)
5. **Interpret the Bible Literally.** The late Dr. David Cooper has stated it well: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the fact of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."
 - (a) Begin with prayer
 - (b) Read the Bible
 - (c) Study the Bible
 - (d) Meditate on the Bible
 - (e) Read what others have written on the Bible
 - (f) Obey the Bible

(g) Pass it on to others

Note on point number four....^{*} I would like to add a some information to this point that Dr. McGee addresses here.

I would advise the student at this point to be careful in a couple of areas when considering Bible translations. First there are many good translations available for you to use.

The translation committees were committed to the full authority and inspiration of scripture. (**KJV, NIV, NASB, NKJV**, and others)

There are some translations that had a very liberal bias to them and the translation committees were decidedly liberal. (New English Bible **NEB** and Revised Standard Version **RSV** and **NRSV** New Revised Standard Version)

There are translations that have been made by cults such as the Jehovah's Witness's New World Translation **NWT**. There are also sectarian translations such as the Clear Word Bible that the Seventh Day Adventists have published. Both of these translations should be avoided!

There are some Bibles that are not translations but are paraphrases, such as the Living Bible. While this has enjoyed much popularity, remember it is a paraphrase, not a direct translation. This would not be your first choice when doing a word study.

The important thing is that you study your Bible. Following the guidelines that Dr. McGee has given would be some of the best advice I could give you in this area.

Assignment

1. Memorize the meaning of the terms **exegesis** and **hermeneutics**.
 2. Write down the Five Rules of Interpretation that Dr. McGee gives and put them in your Bible. **Memorize** and **use** them!
- Our next lesson will be a fun lesson. This will be an exercise to show what kind of problems you can run into when you break just one of these rules.

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