

Principles and Guidelines for Understanding and Applying the Bible

PRINCIPLE

1. Since the Bible was written by human beings, it must be treated as any other human communication in determining the meaning intended by the writer.
2. Since Scripture is God-breathed and true in all its parts, the unity of its teachings must be sought, and its supernatural elements recognized and understood.
3. Since Scripture is God-breathed, it is absolute in its authority for doctrine and life.

GUIDELINES FOR PRINCIPLE #1

1. Base the study on the historical, physical, and cultural setting.
2. Research each unclear and important word.
3. Analyze the structure of the basic unit of thought, the sentence.
4. Examine the immediate context: the passage as a whole; the book as a whole.
5. Identify figurative language and determine its literal meaning.
6. Interpret parables strictly according to the special principles required by this type of literature.
7. Use the parallelism of Hebrew poetry to gain insight into meaning.

GUIDELINES FOR PRINCIPLE #2

1. Compare Scripture with Scripture for light on each passage, and discover the unity of its teaching.
2. Establish the coherence of revealed truth.
3. Since we hold that the Bible is God-breathed and true in all its parts, when a statement appears to be in error, we are committed to seek an explanation.
4. To understand predictive prophecy in Scripture, faithfully observe biblical guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR PRINCIPLE #3

1. Every teaching of Scripture is to be received universally, unless the Bible itself limits the audience, either in the context of the passage itself or in other biblical teaching.
2. God desires the response of faith and obedience to both the direct teachings and the principles of Scripture.