

# *Sunday Night* **Theology**

**INTERPRETING THE BIBLE**

July 9 at 6 p.m.



**POQUOSON**  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
FROM LOST TO LEADER



# Four Assumptions

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1. The Bible needs to be interpreted
2. You want to study the Bible
3. You believe the Bible is true
4. You are saved by grace through faith



## **1 Corinthians 2:14**

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“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”



# **Dangerous Approaches to Bible Study**

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## **1. The Emotional Approach**

– *What feels right to me?*

## **2. The Mystical Approach**

– *What deep, hidden meaning is there for me?*

## **3. The Pragmatic Approach**

– *What works for me?*

## **4. The Superficial Approach**

– *What does this mean to me?*



# A Dependable Approach to Bible Study

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## 1. Observation

– *What does Scripture say?*

## 2. Interpretation

– *What does Scripture mean?*

## 3. Application

– *How should I respond?*



# 1. Observation

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*What does Scripture say?*



# Two Keys to Observation

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## 1. ASK Questions

*I keep six honest serving-men*

*(They taught me all I knew);*

*Their names are What and Why and When*

*And How and Where and Who.*

*--Rudyard Kipling*



# Two Keys to Observation

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## 1. ASK Questions

–Who?

- Wrote it?
- Originally read it?
- Are the main characters?



# Two Keys to Observation

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## 1. ASK Questions

–When?

- Was it written?
- Did the events take place?
- Did the original readers first read it?



# Two Keys to Observation

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## 1. ASK Questions

–Where?

- Is the writer?
- Are the original readers?
- Is the text taking place?



# Two Keys to Observation

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## 1. ASK Questions

–What?

- Is happening in the text?
- Is wrong with the picture?
- Is the author saying?



# Two Keys to Observation

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## 1. ASK Questions

–Why?

- Is the author writing this?
- Is this included in Scripture?
- Did the events happen the way they did?
- Did the author say what he said?
- Did the author say it the way he did?



# Two Keys to Observation

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## 1. ASK Questions

–How?

- Is the author making his point?
- Are the events being described?



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

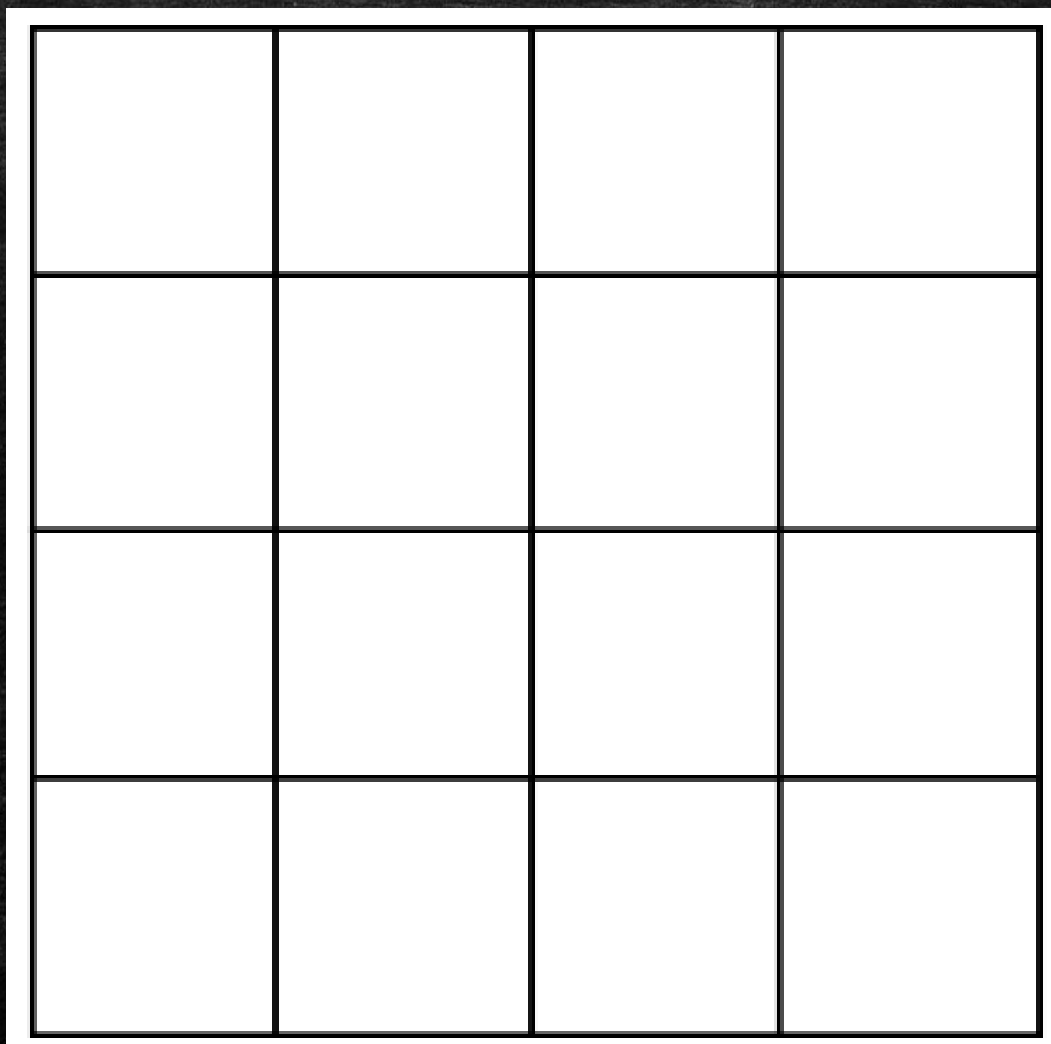
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1. ASK Questions
2. LOOK Carefully



# How Many Squares?

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# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions

2. LOOK Carefully

–Look at Verbs

- Tense—past, present, or future?



## **Ephesians 1:11**

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*"In Him we have obtained an inheritance,  
having been predestined according to the  
purpose of Him who works all things  
according to the counsel of His will."*



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions

2. LOOK Carefully

–Look at Verbs

- Tense—past, present, or future?
- Mood—indicative or imperative?



## Colossians 3:1

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*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek  
the things that are above, where Christ is,  
seated at the right hand of God.*



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions

2. LOOK Carefully

–Look at Verbs

- Tense—past, present, or future?
- Mood—indicative or imperative?
- Voice—active or passive?



## Hebrews 10:19-22

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*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions
2. LOOK Carefully
  - Look at space
    - What is emphasized?
    - What is omitted?



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions

2. LOOK Carefully

–Look for purpose statements

▪ Words like *that, in order that, so that, to, or for*



## Deuteronomy 4:5-6

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*"See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'"*



## John 15:16

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*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*



## **John 20:30-31**

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*"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. "*



## 1 Timothy 3:14-15

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*"I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth."*



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions
2. LOOK Carefully

–Look at order



## **Jonah 1:8-9**

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*Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?"*

*And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."*



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions
2. LOOK Carefully
  - Look for repetition



# Perishing in Jonah

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## The captain doesn't want to perish

- 1:6 – “Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”

## The sailors don't want to perish

- 1:14 – “O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life”

## The Ninevites don't want to perish

- 3:9 – “God may ...turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”

## Jonah doesn't want his plant to perish

- 4:10 – “you pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.”



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions

2. LOOK Carefully

–Look for connections

- Words like *and, for, but, therefore, since, or because*



## Jonah 1:1-4

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*Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." **But** Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. **But** the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up.*



## Romans 12:1

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*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."*



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions

2. LOOK Carefully

–Look at prepositions

- Words like *by, with, from, in, on, upon, through, or to...*



## **Ephesians 2:8-9**

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*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast."*



# Two Keys to OBSERVATION

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1. ASK Questions
2. LOOK Carefully
  - Look at pronouns



## Ephesians 1:3-14

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,<sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.



# Two Keys to **OBSERVATION**

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1. ASK Questions

2. LOOK Carefully

- Look at major shifts
- Look at metaphors
- Look at comparisons
- Look at contrasts
- Look at tone



## 2. Interpretation

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*What does Scripture mean?*



# **Six Rules of INTERPRETATION**

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**1. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.**



# Why Did Jonah Run?

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**Jonah 1:3**—*"But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD...."*

**Jonah 4:2**—*"that is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."*



# **Six Rules of INTERPRETATION**

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1. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.
2. Interpret the Unclear with the Clear.



## Which is Clearer?

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*"Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?"—1 Cor. 15:29*

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast."—Ephesians 2:8-9*



# **Six Rules of INTERPRETATION**

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- 1. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.**
- 2. Interpret the Unclear with the Clear.**
- 3. Interpret the Old in Light of the New.**



# Interpret the Old in Light of the New

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*"This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.—Leviticus 11:46-47*

*"Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)" —Mark 7:18-19*



# **Six Rules of INTERPRETATION**

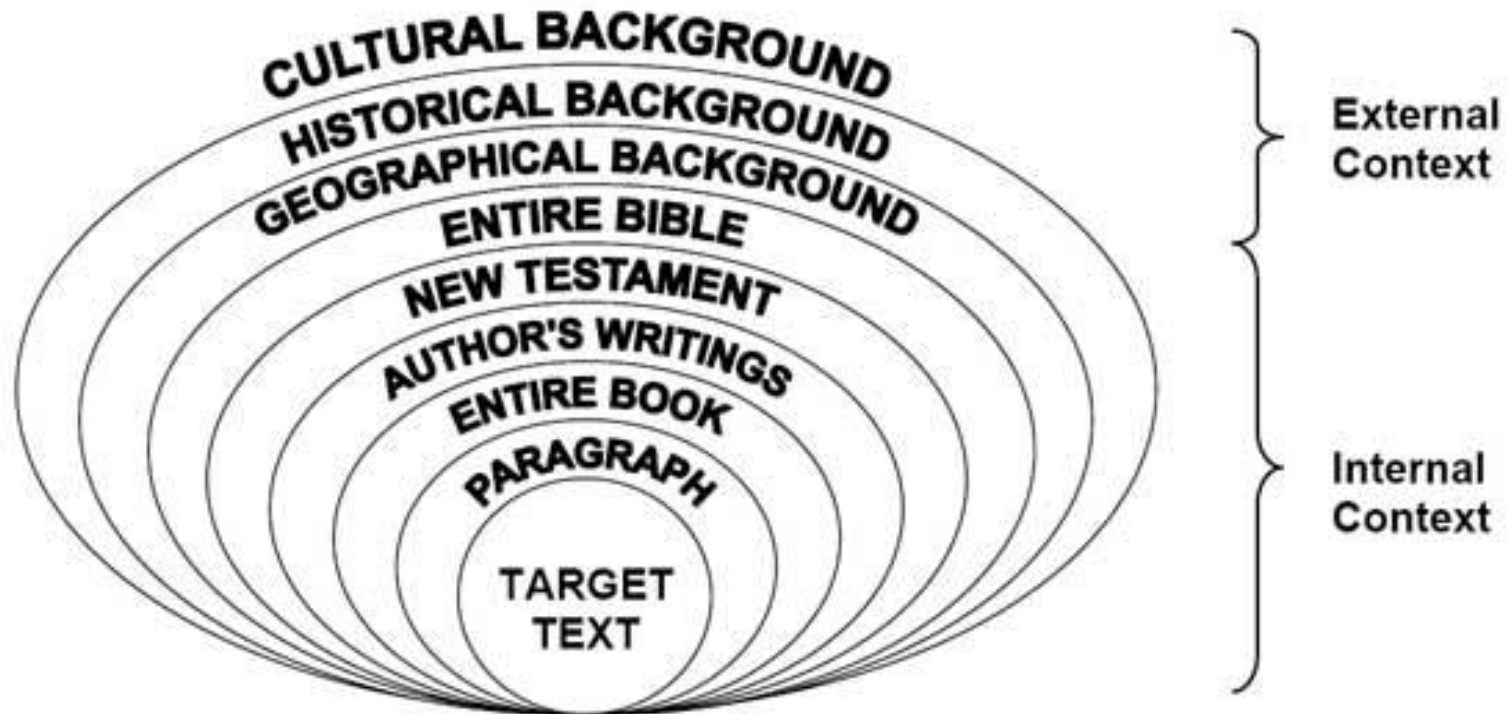
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1. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.
2. Interpret the Unclear with the Clear.
3. Interpret the Old in Light of the New.
4. Interpret in Context.



# Types of Context

## *The Various Contexts of Any Passage*





## **Matthew 18:20**

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*"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*



## Revelation 3:20

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*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."*



# **Six Rules of INTERPRETATION**

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1. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.
2. Interpret the Unclear with the Clear.
3. Interpret the Old in Light of the New.
4. Interpret in Context.
5. Interpret Plainly.



# **Six Rules of INTERPRETATION**

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1. Interpret Scripture with Scripture.
2. Interpret the Unclear with the Clear.
3. Interpret the Old in Light of the New.
4. Interpret in Context.
5. Interpret Plainly.
6. Interpret by the Rules of Genre.



Esther

Nehemiah

Ezra

II Chronicles

I Chronicles

II Kings

I Kings

II Samuel

I Samuel

Ruth

Judges

Joshua

Malachi

Zechariah

Haggai

Zephaniah

Habakkuk

Nahum

Micah

Jonah

Obadiah

Amos

Joel

Hosea

Daniel

Ezekiel

Lamentations

Jeremiah

Isaiah

Song of Solomon

Ecclesiastes

Proverbs

PSALMS

Job

Revelation

Jude

III John

II John

I John

II Peter

I Peter

James

Hebrews

Philemon

Titus

II Timothy

I Timothy

II Thessalonians

I Thessalonians

Colossians

Philippians

Ephesians

Galatians

II Corinthians

I Corinthians

Romans

Acts

John

Luke

Mark

Matthew

## LAW

## HISTORY

## POETRY

## MAJOR PROPHETS

## MINOR PROPHETS

## GOSPEL

## HISTORY

## PAUL'S LETTERS

A Letter  
to Jewish  
Christians

Letters to the  
entire Church

The  
Revelation  
to John



# The Goal of Interpretation

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The goal of Bible interpretation is to understand what the author intended to communicate to his original audience.

–It doesn't matter what Scripture means to you, but what Scripture means.



# 3. Application

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*How should I respond?*



# The Necessity of Application

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- **Matthew 7:24**—*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*
- **1 Timothy 3:16-17**—*"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*
- **James 1:22**—*"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*



## Interpretation

## Application

What does the text mean?

How do I respond?

Single meaning

Multiple responses

Same for all Christians

Varies, based on individual,  
life circumstances, etc.

Us getting into the Word

The Word getting into us



# **Four Steps for APPLICATION**

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1. Uncover the Timeless Truth(s)
2. Meditate on the Timeless Truth(s)
3. Relate the Timeless Truth(s) to Today
4. Practice the Timeless Truth(s)

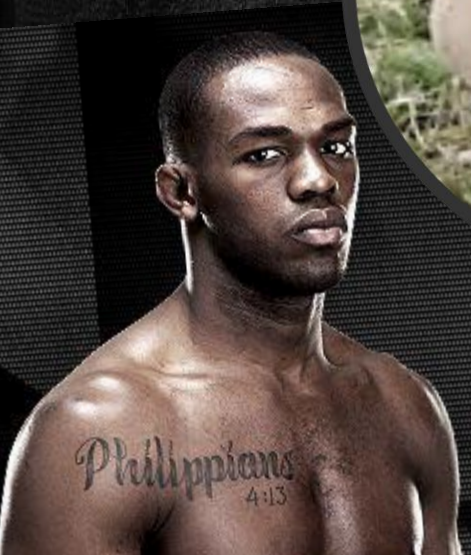
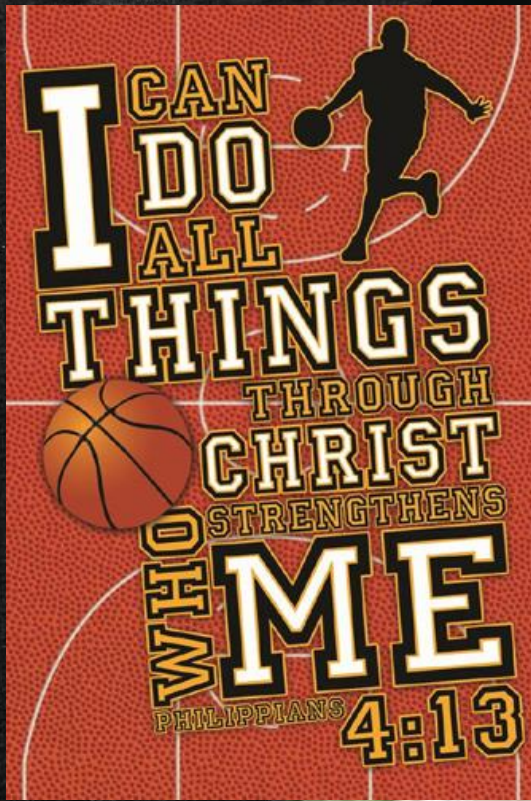


## **Philippians 4:13**

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*"I can do all things  
through Him who strengthens me"*







# Four Steps for APPLICATION

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## 1. Uncover the Timeless Truth(s)

*– Jesus strengthens His people to endure difficulties for the sake of the gospel.*

## 2. Meditate on the Timeless Truth(s)

## 3. Relate the Timeless Truth(s) to Today

*– What difficulties am I enduring for the sake of the gospel?*

*– What strength do I need to endure?*

## 4. Practice the Timeless Truth(s)



# Five Key APPLICATION Questions

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1. Who Should I Be?
2. How Should I Think?
3. What Should I Do?
4. Where Should I Go?
5. Who Will I Teach?