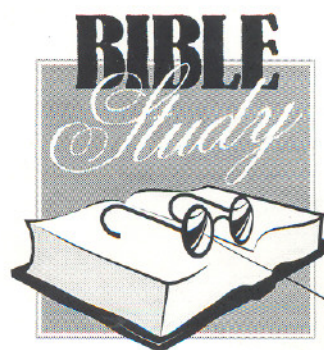


Bible Study



Training

Manual

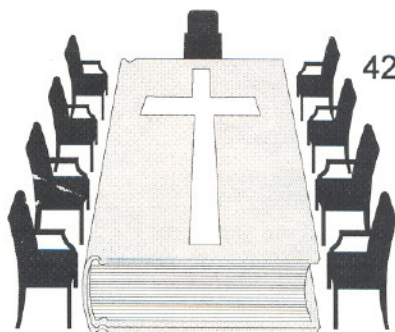


Fellowship Of Evangelical Students



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1 - Our Reading Style

Reading the Bible is influenced by our natural or aquired style of reading throughout the years. For instance, if we often just skim through a page, that is what we will find ourselves doing when we read the Bible too. Maybe, if we are used to picturing in our minds the scene described, that too will become how we read God's Word. Thus, at times, our acquired reading style becomes either an advantage or a disadvantage when it comes to reading and understanding the Word.

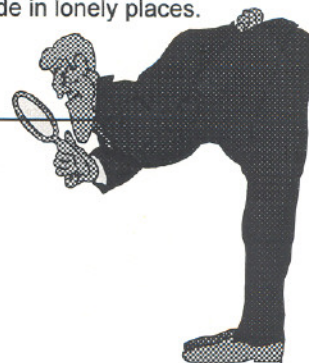
TRY AN EXERCISE :

Read Mark 1 : 40-45 (more than once if need be), and write down at least 20 things you discovered about the passage.

Mark 1:40-45

⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." ⁴¹Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. ⁴³Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

YOUR DISCOVERIES



THE BIBLE TEXT AND WHAT WE DISCOVER ABOUT IT

To be accurate in handling God's Word, it is important to be able to differentiate between what the text *actually* says and what we say about the text. This will help check if we are reading our own into what the Scripture passage is actually saying.

Checking what the text actually says is an important practice in our *personal Bible Study*. It keeps us on track. Also, this becomes an important checking tool when we study together in groups, to help us in our understanding of the passage.

Let me explain further on some of common reading styles by giving different terms to what we actually do when we read the Bible.



Often what we dig out is

Textual Fact	<i>what the Bible actually says</i>
General Knowledge	<i>what is known from other sources of information</i>
Implication	<i>what the passage seems to be saying, but not directly in a set of facts</i>
Opinion	<i>what is suggested as a possible view</i>
Imagination	<i>what can be pictured in one's mind</i>

Interpretation	<i>what the textual facts actually mean, and their consequences or rather implications</i>
Identification	<i>what one can personally relate to</i>

Application	<i>what is relevant and practical for us today</i>
Speculation	<i>what is suggested as true, but with little or no factual basis</i>
Spiritualizing	<i>what is actually something concrete is converted to fanciful symbolism (imagined spiritual connections)</i>

TRY AN EXERCISE :

For the same passage as earlier (Mark 1:40-45), we have made some of our own discoveries. For each one of them, label the kind of observation it is. Use the list in the previous page as a reference for your labels.

- 1. "A man with leprosy." His condition and appearance must have been a sight, as he was probably filled with sores on his whole body. There must have been a stench coming from him too.
- 2. At that time, a leper was considered ceremonially unclean. People must keep away from him, otherwise they too would become unclean.
- 3. "If you are willing." The man was not sure if Jesus wanted to heal him or whether he would be rejected by Him.
- 4. "If you are willing you can make me clean." The man must have known before hand that Jesus could heal!
- 5. The crowd standing there would probably be moving away from the leper in fear and rejection.
- 6. Jesus healed the leper.
- 7. When Jesus touched the leper, he must have been moved by that act of compassion instead of rejection.
- 8. Jesus asked the man to show himself to the Jewish priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded. This shows that Jesus respected the Jewish religious traditions.
- 9. The healing was also a testimony to Jesus' divine power, since Jews believed only God could heal leprosy.
- 10. Jesus warned the man not to tell anybody about the healing. It was not time for Him to be revealed as the Messiah.
- 11. The man was disobedient.
- 12. We can understand why he chose to disobey Jesus. He probably could contain his joy at being healed.
- 13. Jesus could no longer enter a town openly, because too many wanted to see Him. This may cause political unrest as too many Jews gathered may cause the Roman officials to be suspicious.
- 14. Although Jesus could no longer enter a town openly, people still came to Him from everywhere. So, He could still preach effectively.
- 15. Those people who came to Jesus from everywhere probably wanted Him to heal them, or were curious about Him.

- _____ 16. Jesus has the power to heal anybody He wants to.
- _____ 17. We can always bring all our problems to Jesus.
- _____ 18. If we do not obey God, we too could hinder His ministry.
- _____ 19. "... to show himself to the priest." In today's context this can be taken as accepting Christ and needing the pastor to verify it.

Obviously we could not proceed on to make a 20th discovery. Yet, we hope you became aware of our *style of reading*, and were able to label them accordingly.

PRIORITY IN READING

If you are wondering why we need to become aware of our own reading styles, it is so that we can consciously focus and give priority to textual facts. Textual facts keep our eyes on what the text actually says, and helps us avoid pitfall in wayward interpretation of Scripture.

A good question to always keep asking in the first step of observing the Bible text is, "Is this really written in the passage of Scripture I am reading?" It will also be good to note the verse by the side of your observation.

eg. "The man was disobedient" (v45).

In this way, you are assured of accuracy, and you will begin to develop an eye for clues and details which are already there. This then, sets the scene for you to interpret the Word of God correctly.

It is necessary to read the whole passage through (some call it skimming) to get an OVERVIEW of the passage. It is also necessary to note DETAILS in order to unearth treasures from God's Word. Important also, is the ability to PICTURE ourselves in the writer's shoes. In this way we will not miss out the heartbeat of the passage and its urgency.

Keep on practising with other passages, maybe starting with **Mark 4:35-41**. In the next chapter, we will go on to introduce you to a simple yet potent method of studying the Bible.



2 - Inductive Bible Study

Just as there are many reading styles which we bring into our Bible study, our way or approach to studying the Bible can be varied.

Some people study the Bible *deductively* - which in other words means that they already have in mind what they want the Word to say to them or their situation or they have a conclusion on a matter based on a study somewhere else, and then find Scripture to support the idea. It is in some way trying to get the Scripture to say what you want it say.

We would like to introduce you to studying the Bible **inductively**. This approach encourages us to allow the Scripture passage to speak to us directly by first of all focusing on the *textual facts* and their *implications*. In this way we have a progressive way of moving from :

- .. **Specific to General Conclusions**
- .. **Concrete observations to the Abstract**
- .. **What is known to the Unknown.**

So, how do we go about studying inductively? There is a 3 step procedure to it :



Thus, we can be assured that all our conclusions and interpretations are anchored in facts!

Everyday Life Applications

This is also a reflection of the way we live life and make sense of it. The same principles of observing, then interpreting, and then only applying or taking action can be seen in the following :

- .. In doing *research*
- .. In *problem solving*
- .. In being a *manager*
- .. In being a *doctor*
- .. In being a *counselor*
- .. In being a *detective*

In quoting the famous detective Sherlock Holmes,

**"Data! Data! Data!
I cannot make bricks without clay."**



Inductive Bible study is a good approach in learning to LISTEN; listening to the facts, listening to see how the pieces fit, listening to ourselves and what God seems to be saying to us in our situation. We can personally interact with Scriptures and the God of the Scriptures so that our beliefs are based on a prayerful understanding of the life-transforming Word.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INDUCTIVE PROCESS



OBSERVATION



- What does the text actually say?

- 1) Look for the facts - the BIG PICTURE, and the DETAILS
- 2) Continue asking QUESTIONS about these facts - Ask! Think! Link!
- 3) Note REPETITIONS, COMPARISONS, CONTRASTS, PROPORTION, PROGRESSION.

Ps 119:18



INTERPRETATION



- Interpret these facts and their implications. What main points did the writer want his readers to understand?

- 1) Link verses and ideas together.
- 2) Determine which facts or ideas are important by weighing one against the other.
- 3) Analyze KEY WORDS.
- 4) Concretize and summarize all that you have discovered in your observations.

Ps 119:34



APPLICATION



- Apply the lessons learnt. How do we put them into practice today?

- 1) Make the bridge to your context and your life situation.
- 2) Discover general principles that apply to us today.
- 3) Be honest with yourself and hear what God might be specifically saying to you.
- 4) Pray for God's help to put them into practice.

Matt 7:24



LET US TRY AN EXERCISE

In the previous chapter, you were asked to try and identify as many facts as you could in Mark 4:35-41. If you haven't already tried it, you can begin now using the inductive approach - O, I, A. Look for as many facts you can. We will work along side you.

Mark 4:35-41

³⁵That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."
³⁶Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Observation

Who?	Jesus, His disciples and others (v35-36)
Where?	Crossing the lake (Galilee 4:1)
When?	Evening of "that" day (v35)
What?	There was a storm, and they nearly drowned. Jesus calmed the storm.
How?	Jesus commanded the waves and it became still (v39)
Why?	Jesus reveals another side of Himself, that He has control over nature (implied in v 39-41)
So?	As a result, the disciples were terrified and there grew an awareness that Jesus was more than they had thought (v41)

Ask! Think! Link!

- In verses 35-41, there is a PROGRESSION of the story which climaxes at the end.
- In verses 38 & 41, there is a CONTRAST from anger at Jesus sleeping, to awe because of His control over nature.
- In verses 39-41, there is a MEANS TO AN END progression, as Jesus uses the storm to reveal to the disciples who He was.

- 1) "That day" (v35) - what day is this?
- 2) "The other side" (v35) - where is this other side?
- 3) Why did Jesus want to leave the crowd behind?
- 4) Who are in the other boats? What happened to them after the storm? (v36)
- 5) What brought about the sudden storm?
- 6) How could Jesus still continue to sleep?
- 7) Some of the disciples were fishermen (Mk 1:16,19). They should have been used to the sea. Why were they so disturbed?
- 8) What caused the disciples to be afraid? (v40-41)
- 9) Why did Jesus bring up the matter about their faith? (v40)



Answers to the questions in Ask! Think! Link!

Q1) It was at the end of a long day of teaching the crowds (Mk 4:1-34).

Q2) They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes (Mk 5:1).

Comment

In answering Q1 & Q2, we had to look further than the immediate passage. We needed to get an idea of the BIG PICTURE by looking at what went on before and after. [This will be discussed further in chapter 3]

Q3) Most probably Jesus felt He had ministered enough to the crowd. Probably too He was tired (v38) and wanted to withdraw with the twelve. He might have wanted to move on to another place to minister there also (Mk 5:1-20).

(Comments: These are only possibilities. It may help us to identify with the situation.)

Q4) The text gives no facts to answer this questions, and it makes no difference to our understanding of this passage.

Q5) Situated in a basin surrounded by mountains, the Sea of Galilee is particularly susceptible to sudden, violent storms. Cool air from the Mediterranean is drawn down through the narrow mountain pass and clashes with the hot, humid air lying over the lake [NIV Study Bible].

Q6) Jesus must have been utterly exhausted. He was also probably in a covered section of the boat (near the stern) and thus did not get wet from the storm. [The Bible Background Commentary - IVP].

Q7) The fact that they thought they were going to drown (v38) caused terrible fear in them, and probably overwhelmed them.

Q8) Witnessing Jesus' power over the winds and the waves, ... made them realize that Jesus was not just a mere Teacher! In Jewish tradition, the one who ruled the winds and sea was God Himself (Ps 107:29, cf Jonah 1:15) [The Bible Background Commentary - IVP].

Q9) The disciples had witnessed Jesus healing many, casting out demons and teaching about the kingdom of God. Now they witnessed Jesus power over nature. Slowly they were discovering Jesus was more than a human Messiah. But they were afraid of what their hearts were telling them. This could be Jesus' way of encouraging their faith.

Interpretation

We witness another facet of Jesus in this encounter with the storm. Jesus has the power and authority over nature's forces! This whole power encounter seems to be leading to one climax, which is to help the disciples discover Jesus' real identity. Jesus slowly seems to be encouraging their faith - to see and understand that He is indeed God.

Application

1. We should be open constantly to new and fresh understanding of a dynamic Jesus.
2. We must submit to Jesus Christ as Creator God - not just be thankful to Him as Savior.

TO PONDER

How was that for an interesting time of Bible study?! Did you expect to discover so many things about such a little passage? We hope to share with you in more detail in the following chapters about the 3 steps in studying the Bible *inductively* - O, I, A.

NB Another tip to enable you to place all your findings in one page and help you see the overall picture of the passage you are studying is to use a table. The table has the following headings - *Observation (Big Picture)*; *Observation (Details, Ask, Think, Link)*; *Interpretation and Application*. It looks like this and we want to encourage you to use such tables throughout this workbook.

OBSERVATION - Big Picture

- 1) *Literary Form* :
- 2) *Theme of the passage* :
- 3) *Movements or changes noted in the passage studied* :



OBSERVATION		INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION
Details	Ask! Think! Link!		

Happy enjoying your Bible studies!

3 - Observation -- Big Picture

“What do I see?”

In the previous chapter, we looked at the three steps of doing Inductive Bible study: Observation, Interpretation and Application. The part that you will be spending most time on (almost two thirds of your Bible time) is in Observation. Unless we actually begin to unearth the gems in the Scripture text itself, we will not be able to proceed to understand the meaning of what we observed from the text. Remember too, the more time spend on reading the text and rereading it helps a lot in Interpretation and Application.

In this chapter, we will be looking at finding the *big picture* of a passage.



BIG PICTURE OF THE PASSAGE

To approach a passage, we start out by just looking at three areas.

1) *Determine Literary Form* :

Before observing the context, determine which form of writing the author is using. Each form expresses the truth in a different way. Understanding these differences provides help in knowing what to look for and what not to look for. For instance in studying a psalm (poetry), do not look primarily for an ecent (which is found in narrative) nor for a logical argument (discourse).
But look for a heart response.

The Bible is sometimes divided into these basic forms of literature:

NARRATIVE

Narrative is found in the first 17 books of the OT and the first 5 books of the NT. They describe people, sequences of events, and report dialogue and teaching.

DISCOURSE

Includes the prophetic teachings, and the NT sermons and letters. They seek to persuade people to change their beliefs and behaviour.

POETRY

Job, Psalms and Proverbs testify to the writer's experience and observation of life. Poetic sections of OT prophecies set forth God's direct messages in an artistic way.

APOCALYPTIC

Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation use much of this literary form. They reveal the secrets of God's plans for history and his coming triumph through visions, dreams, special terminology, symbols and other vivid imagery.

Particular passages may use more than one form. *Eg.* the prophets used combinations of all four forms.

2) *Theme / Title for the Chapter* :

Having read the passage quickly to get an overall view, what are your general impression ?
In summary, what is this chapter all about?

3) *Changes or Movement in the Passage* :

Noting any change of actions or focus. Mark tentative sections where you see changes in :
location, major action, people, ideas, emphases and give a tentative title to each section.

The Bible contains more of the type of literature called "narrative" than it does of any other type. More than forty percent of the Old Testament and sixty five percent of the New Testament is narrative in nature. In the next few chapters, we will concentrate on studying the narrative passages.

Understanding the Narratives

What Narratives are...

Narratives are stories. God's stories — stories that are utterly true, crucially important, and often complex. Narratives tell us about things that happened — but not just any things. Their *purpose* is to show God at work in His creation and among His people. Each narrative carries a message to which we must *respond personally*.

What narratives are NOT...

Narratives are not allegories or stories filled with hidden meanings. Narratives does not always teach directly, they often illustrate what is taught directly and categorically elsewhere. Each individual narrative or episode within a narrative does not necessarily have a moral all its own. What people do in narratives is not necessary a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.

Try An Exercise With Us

Read Mark 5:25-34 and discover the big picture using the steps introduced in the previous page:

Mark 5:25-34

²⁵And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. ³⁰At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" ³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

- 1) Literary form : *narrative*.
- 2) Theme : *Jesus heals a bleeding woman*.
- 3) Movements : *the woman's history of illness and condition (vs25-26); the woman's desires, actions and the result (vs27-30); Jesus and the disciples' response (vs31-32); woman's encounter with Jesus (vs33-34).*

NB: Having done the observation for changes of actions or focus, you may want to double check the title given earlier on (this is especially so for longer passages).

Try An Exercise

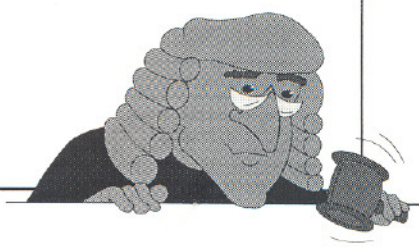
Now try Luke 10:25-37 on your own using the same procedure.

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" ²⁷He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" ²⁸"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." ²⁹But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'" ³⁶Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" ³⁷The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "go and do likewise."

Your Answers ...

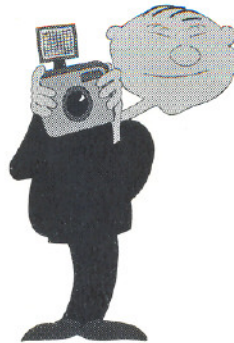
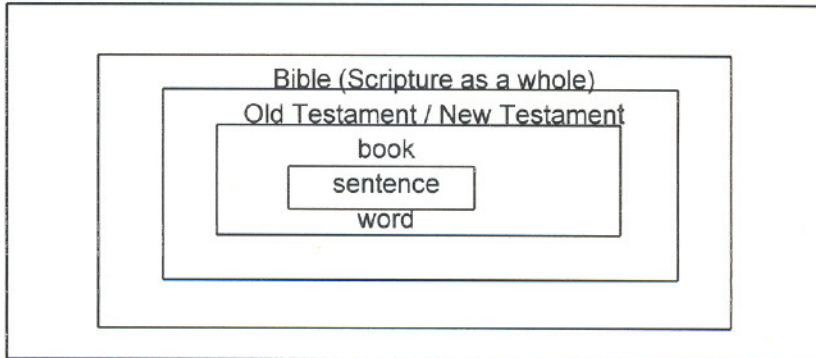
- 1) Literary form:
- 2) Theme:
- 3) Movements:



GETTING A BIGGER PICTURE

As we read the bible passages, there is a need for us to look out for what went on immediately *before and after* each passage or event to get a feel of the atmosphere or the context of the passage being studied. It will help us further along to check and be alert when we interpret the given passage. We are then forced to ask the question, "*Does my interpretation fit into this bigger context?*". If it does not fit then we should return to do our observation all over again.

The "pictures" we are refering to can be categorised into the following area. As you can see, the biggest picture is the Bible itself.



To get the bigger picture for Mark 5:25-34, we look at the chapters before and after the passage - Mark 4:35-5:43.

The procedure for doing the bigger picture is the same as we did earlier on.

- 1) Theme: *Jesus manifesting his deity (authority and power); series of encounters with nature, evil spirit, sickness and death.*
- 2) Movements: *Jesus calmed the storm (4:35-41); Healing of a demon-possessed man (5:1-20); Woman's encounter with Jesus--freedom from much suffering (5:25-34); Raising Jairus dead daughter (5:35-43).*

A Further Exercise

Mark 11:27-12:12

²⁷They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teacher of the law and the elders came to him. ²⁸"By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?" ²⁹Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰John's baptism -- was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!" ³¹They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ³²But if we say, 'From men'..." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) ³³So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things." ^{12:1}He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ²At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. ⁶"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰Haven't you read this scripture: " 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; ¹¹the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" ¹²Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

The big picture of Mark 11:27-12:12

Literary form :

Theme :

Movements :

The bigger picture : Mark 11:1-12:44

Theme :

Movements :

4 - Observation -- Details

There are seven investigative questions that is important and helpful for us to dig facts and information from the Scripture text. We call them the 7 Basic Fact-Finding Questions (7-FFQ) -- *who, where, when, what, how, why, so*.

7 BASIC FACT-FINDING QUESTIONS (7-FFQ)

WHO? who are the people?

WHERE? help you to see the setting of the passage as you observe
people, place and time
Where are they? How is the place significant?
What is the atmosphere like?

WHEN? When does this event take place?

WHAT? leads you to focus on the main point of a passage:
the main event in a narrative
the writer's argument in a discourse
his testimony in poetry
or his vision in apocalypse

HOW? gets you to consider:
people's method of doing something
people's manner of behaviour

WHY? serves you in looking for the reason or purpose:
for an event
for people's actions or behaviour

SO? so what results follow? were they expected?
what other implications are there?
points to the result or climax



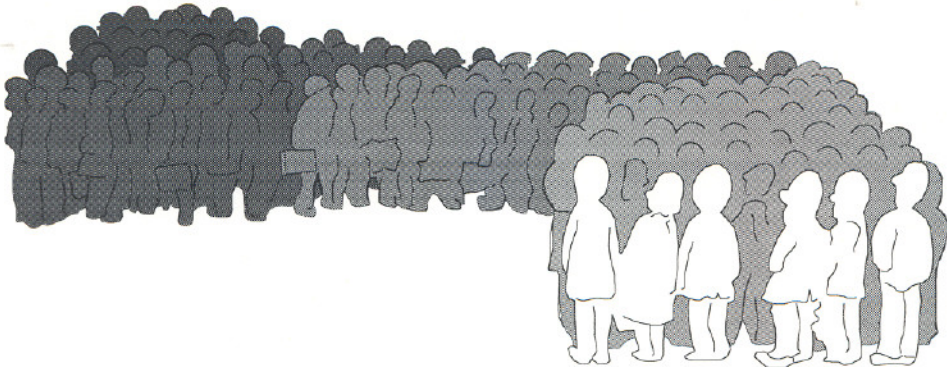
Let us Try on Mark 5:25-43

Mark 5:25-34

²⁵And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding^a for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had^b, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him^c in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed^d." ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. ³⁰At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" ³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it^e. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth^f. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

7-FFQ ...

Who?	<i>The woman, crowd, disciples, Jesus</i>
Where?	<i>In the midst of the crowd, in the region of Galilee (found in v1 and v21)</i>
When?	<i>On His way to Jairus' house (v21-24)</i>
What?	<i>A bleeding woman was healed</i>
How?	<i>She touched Jesus' cloak and power went out of Him to heal her.</i>
Why?	<i>Jesus has the power within Him to heal</i>
So?	<i>Her faith was acknowledged. She received the blessing of peace and her healing was affirmed.</i>



The seven investigative questions may be very helpful for us to get to some facts, especially the open or more obvious facts. In order to get to the hidden or less obvious facts, we need to work further by asking, thinking and linking the texts and those facts that we have found.

ASK! THINK! LINK!

- ◆ Ask further question about these facts
- ◆ Think about their implications
- ◆ Link different facts and their implication

Note the writer's

Emphasis by looking for

- **Repetitions** : the primary means of emphasis; two or more mentions of the same word or idea or person
- **Comparisons**: learning by association with familiar things or linking things that are alike
- **Contrasts**: association of opposites; things in the same category but unlike each other
- **Proportion**: when a subject is given noticeably more (or less) attention relative to other subjects

Underlying ideas and thought patterns by looking for

- **Cause and Effect**: when one thing naturally follows another
- **Means to an End**: when one thing is intentionally used to achieve a purpose
- **Progression**: when a list of words, or series of ideas or events moves towards climax

ASK! THINK! LINK! ...

a) What is this bleeding all about?

The precise nature of the woman's problem is not known. But her condition caused her to be considered ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15:25-33) [NIV Study Bible].

b) *The woman must have been very desperate since she had consulted many doctors and used up all her money.*

c) She came up to Jesus from behind. What does this tell us about her?

Her existence was wretched because, in general she was shunned by people since anyone having contact with her was made ceremonially unclean.

d) What could be her other encounter with Jesus for her to believe that even Jesus' belongings heal.

One opinion is that it was a practice in those days that contact with religious figures would bring healing to the sick (Acts 5:15; 19:12) [NIV Study Bible].

e) Did Jesus really not know who was the one who touched Him?

There were lots of debate concerning this question. However, we feel that the answer to this question is not significant in contributing to the further understanding of the main event in the passage.

f) Don't you think the disciples' irritation was understandable?

Just imagine being sandwiched in a mini bus. You wouldn't even think of asking "Who touched me?"

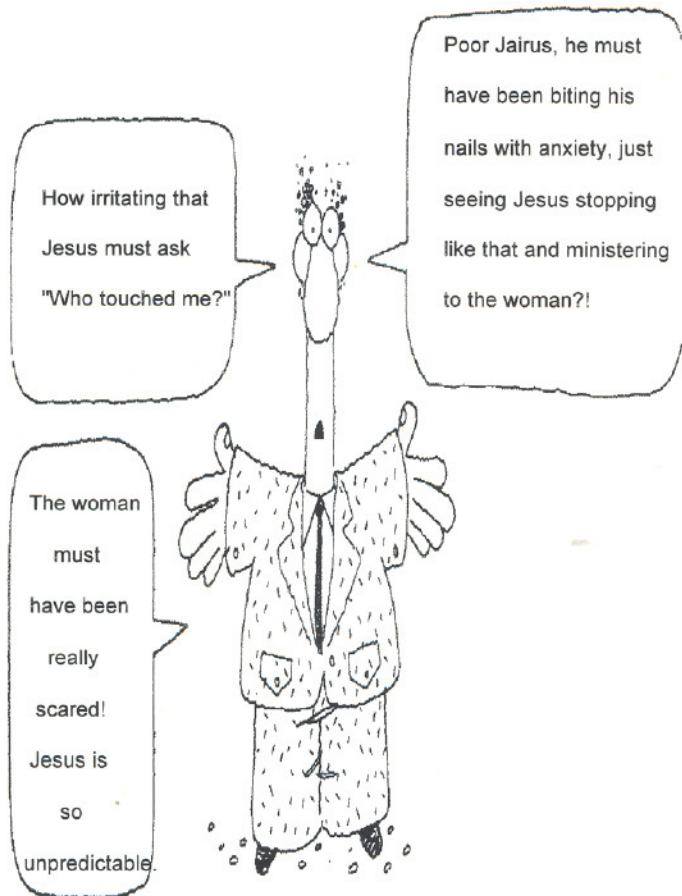
g) So, would there be a reason why Jesus insisted in knowing who touched Him?

Having found out who it was, Instead of condemning or scolding, Jesus affirmed the woman's healing and granted her peace.

h) Try to imagine what was the woman's feeling when she had to admit and furthermore, tell the whole truth.

She must have felt fearful, lost and ashamed. Fearful because many people could have been defiled by her action; lost and ashamed because the crowd was probably staring at her.

i) From the bigger picture, some of the disciples have seen Jesus performing many different miracles: drives out an evil spirit (1:21-28), heals many (29-34), heals a man with leprosy (40-45), heals a paralytic (2:1-12), Jesus calms the storm (4:35-41), healing of a demon-possessed man (5:1-20), raising Jairus's dead daughter (5:21-24, 35-43).



TRY AN EXERCISE

Mark 11:27-12:12

²⁷They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teacher of the law and the elders came to him. ²⁸"By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?" ²⁹Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰John's baptism -- was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!" ³¹They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'" ³²But if we say, 'From men'...." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) ³³So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things." ^{12:1}He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ²At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. ⁶"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰Haven't you read this scripture: " 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; ¹¹the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" ¹²Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

7- FFQ ...

Who?

Where?

When?

What?

How?

Why?

So?

ASK! THINK! LINK! ...

5 - Interpretation

“What does it mean?”

The next procedure in doing Inductive Bible study is Interpretation. Having done the Observation, and found the important and relevant facts, you need to move on to understand what does these facts tell us about? What does it mean? To do so, begin by...

DETERMINE THE WRITER'S PURPOSE

Gather your specific observations into a **CONCLUSION** of what the writer intend his readers to understand. This message has to be linked with the context of the passage — what has just happened and what follows.

EXAMPLE on Mark 5:25-34

Interpretation ...

A woman who's life was full of hopelessness and suffering for 12 years, dared to trust that she would be healed by touching Jesus. It was indeed a power encounter! She was healed. In addition to this new hope,... it was also a personal encounter with Jesus for her. Jesus took time in the midst of the crowd to affirm her faith and to confirm her healing. Here it is revealed that Jesus has the power to heal. The writer has been slowly disclosing Jesus' deity from Mark 4:35-5:43 by showing His power and authority over nature, over demons, over sickness and over death!

Having done that, check your interpretation by using these three RULES:

- **RULE OF SIMPLICITY** : Use the natural sense to interpret. Do not spiritualize or read into the language. Only when the language is obviously pictorial or metaphorical, then interpret figuratively.
- **RULE OF HISTORY** : Think what the passage meant to the original hearers, and how they would interpret it.
- **RULE OF HARMONY** : Scriptures interpret Scripture. You may use other known easier understand and relevant passages to help you understand the harder ones. They do not and should not contradict each other. Thus, check your interpretation with other known Scriptures on this matter.

Remember, your interpretation of the passage has to stand through all three rules.



Remember, your interpretation of the passage has to stand through all three rules.

Example :

- (1) "a woman... had been subjected to bleeding for twelve years ...". To understand what Mark was trying to say here, we are to interpret the word 'bleeding' and not trying to think that Mark was hinting the woman was losing her life for the past twelve years ("For the life of a creature is in the blood, ... it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." Lev. 17:11). This interpretation is incorrect in it's *original sense*, for the original reader would not understand it in such a way.
- (2) We may interpret that "by faith you'll be healed by Jesus, if you are not healed, it will be because you have no faith in Him." But this is contradicting with other portions of Scriptures. eg. 2 Cor. 12:7-9. "Thre time I (Paul) pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said my grace is sufficient for you ...Obviously the Lord did not grant Paul's pleading, instead he offers His grace for Paul. In 1 Tim. 5:23, when Timothy was frequently sick, Paul advised him to stop drinking only water and use a little wine.

Try Your Best — Then Consult Reference Books

Use dictionaries, concordances and atlases to check technical terms, customs, historical facts or other special references. Do not use commentaries until you have tried your best. If possible, refer to more than one for different viewpoints. A good commentary should be giving more than a view (when there is) for your reference. *Do not substitute* their conclusions for your own efforts!

Try an exercise on Mark 11:27-12:12

Interpretation...



WHY INTERPRET?

Why do we need to interpret?

God is the ultimate author of Scriptures. However, God also used human authors to reveal His Word to us in every concrete situations, during a time that is far removed from us. Therefore *interpretation is the science of discovering the author's original meaning as he wrote the Scriptures*. We may not know Greek or Hebrew but we do have bible study tools and reference books to help us find the true meaning of a biblical text, what God originally intended it to mean when it was first written. Jack Kuhatschek, in "Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible" actually suggests that we become TIME-TRAVELERS when we read in order to *bridge the gaps and understand the true meaning*.

What are the gaps?

- the **language** gap -- from Hebrew, aramaic and Greek or even the English of our Bibles to our own heart language.
- the **age/time** gap -- from centuries past to our time
- the **cultural** gap -- from ancient Near Eastern setting to our own culture
- the **geographical** gap -- from a world centered around Palestine and Asia Minor to our own geographical area
- the **literal** gap -- the Bible is written in several different kind of literature; poetry, parables, letter, prophetic, narrative etc.

The Questions of Interpretation

The secret of understanding the original meaning of a text is to ask the right question of the text. these should be questions that are related to the following:

Occasion

- What is the occasion of the text?
- Why was it written?
- Why is it written in such a manner?
- What was the writer's intend?
- Why does he mention certain things or people?

Historical, Cultural and Geographical Context

- What was the culture of the writer and the reader or the people of that time?
- What were the needs of the readers? What were the people's expectations?
- What is the political climate?
- How were the people's worldview? What did they believe?
- Why they respond the way they did?
- At what point in the life of Israel, or the church, or the particular persons involved in it and difference does it make?
- What do I need to know about the location or geography or climate and what significance would it have?

Literary Context and Content

- What is the plain meaning of the text in relation to what is said before and after it?
- What is the original meaning of the words used?
- What is the difference in meaning compared to today's usage?
- What is the grammar used?
- What is the author's train of thoughts?