

Properly Interpreting Scripture



4G Mentoring: Growing, Guiding, and
Guarding the Global Bride of Christ

Foreword

This document has been designed for use with small groups using cell-phones, tablets, computers, TV connections, or projectors. This document is not designed as a printed book (though it may be printed) or large group presentation but rather an electronic discussion guide for small or medium sized multi-language groups. The graphics on each page are designed to ease cross-cultural communication issues when using a translator or with group members using a second language. We hope that this document helps facilitate discussions about the Gospel of Jesus Christ in both formal and informal discussion groups in homes, churches, and coffee shops around the world. The copyright on this document allows you to freely distribute and even modify the content to meet your needs.

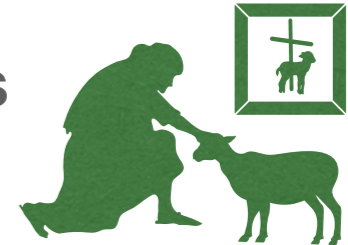
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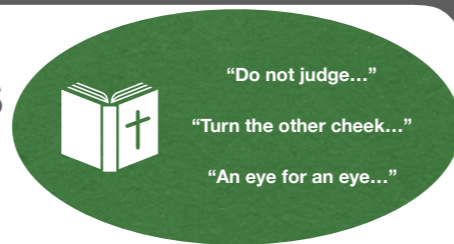
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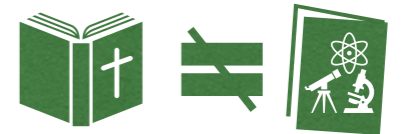
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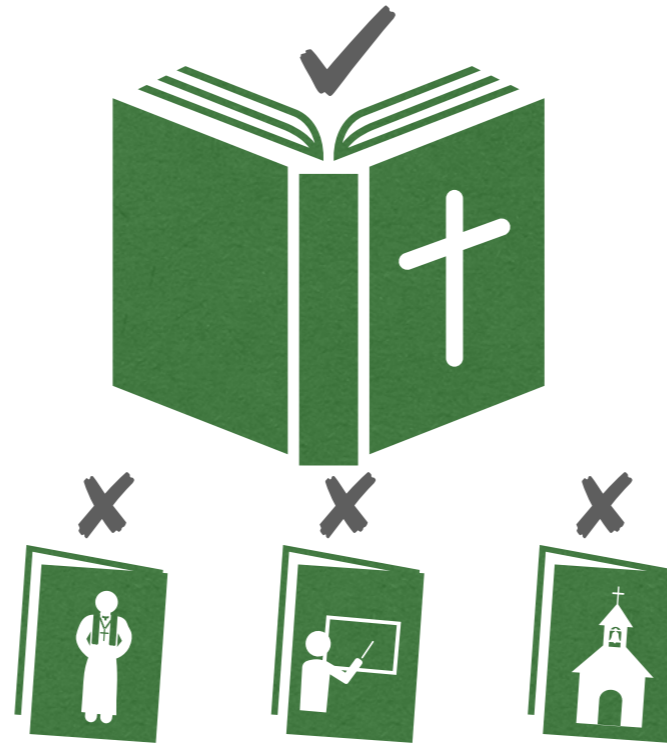


Case Studies



Sola Scriptura

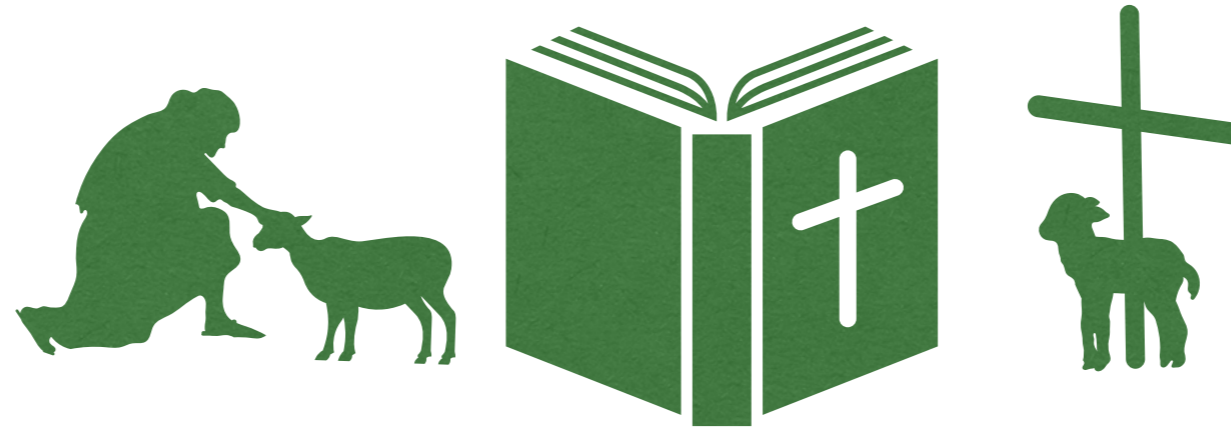
(Scripture Is our Only Authority)



*“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, **teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**” (Matthew 15:8-9)*

Key Idea: Scripture is our authority and not other writings or traditions.

One Story With Two Parts



*“And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ And **beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**” (Luke 24:25-27)*

Key Idea: The Bible is one consistent story of salvation through Jesus with two distinct parts: the Old and New Testaments.

Written by Sinful Men Through (the Power of) the Holy Spirit



“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)

*“**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.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

Key Idea: The Bible was written by sinful men through the power of and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

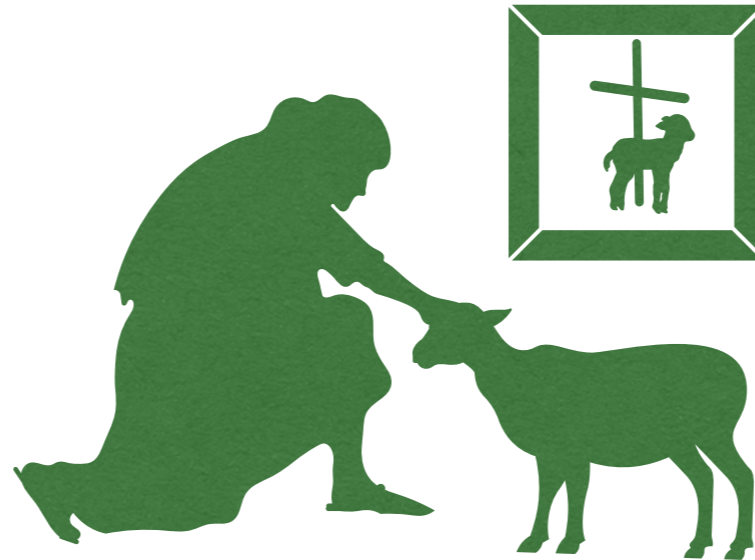
The Bible Focuses on God (Not Mankind)



*“He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness **for his name's sake.**” (Psalms 23:3)*

Key Idea: The Bible focuses on what God is doing in the world and not mankind. If mankind were the focus then we would be God.

Salvation Has Always Been Through Jesus



*And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when **Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. **For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**" (Hebrews 10:11-14)*

*“And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, **that apart from us they should not be made perfect.**” (Hebrews 11:39-40)*

Key Idea: Salvation has always been through Jesus as all of the Old Testament sacrificial system pointed to Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice.

The Bible Is our Only Reliable Information on Jesus



Key Idea: The Bible is our only reliable source of information on Jesus.

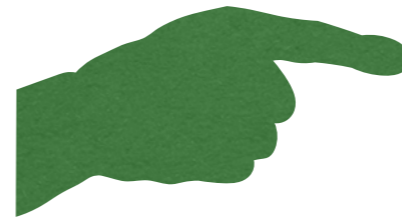
The Old Testament Is Essential to Understanding the New Testament

The New Testament
quotes the Old
Testament at least
300+ times.



Key Idea: The Old Testament is essential to a proper understanding of the New Testament.

The Law Points to Jesus as the Savior



*[Jesus] “You search the **Scriptures** because you think that in them you have eternal life; and **it is they that bear witness about me...**” (John 5:39)*

*[Jesus] “For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; **for he wrote of me.** But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (John 5:46-47)*

Key Idea: All of the Law and the Prophets point to Jesus as the savior.

Don't Follow Old Testament Laws Unless Re-Affirmed in the New Testament



10

No other gods	Exodus 20:3	Matthew 4:10
No idols	Exodus 20:4-6	1 John 5:21, Acts 17:29
Do not take God's name in vain	Exodus 20:7	1 Timothy 6:1
Keep the Sabbath (not an explicit affirmation)	Exodus 20:8-11	Hebrews 4:4, 9, 10
Honor your mother and father	Exodus 20:12	Matthew 19:19
Do not murder	Exodus 20:13	Romans 13:9
Do not commit adultery	Exodus 20:14	Matthew 19:18
Do not steal	Exodus 20:15	Romans 13:9
Do not lie	Exodus 20:16	Romans 13:9
Do not covent	Exodus 20:17	Romans 7:7

Key Idea: Don't follow Old Testament Laws unless re-affirmed in the New Testament (such as the 10 Commandments).

Scripture Interprets Scripture



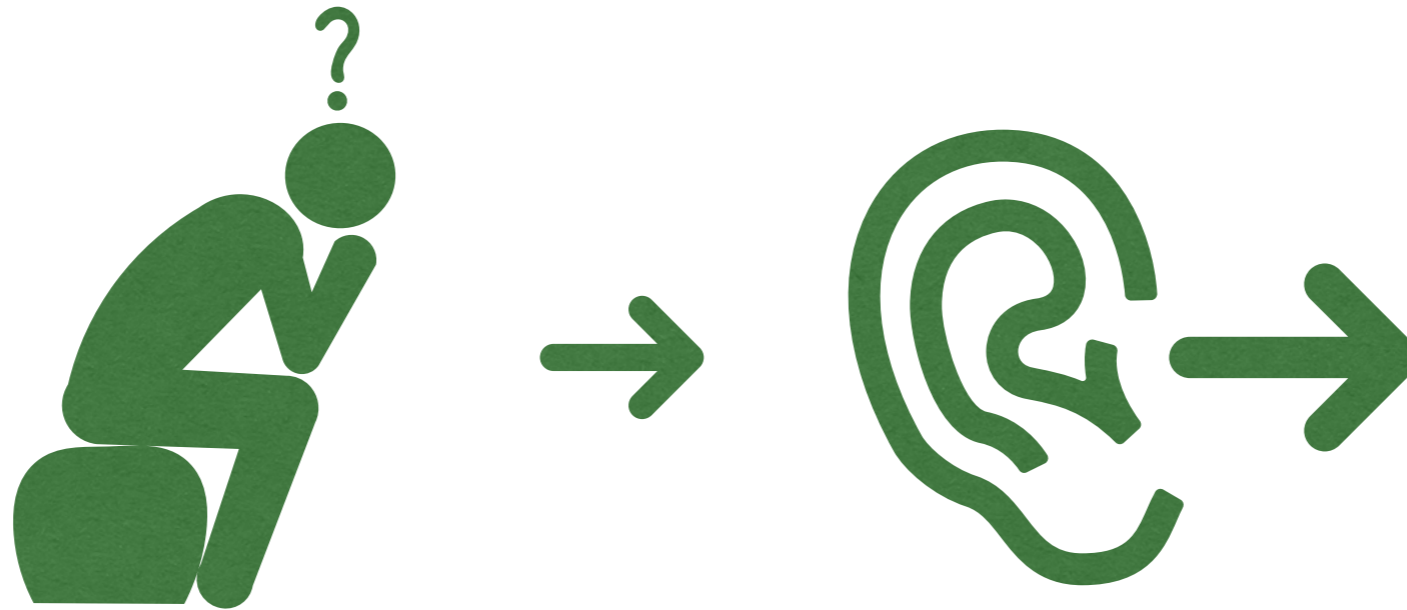
Key Idea: Scripture is always the best interpreter of scripture.

The Intent of the Author Is the Meaning



Key Idea: The original intent of the author to his intended audience is the meaning of the passage.

Move From Meaning to Application



*“But **be doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” (James 1:22)*

Key Idea: Once we have established the meaning we need to make sure we know how to apply the meaning to our modern life in a practical way.

Avoid Taking Verses Out of Context



“Do not judge...”

“Turn the other cheek...”

“An eye for an eye...”

*“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— **not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world**, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother** if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not **those inside the church whom you are to judge**? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.” (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)*

Key Idea: Avoid taking a verses out of the overall context of a passage or book of the Bible.

New and Novel Interpretations Are Often Wrong



Key Idea: New and novel interpretations of the Bible are often wrong.

Don't Base Practice on Difficult-To-Interpret Verses



*“And **these signs will accompany those who believe:** in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; **they will pick up serpents with their hands;** and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17-18)*

Some Christians interpret Mark 16:17-18 to mean that Christians must pick up poisonous snakes to prove that they are true believers. Many people have died from these snake bites. This verse is very difficult to interpret and there are no other verses in the Bible to support this practice. We should base our faith and practice on the clear teachings of scripture and not on obscure passages that have no other biblical support.

Key Idea: Do not base major doctrines of faith and practice on difficult to interpret passages - especially if there is no other support anywhere else in Scripture.

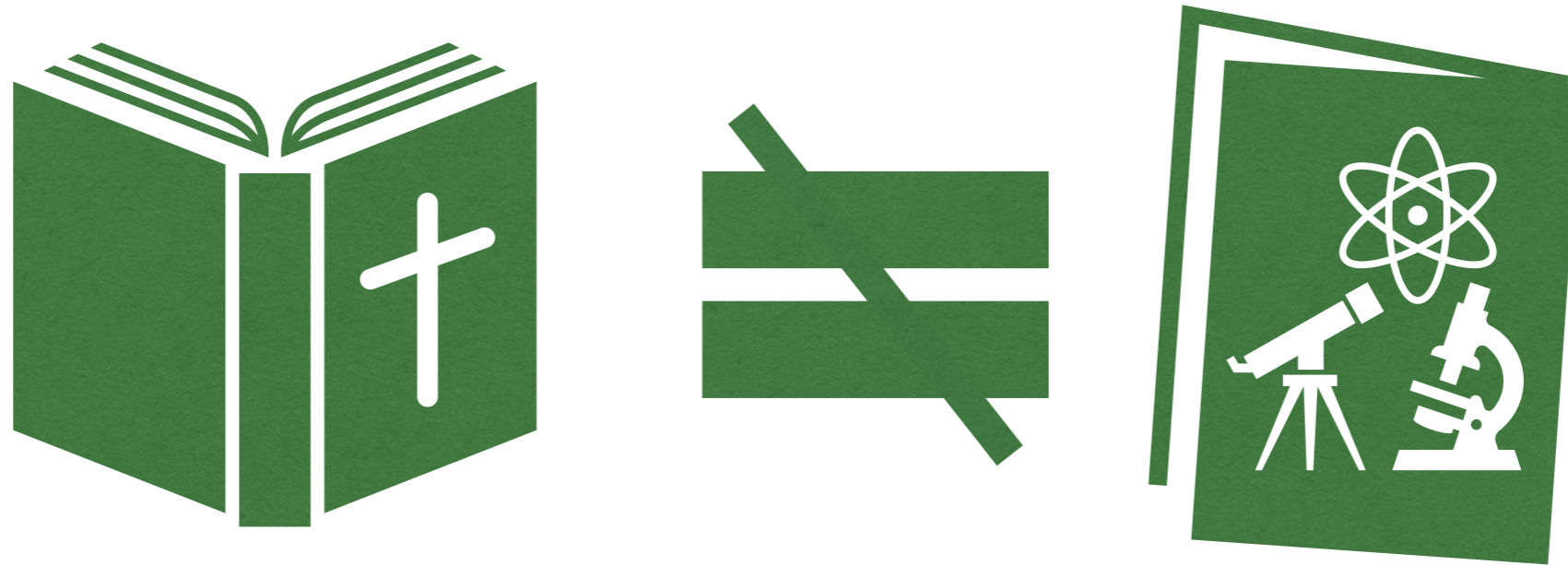
Major on the Majors, Minor on the Minors



*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! **For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, **straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!**”** (Matthew 23:23-24)*

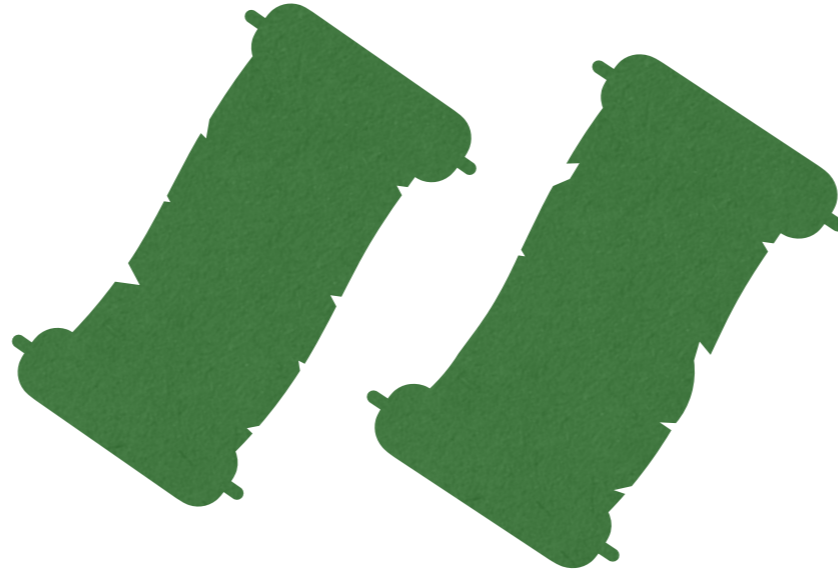
Key Idea: Major on the major teachings of scripture and minor on the minor teachings of scripture. Avoid over-emphasizing minor points in the Bible.

The Bible Is Not a Scientific Textbook



Key Idea: The Bible is not a science textbook and was not written to answer scientific questions although where it touches on science it gives us understanding and truth.

Don't Be Ashamed of Variant Manuscripts



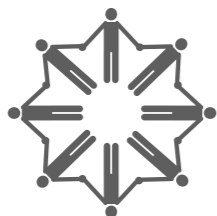
We have 24,000 New Testament hand-written manuscripts with 400,000 variants. Over 99% of variants are dropped letter, wrong letter, forgotten word, changed word (same meaning), changed word (nonsense meaning), changed word order. Variants are common to all hand-written manuscripts, not just the Bible. No major doctrines are in doubt because of manuscript variants. But variant manuscripts help us trace manuscript history - proving that no one has had the power or opportunity to change the Bible.

Key Idea: Don't be ashamed of the manuscripts we have or the way in which God has preserved them. Manuscript variants do not disprove the Bible but are a great testimony to how God has preserved the Bible down through the ages.

Case Study 1



You are teaching a lesson on church discipline and someone in the group strongly disagrees with any form of church discipline. This group member uses the verse in Matthew 7:1 to say that you should never judge anyone for anything. How would you respond? Use scripture to back up your answer?

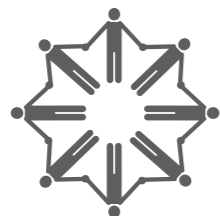


**Break up into groups and discuss.
(suggested time - 10 minutes)**

Case Study 2



Someone in your group just came back from a conference on the “End Times.” The teacher at this conference told everyone that there is a secret code in scripture that reveals the date of the return of Jesus. This teacher claims to have broken the code and gave everyone a specific date for the return of Jesus. Your group member is excited and wondering how he/she should prepare for this date. What should you say? Use scripture to back up your answer.



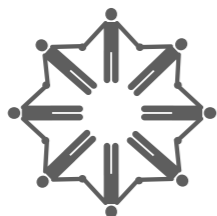
**Break up into groups and discuss.
(suggested time - 10 minutes)**

Case Study 3



Someone in your group recently met a pastor who told them that it does not matter if we practice the moral teachings of the Bible as long as we believe in Jesus.

The pastor quoted Mark 16:16 that says, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.” What should you say to this group member? Use scripture to back up your answer.



**Break up into groups and discuss.
(suggested time - 10 minutes)**



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