

Acts 6:1-7

This week will be a little different. We have a short passage to look at, so I thought I would take the opportunity to lead you through a passage study similar to how I go about studying a passage and preparing it for a sermon. I learned this message through participating in "Precepts" Bible studies. It was a tool I learned about 10 years ago, and I still use it regularly.

I will put the passage of study on the back of this paper with plenty of room for you to take notes. I recommend having a few colors to work with if you are a visual learner like myself (I use a set of markers).

Day 1- The first step is **observation**. Before you interpret a passage and apply it to daily living, you need to start with very basic observation. This step may seem tedious, but it pays great dividends. You will be surprised at how much you will learn simply by looking at the basics. I try to identify the setting, characters, any members of the Godhead, and basic grasp on the author's intended message in a passage. I also identify any repeated words and underline them for potentially more in-depth study. To go through the observation step, follow these steps:

- Using the symbols key on the bottom of the page, note any occurrence of each of the symbols in the passage.
- Underline any repeated words or phrases that you think may be significant
- Using brackets, identify these four portions of the narrative: "Status Quo", "Conflict", "Resolution", "Result"
- Answer: In one sentence, state the main idea/story behind this passage:
- _____

Day 2- We are still in the **observation** step. Today, you need to ask as many questions as you possibly can of this text. Think; who, what, where, when, why, how? "why" in particular is a helpful question. Write all of your questions either in the text by simply underlining a phrase and writing your one word question like "who?" (ill give an example of that below). Aim for at least 10 questions. (use the back of note's page to help)

You may start finding some answers today, but today and tomorrow will be used to find answers to these questions.

After writing your questions. Take time to underline any words in the passage that you think would be helpful to define.

Day 3/4- We are still in the **observation** step. Today, try to answer all of your questions. Some of them should have short easy to find answers. If you find yourself short of time, try to pick the 4 most important questions you asked and find answers for those. START BY SEARCHING SCRIPTURE FOR THE ANSWERS. After you have looked at Scripture, consider using biblehub.com which is a fantastic resource that has compiled the most popular commentaries all into one place. I also use biblehub.com for some of my word studies. Also, don't underestimate your own ability of reasoning through prayer and meditation on God's Word. You may be able to derive a pretty sound thought as to the answer to some of your questions, especially the "why?" ones.

5- After 4 days of observation, we are finally ready to move on to the **interpretation** stage. When we read Scripture, we are going back in time to read an ancient author, communicating an ancient thought, to an ancient audience, in an ancient culture (Ancient may be too dramatic of a word here, but certainly not if you are speaking about many of the books in the Old Testament).

So how do we go about understanding it today. There are two main ways in which Scripture gets interpreted in modern times:

1. **Moral:** There are many who hold that Scripture is a more modern mythological text, much like we would see in primitive cultures, that explains the creation and moral underpinnings of the world. This perspective renders Scripture at best a significant, albeit outdated, moral guide. It also would render impotent the most important points of the gospel (man's need for a Savior, Christ's death, burial, and resurrection) to be purely myth.
2. **Non-Literal/Allegorical:** Some interpret Scripture as a collection of allegorical stories, meaning that there is deeper meaning than just what the author intended to say. For example; instead of seeing the event of Noah's ark as historically significant, and a strong example of God's hatred of sin, an allegorical interpretation might look at what Noah did and say something like, "in Noah you can see the kind of man God wants to follow him. Noah was patient (waited for the dove), persistent (worked on the boat for a long time), etc." While this might make great sermons, it also allows one to bend Scripture to say anything that fits the current cultural values. In other words, it allows us to read our meaning into scripture (eisegesis) as opposed to extracting the meaning from Scripture (exegesis)
3. **Literal:** Though it is called interpreting Scripture literally, it may not always be exactly a literal meaning. In Song of Solomon, Solomon compares says that his beloved's nose is like the tower of Lebanon. We do not say, "wow, she had a 40 foot nose?!" We understand the author's intent. Really, this version of interpretation is not focused on literal interpretation, but rather "normal" interpretation. To do this, start with the assumption that the author had 1 intended meaning when he penned a verse (though, the Lord may have used the words prophetically in a way the author did not intend). Our job as interpreters is to ask of a text, what did the author mean to say with this text to his audience? This is the form of interpretation that leads to "exegetical/expository" preaching.

Using a literal interpretation answer the following question: What was Luke trying to communicate with Theophilus in Luke 6:1-7? _____

Day 6- Today we move on to **application**. So, if we understood exactly what the author was communicating to his audience thousands of years ago, how do we accurately apply it to ourselves today? We have to extract eternal principles, drag those principles forward to our modern day, and ask how do we live them out? Follow the instructions below to fill in the "day 6" diagram on your note-sheet.

1. In the bottom left corner, write your answer from Day 5. You are noting how Scripture was lived out 2000 years ago.
2. Above that square, extract 2-3 eternal principles that can be understood from the passage (note where that is supported in Scripture to make sure it is not just coming from this passage)
3. Re-write those principles in the modern day side of the diagram.
4. Write 2-3 ways per eternal principle that the principles can be applied in the life of the church (or individuals within it) now. I have listed an example from last week's sermon.







6 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists^a arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers,^b pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

Status quo

Notes

⁷ And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Mark-up key

 God	 Jews/Israel
 Jesus	 Church
 Holy Spirit	Apostles
Any Other Character (example above) - Write their initial then underline Anything in the text that tells you about them	Geographic Location -Underline in Green
 Change of Time	