

Seven tips for getting context

1. (Paragraph): watch for transition words
 2. (Chapter): read before and after your passage
 3. (Chapter): locate your passage in an argument or sequence if there is any
 4. (Chapter): ask yourself, “what would be lost if your chapter disappeared from the book?”
 5. (Chapter): pay attention to how the book is structured. Especially important for Job, Ecclesiastes, Revelation. Also important for Exodus, Daniel, Malachi, Matthew.
 6. (Book): read an introduction to the book.
 7. (Bible): read a good overview of Biblical Theology
 - a. *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*
 - b. *God's Big Picture*
 - c. *Gospel and Kingdom*
 - d. *The Big Picture Story Bible*
-

Core Seminars—How to Study the Bible Class 9: Purpose & Context



“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5.13)

I. The Author's Purpose

Intent is clear:

John 20.30-31

I John 5.13

Intent is NOT clear:

Four questions for NT epistles & OT prophets

1. Who is writing to whom?
2. What is the situation of the author and reader?
3. Are there any problems or issues explicitly identified as things to be addressed?
4. Are certain things repeated or is there a central idea that holds everything together?

Class exercise: 2 Timothy 1:9-10

How To Study the Bible Schedule

- I. Section One: First Things
 - a. What is the Bible & is it Reliable?
 - b. The Inductive Study Method
- II. Section Two: Anatomy of the Bible
 - a. Studying the Old and New Testaments
 - b. Genres I: Narratives and Histories
 - c. Genres II: Poetic and Wisdom Writings
 - d. Genre III: Gospels/Epistles & Prophetic/Apocalyptic Literature
- III. Section III: Interpretive Tools
 - a. Purpose and Context
 - b. Structure and Parallels
 - c. Linking Words
 - d. Repetition
 - e. Using Commentaries & Other Resource
 - f. Studying Difficult Passages and Familiar Passages

When dealing with narratives....

Other books (e.g. Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, etc.)
may prove more difficult ... search for

Context

Novel vs. encyclopedia

Verses, chapters, and books are all connected

We should ask how this passage fits into what comes before
and after

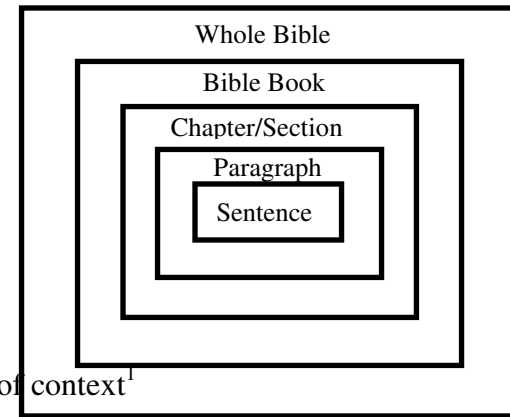


Figure 1: Levels of context¹

Class exercise: John 3.16

Sentence:

Paragraph:

Chapter:

Book:

Bible:

¹ Taken from Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sach, *Digging Deeper: Tools to unearth the Bible's Treasure*, pp. 37, Inter-Varsity Press, 2005