

Workbook: Session One

Introductory Lesson:

Studying the Bible Correctly

ZChurch Online Bible School

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Exegesis vs. Eisegesis – A Guide to Biblical Interpretation

Introduction:

Exegesis and eisegesis represent two distinct approaches to Bible study. This workbook is designed to help you grasp their differences and equip you to approach Scripture thoughtfully and respectfully.

Definitions:

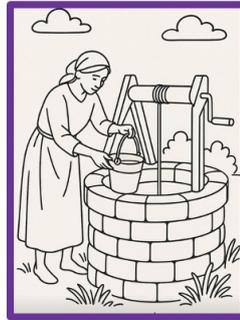
- **Exegesis** (ek-suh-JEE-sis):
 - Drawing meaning out of the text.
 - Seeking original intent and context.

The Two Approaches to Bible Study

EXEGESIS

“To draw out”

Drawing from the Scriptures, its intended meaning.



- **Eisegesis** (eye-suh-JEE-sis):
 - Reading personal interpretations into the text.
 - Ignoring original context and intent.
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The Two Approaches to Bible Study



EISEGESIS

“To lead into”

Reading into the Scriptures personal opinions, biases, or preconceived ideas.

Important Note:

Being “critical,” many associate it solely with being negative or judgmental.

But in the context of reading or thinking, "critical" refers to careful analysis, discernment, and reasoning—something essential for a deeper understanding of Scripture and faith.

Important Quote:

“**Exegesis** allows us to agree with the Bible;
eisegesis seeks to force the Bible to agree with us.”

(GotQuestions.org)

Activity 1: Identify the Approach

Read Colossians 1:15b, 18a, “[Jesus] is the ‘firstborn’ of every creature.”

Exegesis: Affirms Christ’s divinity, supremacy, and eternal nature

Eisegesis: Leads to a reduced view of Christ’s divinity, supremacy, and eternal nature.

Different Translations of Colossians 1:18

- **Voice:** “He is the head of this body, the church. He is the beginning, the first of those to be reborn from the dead, so that *in every aspect, at every view*, in everything—He is first.”
- **WADE:** “He is, too, the Head of the Body, that is, of the Church, since He is its Origin, being the First-born from among the dead, in order that He—none other—may become in all respects pre-eminent.”
- **TPT:** “He is the Head of his body, which is the church. And since he is the beginning and the firstborn heir in resurrection, he is the most exalted One, holding first place in everything.”
- **AMP:** “He is also the head [the life-source and leader] of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will occupy the first place [He will stand supreme and be preeminent] in everything.”

- **WADE:** “He is, too, the Head of the Body, that is, of the Church, since He is its Origin, being the First-born from among the dead, in order that He—none other—may become in all respects pre-eminent.”
- **Knox:** “He too is that head whose body is the Church; it begins with him, since his was the first birth out of death; thus in every way the primacy was to become his.”

Activity 2: Context Matters

Read 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (KJV).

1. How does this verse instruct us regarding our approach to Bible study?
2. List two ways exegesis honors this instruction.

Different Translations of 2 Timothy 2:15

- Weymouth: “Earnestly seek to commend yourself to God as a servant who, because of his straightforward dealing with the word of truth, has no reason to feel any shame.
- WAND: “...a workman who has no need to be ashamed of his work, but gives well proportioned teaching on the word of truth.”
- TPT: “Always be eager to present yourself before God as a perfect and mature minister, without shame, as one who correctly explains the Word of Truth.”

Activity 3: Guarding Against Bias

Reflect on your approach to Scripture. Answer honestly:

“Am I seeking to understand what God has spoken through His Word, or am I trying to make Scripture say what I want to hear?”

Note one instance where personal bias influenced your interpretation.

Write steps to minimize biases.

More Questions to Ask Yourself

1. "Do I read the Bible to discover God's truth, or to confirm what I already believe?"
2. "Am I allowing Scripture to shape my worldview, or am I shaping Scripture to fit my worldview?"
3. "When I read the Bible, do I consider the historical and cultural context, or do I jump straight to personal application?"
4. "Am I willing to let God's Word challenge and correct me, even when it goes against my desires or assumptions?"
5. "Do I handle Scripture responsibly, or do I pick and choose verses that support my opinion?"
6. "When faced with difficult passages, do I dig deeper to understand, or do I ignore or reinterpret them to avoid discomfort?"
7. "Am I more concerned with being right, or with knowing and following God's truth?"
8. "Do I rely on careful biblical study, or do I let emotions, tradition, or personal experience dictate my understanding of Scripture?"
9. "If my interpretation of a verse contradicts the overall message of the Bible, am I willing to reconsider my understanding?"

10. "Am I approaching the Bible with humility and a teachable heart, or with the assumption that I already have all the answers?"

****Note**:** These questions are designed to encourage deep reflection and challenge individuals to assess whether they are engaging in **exegesis (drawing truth from Scripture)** or **eisegesis (reading personal meaning into Scripture)**.

Activity 4: Christ's Example

Read Luke 24:13-35

How did Jesus exemplify exegesis on the road to Emmaus?

Write two key insights you can apply to your study habits.

Activity 5: Consequences of Eisegesis

Check the characteristics of eisegesis you've experienced or observed:

- ✗ Imposes personal opinions rather than drawing out meaning
- ✗ Ignores historical and grammatical context
- ✗ Leads to cherry-picking verses and misusing Scripture
- ✗ Distorts theology and supports false teachings
- ✗ Encourages a self-centered rather than God-centered reading

Reflect: Why is awareness of these tendencies important?

Activity 6: Strengthening Your Study

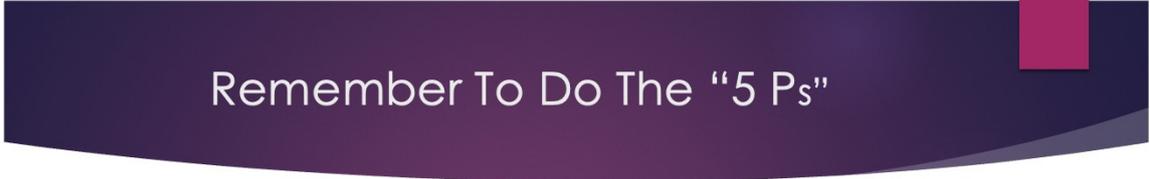
Reflect on how practicing exegesis:

- Prevents misinterpretation
- Clarifies theological truths
- Strengthens faith and discipleship
- Equips you for apologetics (1 Peter 3:15)
- Honors God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

List three specific ways you will commit to practicing exegesis this week:

Closing Reflection:

Summarize your key insights about the difference between exegesis and eisegesis.



Remember To Do The “5 Ps”

Pause
to **P**onder
the **P**assage
then **P**ractise it in
the **P**ower of the Holy Spirit

(Precept Austin, n.d.)

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https://www.preceptaustin.org/colossians_commentaries
7. All Scriptures are from the King James Version (KJV) unless otherwise indicated.