

# Guiding Questions for Bible Reading

## Exegesis: What did it mean then?

### Historical Context

1) What is the **situation** of God's people to which this author is responding?

First look for clues in the text itself, then a Bible dictionary or the introduction in a study Bible or commentary will help.

### Literary Context

2) What is the **purpose** of this particular text, as it fits into its broader context?

Look at and around the text, preferably in a translation arranged into paragraphs.

### Content

3) What is actually **said** in this text?

First look carefully at the text itself, then a good commentary will help.

## Hermeneutics: What does it mean to us?

4) How much of this text **applies** to us in a comparable way?

Remember that the proper control here is careful, accurate exegesis.

5) How might I/we **apply** this word to my/our own situation?

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22)

Eventually, the goal is to consider these issues naturally. But it might be a bit formulaic or messy at first. We want to learn to ask good questions of Biblical texts. You might think of it as 'active listening' to God.

This guide is based on principles from Fee and Stuart's [How to Read the Bible for All its Worth](#).