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Grasping God's Word-Chapter 2

Describe the five steps of the Interpretive Journey

1. Determining what the text meant to the biblical audience.
2. Finding the differences between the biblical audience and us.
3. Finding the theological principle of the text.
4. Knowing how our theological principle fits with the rest of the Bible.
5. Knowing how individual Christians today can live out the theological principles.

What are the guidelines for developing theological principles?

1. Determine how the principle is reflected in the text.
2. We need to see how the principle is timeless and not to a specific situation.
3. Determine how the principle can be applied to all cultures.
4. Determine how the principle corresponds to the teaching of the rest of the Scripture.
5. Determine how the principle is relevant to both biblical and contemporary audience.

What are the differences that determine the width of the river to cross?

What separates us from the biblical audience is the culture, language, customs, time, and the situation they were experiencing. The Old Testament widens the barrier because of the Old Covenant and its laws, such as the ones that deal with animal and grain sacrifices. Our culture today deals with sickness and disease differently because of medicine and readily available clean water for most people whereas infected Israelites had to be separated from others. The New Testament is more relatable to us today in how we worship (we are not required to go to a synagogue) and how to love one another. It also inspires us to act with mercy and kindness. Barriers exist with both of the Testaments and that is why it is important to find the correct meaning by using the steps and guidelines of interpretation.

Habakkuk 1:2-3

How long, O Lord, must I call for help?

But you do not listen!
“Violence is everywhere!” I cry,
But you do not come and save.

I think many Christians today can identify with these verses from Habakkuk as he is addressing his concerns to God. He is struggling to understand all the evil and cruelty that surrounds him being done by his own people. When Habakkuk receives his answer from God, he is frightened by what he is hearing but knows that God is in control. Today and throughout history many Christians have had to deal with the evil and unjust of this world but we know we still have to put our trust in God and depend on him.