

Karen Sweeney

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.

Hi Karen, thank you for completing this assignment. Well done. Your final paragraph shows a good understanding of the challenges in Biblical interpretation, crossing that "principlizing bridge" of several millennia. Your examples also help illustrate that.

Perhaps, if I may suggest, also including a particular Biblical passage to help illustrate the above points. Citing a particular reference, and then explaining, as an example, how it applied 3,500 years ago to the original audience as they understood it, and then explain how we today might understand and apply it.

John 08/04/2025