

## What's the Problem? A Tool to Handle Problem Passages

### 1. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Interpreter

- a. Are you a \_\_\_\_\_? (John 3:16, Rom 3:23, 4:5, 5:8, 6:23; 1 Cor 2:9-14, Eph 2:8-9)
- b. Are you \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_? (1 Cor 3:1-4)
- c. Have you asked for \_\_\_\_\_? (Jas 1:5-8)

### 2. \_\_\_\_\_ the Problem

- a. What does the passage seem to \_\_\_\_\_?
- b. Is there any \_\_\_\_\_ teaching from scripture related to the truth in question?
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ from this passage, what is the \_\_\_\_\_ teaching of Scripture?

### 3. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Passage

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Context
  - i. Who is the \_\_\_\_\_?
  - ii. Who are the \_\_\_\_\_?
  - iii. What is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the book?
  - iv. Where does the passage \_\_\_\_\_ the argument of the book?
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Context
  - i. What do the \_\_\_\_\_ passages teach?
  - ii. Are there \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate the relationship to the immediate context?
  - iii. Does the problematic teaching \_\_\_\_\_ into the immediate context?

### 4. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Passage

- a. What are the key \_\_\_\_\_ in the passage that must be defined?
- b. What is the \_\_\_\_\_ that is being made?
  - i. What \_\_\_\_\_ of argument is it?
  - ii. Are there important \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. "if")?
  - iii. Are there important \_\_\_\_\_?
  - iv. Are there important verb \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?
  - v. Are there \_\_\_\_\_?
- c. Are there informative \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?

5. \_\_\_\_\_ **Your Interpretation to Other Scripture**

- a. Are there other passages that \_\_\_\_\_ the same truth?
- b. Are there other passages that \_\_\_\_\_ the same action?

6. \_\_\_\_\_ **What the Passage Teaches**

- a. What was the teaching or message to the \_\_\_\_\_?
- b. Is there a truth that should be applied to \_\_\_\_\_?

**Rules of Thumb**

1. The Bible, properly understood, is internally consistent and is the best interpreter of itself. Don't use the crutch of "paradox" as an excuse for retaining conflicting interpretations.
2. Don't let the confusing passages confuse the simple passages. Cling to the simple passages. Hold the confusing passages in abeyance until through further study, you come to a proper interpretation.
3. Context –
  - a. Given the option of complete mastery of the original language, or complete mastery of the context, take the context every time.
  - b. Take the "text" out of "context", and you will be left with a "con".
  - c. The three most important things related to interpreting the Bible are context, context, and context.
4. "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.

- Dr. David L. Cooper (1886-1965)