

KNOWING SCRIPTURE

By R. C. Sproul

This is very, very helpful book. I do not say this lightly. Hermeneutics (the art and science of interpretation) is one of the most practical studies we can involve ourselves in. You will find the material in this book not only useful, but also interesting. The book is easy to read and the examples are quite beneficial. I have tried to prepare assignments that will be challenging without being too demanding. Basically, I am interested in knowing if you understood the content in each chapter.

Wendell



Here is how it works:

1. Included in this packet are all the homework assignments.
2. The goal is one homework assignment every 1 or 2 weeks.
3. Turn in assignments as you complete them – not all at once! Place them in the wall pocket under the bulletin board.
4. I will review your homework and return to you by placing it in your mail folder. Be sure to check it each Sunday.
5. Completing opportunities like this – be it the book club or a home group study – will be taken into consideration when selecting teachers and leaders in the church.
6. After this book, you will be afforded the opportunity to continue on with another. I have enough books waiting to keep us all busy for some time.
7. Learn. Benefit. Enjoy.

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Knowing Scripture Homework # 1

Name _____

' As much as possible, use your own words rather than just copying from the book.

1. Read the Forward, Preface and Chapter 1.
2. What would you say to someone who claims the Bible is too hard to understand?
3. What would you say to someone who claims the Bible is boring?
4. The author refers to the "Reformers" on page 15. How familiar are you with the Reformers and the issues of the Reformation?
 Not very familiar: I need some instruction on this
 Somewhat familiar, but still ignorant or unclear on many things
 Pretty familiar: I know most of the important people and issues
 Very familiar: I have a good grasp of the history and theology
5. What would Martin Luther do when he came across a difficult passage?
6. The problem is not that the Bible is dull or difficult, it is rather:
7. The significance of the Greek term *theopneust* (God-breathed) is
 - A. The author of the Bible is only God, not man
 - B. The theory of inspiration can be understood
 - C. The source of Scripture is God
 - D. The Holy Spirit speaks to you when you read the Bible
8. What is the point the author makes about "transcendent perspective" on page 23?
9. What is the problem of pragmatism?

10. Why is the Bible practical?

11. Contrast a "Sensuous Christian" to a "Biblical Christian"

12. Read the 3 paragraphs on page 28 twice.

13. Who said, "He [the devil] is engaged against the Bible and hates every word of it."

- A. Jonathan Edwards
- B. Martin Luther
- C. Lee Trevino
- D. Bill Monroe

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

15. What sentence or phrase stood out that is worth remembering? (example: "...every American has an opinion to offer about the Bible, and yet so few have ever studied it." Page 18).

16. List some new words you encountered:

17. Something not clear? Point me to it (include page and paragraph).

18. Rate this chapter (note both columns).

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Very helpful | A. Easy to understand |
| B. Somewhat helpful | B. About at the right level |
| C. Not very helpful | C. A little difficult |

19. Rate this homework (note both columns).

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Very helpful | A. Easy to understand |
| B. Somewhat helpful | B. About at the right level |
| C. Not very helpful | C. A little difficult |

Knowing Scripture Homework # 2

Name _____

' As much as possible, use your own words rather than just copying from the book. Also note that some answers will have to be found outside the book itself.

1. Read Chapter 2. As you read, be sure to look up all the words you don't know in a dictionary.

2. Define "vernacular."

3. What was the "Diet of Worms"?

- A. A council meeting at a city named Worms
- B. A diet that Martin Luther was forced to eat while in prison
- C. A decree by the pope to punish the reformers
- D. A controversial method of interpreting Scriptures

4. Luther sparked great controversy because he believed

- A. The pope had as much authority as the church councils
- B. The Scriptures had more authority than the pope or church councils
- C. The church councils had as much authority as the pope
- D. The Scriptures never err, but the pope had the final say on interpretation

5. What language did Luther translate the Bible into? _____

6. The Council of Trent was considered

- A. a reformation
- B. a counter reformation
- C. the very thing that saved the church from a great split

7. The Council of Trent attacked

- A. the pope's authority to provide a final interpretation of the Bible
- B. the proposal that the Bible was not the Word of God
- C. the church council's authority to provide a final interpretation of the Bible
- D. the proposal that the Bible was the Word of God
- E. the legitimacy of private interpretation of the Bible

8. On what point did the reformers and the council of Trent agree?

- A. the Scriptures are not to be distorted
- B. the Scriptures are not to be translated into the vernacular
- C. the Scriptures are to be translated into the vernacular

9. What was the Inquisition?

10. How did the Roman Catholic church justify its persecution of the Reformers?

11. Luther's "priesthood of all believers" doctrine teaches

- A. everyone, regardless of training, is equipped to teach the Bible
- B. there is no distinction between the clergy and laity
- C. the church does not need overseers or teachers
- D. all of the above
- E. none of the above

12. An over-reaction against the Council of Trent's mentality can be seen in

- A. the church split between the East and West in 1054
- B. the anti-organized church sentiments of the Jesus Movement
- C. the establishment of seminaries and Bible colleges
- D. modern day translations of the Bible

13. TRUE or FALSE? Subjectivism takes place when the truth of a statement is not merely expanded or applied to the subject, but when it is absolutely determined by the subject.

14. In the statement above, circle the verb that gives the sentence its ultimate punch.

15. Any verse in the Bible can have more than one _____
but not more than one _____.

16. What is the difference between exegesis and eisogesis?

Exegesis =

Eisogesis =

17. The author says, "...our views need the sounding boards and honing steel of other people's research and expertise." List a theological view you once had that you either modified or abandoned because you "checked it out" with someone more trained in the Scriptures (can be a person you talked with, a book you read, a sermon you heard, etc.)

18. Home Bible studies can be a mixed blessing. What are the dangers? What should our church do to protect itself? (Be as specific as you care to be).

Knowing Scripture Homework # 3

Name _____

1. Read Chapter 3. Look up all words you don't know.
2. Make a comparison: Oliver Wendell Holmes is to the Constitution of the U.S.
 - a. what the liberals are to the Bible
 - b. what the Pope is to the authority of the church
 - c. what the Reformers are to private interpretation of the Bible
3. The primary principle of biblical hermeneutics is the _____.
Explain it in one or two sentences.
4. The second principle of biblical hermeneutics is called _____.
5. TRUE or FALSE? The natural meaning of a passage is to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax, and context. This is what it means to interpret a passage literally, that is, as literature.
6. How would genre analysis be helpful in interpreting a passage of scripture?
 - ' You interpret poetry differently than legal documents or comics; the same principle applies to types of literature found in the Bible.
 - ' The book of Revelation is to be understood in the same way as the book of Proverbs, the letters of Paul, and the prophecies of Jeremiah.
 - ' I am not sure.
7. Give an example of a hyperbole in the Bible, other than what is mentioned by the book.
8. Give an example of a metaphor in the Bible, other than what is mentioned by the book.
9. What is the value of using the *quadriga method* of interpretation? (*be careful*)

10. The third principle of biblical hermeneutics is to utilize the grammatico-historical method. Explain this method in one or two sentences.

11. Is there value in knowing the author of a book, the circumstances in which the book was written, when it was written, who the readers were, and other background information? Why or why not?

12. What is a problem with “hapax legomena.”

13. On page 60 the author refers to “higher critics”. How familiar are you with the concept of *biblical higher criticism*.

___ I don't have a clue

___ Not very familiar: I need some instruction on this

___ Very familiar: I have a better-than-average grasp of this subject

14. The Bible contains numerous grammatical errors. How would you explain these if you are trying to defend the Bible's inerrancy.

15. List the 3 major principles of biblical hermeneutics.

A.

B.

C.

16. Read the last paragraph of this chapter at least twice. Make sure you know AND understand the 3 principles.

Knowing Scripture Homework # 4

Name _____

1. Read chapter 4. (NOTE: The next four assignments are taken from chapter 4).

2. In the previous chapter the author established 3 principles of interpretation. As a quick review, write down those 3 principles.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

3. The author begins chapter 4 by saying that these 3 principles serve as a basis upon which 10 *practical rules of interpretation* rest upon. Write down the 10 rules (feel free to paraphrase them, or to put them in your own words if you wish).

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

4. "Sensus literalis" means:

- a. the literal sense; interpreting Scriptures literally
- b. interpreting Scriptures through our 5 senses

5. Have you ever practiced “lucky-dipping?” _____ Want to tell me about it?

6. What would you say to someone who argues that “luckydipping” is a legitimate means to determine the will of God?

7. What does the author mean when he suggests that the Bible should be read like any other book?

8. Regarding Rudolf Bultmann and his “existential” hermeneutics:

- A. I never heard any of this before, and I don’t really have a clue
- B. I am a little bit familiar with the issue, but don’t really know too much about it
- C. I know some, and know what the author is referring to
- D. I’m pretty familiar with Bultmann and his approach to Scriptures

9. TRUE or FALSE? “Reading between the lines” for the sake of trying to “crawl into the skin” of characters in a biblical narrative can be useful.

10. Imagine that you are preaching a sermon on the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). In order to “flesh out” its impact, you utilize the Empathetic Method in a series of questions you present to the congregation for consideration. For instance, you might rhetorically ask, “What do you think was going on in the woman’s mind when she first saw Jesus? What expression do you think He gave her?” Now, you take it from here: List a number of other questions from that story that could help your listeners “feel” the story, and thus better appreciate its meaning.

Knowing Scripture Homework # 5

Name _____

1. Read the section on Rule # 3 again (pages 68-74).

2. Epistles are

A. Narratives

B. Gospels

C. Wives of the apostles

D. Letters

E. Books with an unknown author

F. Prophets

3. Match the following: **N**arratives or **D**idactic (If a didactic passage is found in a narrative then answer it as a didactic).

_____ Teaching

_____ Recording of events

_____ Doctrine

_____ Romans

_____ Book of Acts

_____ Mark 2:1-12

_____ Exhortation

_____ Descriptive truth

_____ Prescriptive truth

_____ Galatians

_____ Matt 5-7, Sermon on the Mount

_____ Describes what happened

_____ Explains what happened

_____ Pastoral Epistles

4. What would you say to someone who claims that the Gospels have more authority than the Epistles?

A. The Gospels have less authority because they are plagued with errors

B. One would have to admit that the gospels do have more authority

C. The claim assumes that one can position one apostle over another apostle

D. The Gospels have authority because the church canonized them

5. Although this book was written 24 years ago, the author was on top of the WWJD craze. Instead of WWJD, we should probably change the bumper sticker to say:

6. Why is "What would Jesus Do" the wrong question?

7. The author points out that we should be careful with following the examples of Biblical characters because sometimes their examples were actually sinful, such as, David's affair with Bathsheba. Name a couple other examples.

8. In Acts chapter 1, we see that the Apostles chose Matthias to replace Judas as an Apostle. What was the method they used to make this important decision?

9. In light of this, what would be wrong with rolling dice to choose elders for a church?

10. How would you answer someone who claims that we can't really know God's truths because human language is too limited?

11. In Nehemiah 4:21 we read, "So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out." However, stars do not really come out – they are above us all the time, we just can't see them in the day because of the brightness of the sun. Therefore the Bible must be in error. Refute this conclusion.

12. Rate this chapter (note both columns).

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Very helpful | A. Easy to understand |
| B. Somewhat helpful | B. About at the right level |
| C. Not very helpful | C. A little difficult |

13. Rate the homework over the last few chapters (note both columns).

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Very helpful | A. Easy to understand |
| B. Somewhat helpful | B. About at the right level |
| C. Not very helpful | C. A little difficult |

Knowing Scripture Homework # 6

Name _____

1. Read the section on Rules #4 and #5 again (pages 75-85).
2. Write down these 2 rules of interpretation (feel free to paraphrase them, or to put them in your own words if you wish).

a) _____

b) _____

3. The following are important statements the author uses to punch home his points. Locate them in the book. Know them. Understand them.

Rule #4

A. ...is a possible inference from the text, but not a _____ one.

B. The former statement is merely the _____ of a command; the latter is a positive _____.

C. When an implication is drawn that is contradictory to what is explicitly stated, the implication must be _____.

D. ...interpret the obscure in light of the _____.

E. Sometimes the _____ of the controversy causes us to lose that common sense.

Rule #5

F. Misuse of _____ and misunderstandings go hand in hand.

G....it is extremely important for us to study language in the context of its _____.

H. Countless controversies have developed and heresies born simply by failing to see the _____ words often have.

4. On page 77 the author takes the opportunity to discuss some controversial passages that divide Calvinists from Arminians. How familiar are you with these two views?
 - a. I am pretty ignorant of the whole subject
 - b. I am only slightly familiar
 - c. I know a little bit about the differences, but never really studied it much
 - d. I am fairly well versed in this subject
 - e. I have spent a lot of effort on this and would consider myself knowledgeable

5. Why do scholars incorporate technical terms? (Answer found in Rule #5).

6. Go to a dictionary and offer a definition on “lexicography” (found on page 80).

7. TRUE or FALSE? We should always define words in terms of their original meanings.

8. The term “justify” may mean: 1) to restore to a state of reconciliation, and 2) to _____.

9. The reformers stated the formula, “Justification is by _____
_____.

10. Do you see the author’s point on the importance of properly understanding the meaning of words? _____

11. An evangelist on the radio preaches about the power of God. He refers to the Greek word, “dunamis” to explain that God’s power is mighty [this is true]. He then says that our own English word “dynamite” comes from this Greek word [this also is true]. He then preaches a sermon showing the similarities between God’s power and dynamite. What is the problem with this? (Don’t answer this “theologically”; answer it “exegetically” using the principles from this chapter -- *one sentence could do it!*).

12. What point in this lesson made the greatest impression upon you?

Knowing Scripture Homework # 7

Name _____

1. Read the section on Rules #6 through #10 again (pages 85 to end of chapter).
2. What is the 6th Rule?
3. Parallelisms (check all that apply)
 - ' consists of poetry where the words rhyme
 - ' involves a rhythm of thoughts
 - ' involves 2 or more corresponding sentences (or clauses)
 - ' consists of three basic types: synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic
4. The author uses the Lord's Prayer as an example of how parallelisms are used. Did you find anything here that helped you understand the Lord's Prayer better? _____
5. What is the 7th Rule?
6. Proverbs (check all that apply)
 - " are moral absolutes
 - " express practical advice
 - " are commands that are to be applied to life's situations
 - " are catchy expressions, truisms
7. What is the difference between apodictic law and casuistic law? (briefly)
8. What is the 8th Rule?
9. The legalists destroy the _____ and the _____
destroy the letter.

10. What does antinomian mean?

- a. grace frees us from obeying God's commands
- b. grace is not sufficient, we also need the law to be saved
- c. man needs both law and grace

11. If you murder someone you violate the _____ of the law; if you hate someone you violate the _____ of the law.

12. What is the 9th Rule?

13. Parables (check all that apply)

- ' are concrete stories based on life situations
- ' are too confusing to benefit from
- ' are pithy stories (another word for pithy is: _____)
- ' are riddles
- ' are allegories filled with mystical, detailed symbols that must be uncovered
- ' generally have one, or possibly two, main points

14. What is the 10th Rule?

15. Read the first paragraph of Rule #10 on page 97 at least one more time – It is very important.

16. An example of an Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled to the letter is:

17. An example of an Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled in a broader sense is:

18. Define apocalyptic. What book in the New Testament is apocalyptic?

19. The main lesson in dealing with predictive prophecy is not to avoid it, but to be very, very _____.

Knowing Scripture Homework # 8

Name _____

1. Read chapter 5.

2. True or False?

- T F The Bible reflects the culture of its day
- T F The Bible was dictated directly by God without any reference to customs
- T F Having some understanding of first-century Palestine would prove helpful
- T F The human writers of the Bible had no influence upon the words written
- T F The Bible is inspired by God

3. On page 104 the author states, "The problem [of the culture gap] becomes more acute when I realize that not only is the Bible conditioned by its cultural setting, but I am conditioned by my cultural setting as well." This is a very important point that must not be lost when attempting to understand the Scriptures. To help me keep this perspective I have purposed to remember the following illustration. "It is like 2 goldfish looking at each other in separate goldfish bowls." The point is, it can be difficult to understand the "life setting" of one culture while existing in another.

4. Offer your best argument on the ritual of foot washing: should it be practiced in the church today or not?

5. Did you find his examples on the "hair-covering" passage helpful in understanding his points about *principles* and *customs*? _____. Any comments?

6. T F Language is an example of something that is capable of reaculturation.

7. What is reaculturation? (You can probably figure out a definition from the way the word is used by the author).

- A. Changing one culture into another
- B. Restoring a country's original culture
- C. The study of comparing different cultures
- D. Adapting something from one culture to another culture
- E. Trying to understand another culture

8. We must be careful to distinguish between institutions the Bible merely _____ as existing, and those which the Bible positively _____, _____, and _____.

9. Some time ago I presented a teaching on the responsibility and qualifications of elders. Afterwards a young visitor came after me, wondering why I was so "sexist." She wanted to know why we would exclude women, "after all, we are all equal." Generally, one can quickly answer these sorts of questions by simply quoting some of the verses that specifically apply. However, these verses don't have any impact on those who believe they were conditioned by the culture in which they were written. In other words, when Paul wrote that women are not to teach men, or exercise authority over men, that these words only applied to his culture and not to ours. From what you have learned in this chapter, how would you answer this? (There is one verse in particular that would address this very issue.)

10. Rate this chapter.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Very helpful | A. Easy to understand |
| B. Somewhat helpful | B. About at the right level |
| C. Not very helpful | C. A little difficult |

**Knowing Scripture Homework # 9
FINAL ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS BOOK!**

Name _____

1. Read chapter 6. Because this book was written over 20 years ago, his list of recommend resources tends to be a little dated – some of the books may even be out of print. Nevertheless, the advice he offers in this chapter is very helpful.

2. On page 114 the author lists 3 translation methods. These methods have taken on newer names in recent years. “Verbal accuracy” is also known as “literal”. “Concept accuracy” is now referred to as “dynamic equivalent.” And “paraphrase” is also known as “free.”

3. The author neglects to mention another weakness of the “verbal accuracy” method. A translation may be faithful in translating the Greek to English, word-for-word, but could actually fail to convey the true essence of the author’s point. One example of this can be found in 2 Corinthians 5:16, SO FROM NOW ON WE REGARD NO ONE FROM A WORLDLY POINT OF VIEW. THOUGH WE ONCE REGARDED CHRIST IN THIS WAY, WE DO SO NO LONGER. In a literal translation (King James and NASB), “Worldy point of view” would be rendered “according to the flesh.” But “according to the flesh” would risk distorting the author’s point. The phrase is ambiguous. Is it the person who is *being known* who is “according to the flesh?” If so, then this would mean something like “by their outward appearance.” Or is the person who is “knowing” doing so “according to the flesh,” which would mean “from a worldly point of view”? The context is obvious, and a dynamic equivalent translation better captures the author’s intended meaning in this case.

However, I personally remain a proponent of literal translations, like the NASB and the ESV, for I believe that they are better for serious study.

4. List and identify the translations that you use.

A. Literal B. Dynamic Equivalent C. Free D. Unsure

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. Do you agree with the author’s opposition to running commentary in annotated Bibles (bottom of page 115)? Why or why not?

6. Always remember that every translation involves interpretation. (Say it out loud and remember this!). On page 116 the author makes this point very clear under the heading "Translations and Commentary." Read that section one more time.

7. List 2 or 3 main points to keep in mind when shopping for a commentary.

A.

B.

C.

8. List concordances, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias and atlases that you may own. (Don't be embarrassed if you don't own any of these – you won't get yelled at. I am just trying to determine what resources populate your library).

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

9. I highly encourage you to build your personal library. From time to time I may prod you to purchase such a useful tool (especially after I review your list above). You should consider such a purchase no less than twice a year. Denny Laub is a good source for these books – put them on your birthday and Christmas wish lists.

10. Rate this chapter.

A. Very helpful

B. Somewhat helpful

C. Not very helpful

11. Rate this book.

A. Very helpful

B. Somewhat helpful

C. Not very helpful

12. Other comments about this book or the homework: