

## **The Interpretive Journey**

Sure we can read the Bible but how do we really come about studying and applying any given text to our lives? Below you will find a strategy that is adapted from *Grasping God's Word* by Duvall and Hayes. These are five easy steps to take in interpreting and applying the Bible!

### **1. Observe it!**

In any text, you will need to observe, observe and observe some more! In this step, read over the passage or verse several times and observe the grammar and analyze all significant words. How does this passage fit into the larger context of the chapter or book that this verse(s) is in? What did this passage mean to the original audience to whom it was written?

### **2. Identify the differences**

The original text was written for people over 2,000 years ago. While the words still apply, in principle, to us, it is wise to observe the differences between the Biblical audience and us today. Some of the differences in any given text can include: culture, language, situation, time etc. What are some of the differences in the passage you are studying?

### **3. Find the principle**

What is the theological principle in the text? Taking what you learned in steps 1 and 2, bring it all together with a principle that is reflected in the text, is timeless and not tied to a specific situation, isn't culturally bound, corresponds to the teaching of the rest of Scripture and is relevant to both the biblical and the contemporary audience. If you can't come up with a "good" principle right away, don't worry! Keep working at it!

### **4. Consult the Bible**

Taking the principle you came up with, look throughout the Bible to ensure that your principle lines up with all of Scripture. We see all over the New Testament and specifically in Matthew 22 that the Bible is without error. If your principle, at all, contradicts Scripture, it is time to revisit your steps!

### **5. Apply it!**

After completing steps 1-4, you are now ready to take all of this information and apply it to your life here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! What does this truth mean to you? How can it change your life today?