

“Understanding the Meaning of a Text”

- **Observation: What does it say?**
- **Interpretation: What does it mean?**
- **Correlation: What other verses explain it?**
- **Application: What will I DO about it?**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no FRUIT, while every branch that does bear FRUIT He prunes so that it will be even more FRUITFUL. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear FRUIT by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear FRUIT unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much FRUIT; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much FRUIT, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has LOVED me, so have I LOVED you. Now remain in my LOVE. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my LOVE, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His LOVE. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: LOVE each other as I have LOVED you. Greater LOVE has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear FRUIT- FRUIT that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: LOVE each other.”
- John 15:1-17

Problem verse:

“If anyone doesn't remain in me, he's like a branch that's thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”
- John 15:6

Some Basic Rules of Interpretation:

1. I consider the historical context.

- Chapters 13 to 17 = Jesus' final words of comfort to His disciples before His arrest.

“I've told you these things so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”
- John 15:11

2. I must define key words.

- “Love” = mentioned 9 times. “Fruit” = mentioned 9 times.
- “Fruit” & “Fruitful” = 45 times in New Testament
- What is the meaning of “fruit” in this context?

3. I must interpret unclear words with clear ones.

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” - Jn. 15:4

- Bearing fruit is produced by remaining in Christ.

“This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”
- John 15:8

- Bearing fruit brings glory to God.

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”
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- Bearing fruit will give me complete joy.

4. I must look for the obvious meaning.

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you!”
- John 15:7

- Remaining in Christ produces answered prayers.

“I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” - John 15:13

- Answered prayer brings glory to God.

“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete!”
- John 15:24

- Answered prayer gives me complete joy.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name!”
- John 15:16

- I bear fruit by asking in prayer.

My Personal Application.

“Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house upon the rock”
- Matthew 7:24

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