

# Week Two: Understanding

## Interpretation:

- “How to Interpret the Bible” on FoodForYourSoul.net
- Hermeneutics Test in “Forms and Surveys” in the resource library on TreasuringGod.com
- *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* by Fee and Stewart.

## Normal Use of Language

## Flow of thought

## Questions

## Commentaries

E-sword software

[www.doctordavet.com](http://www.doctordavet.com) for more commentaries

## Recommended Commentaries

I am often asked what commentaries I recommend. My strategy regarding commentaries is as follows:

- 1) Get some kind of commentary on the entire Bible. The list below is in order from least expensive (free) to most expensive (over \$1000). NOTE: I do not recommend buying any set without first borrowing some volumes from your pastor to see how you like them.
- 2) When you study a particular book, find out from your pastor which are the best 3 or 4 commentaries on that book and purchase those (or borrow them from your pastor or church library).

### Commentaries on the Entire Bible:

#### 1. Free electronic commentaries

E-Sword in a free Bible program that includes numerous commentaries ([www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net)), including commentaries on the entire Bible by Albert Barnes, John Wesley, Adam Clarke, Jamieson Faucet and Brown, John Gill, and Matthew Henry. (Clarke and Wesley are from a more Arminian perspective and the others more Calvinistic). All are good commentaries, but when a single individual writes a commentary on the entire Bible it is generally not as reliable as sets in which the commentary for each book is written by a different scholar with special expertise in that book. The above commentaries are also quite brief and unhelpful in many passages. Of those listed above my favorite is Matthew Henry for his wonderful devotional insights. (This program also provides the entire 10-volume Keil and Delitzsch set on the OT. That set is outstanding, although it is written for scholars and is not easy reading at all).

The free, whole-Bible commentary that I have found the most helpful has been John Calvin's. It is available at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/commentaries.i.html>.

#### 2. The NIV Study Bible notes

These notes are brief, but they are exceptionally helpful, particularly in the Old Testament. Even if I have 20 scholarly commentaries on my shelf for a particular Old Testament book I will always consult the NIV Study Bible notes first. The notes for each book are written by a different scholar with expertise in that particular book, and they are a great way avoid "re-inventing the wheel" in your study. Most study Bibles give commentary from the perspective of a single individual. But when you see something in an NIV Study Bible note you can be fairly confident that it is something that is generally accepted and not in dispute among conservative scholars. A copy of the NIV Study Bible can be purchased quite inexpensively from Wal Mart.

#### 3. The Expositor's Bible Commentary edited by Frank Gaebelin.

Each book in this set is written by a different scholar. It is more detailed than the above commentaries, but still quite brief. The one on Matthew is exceptional – one of the best commentaries out on Matthew (written by D.A. Carson). This set on the entire Bible is available on CD ROM for less than \$100.

#### 4. New Testament Commentary set by William Hendriksen and Simon Kistemaker

When I lend my commentaries to people I usually give them 8 or 10 on the book they are studying so they can pick which one is most helpful. *Almost always* they pick the volume from the New Testament Commentary series. These commentaries are much more detailed than the Expositor's set, they are scholarly and yet easy to understand, and very reasonably priced. Most are written by a single author (Hendriksen) and the rest by Kistemaker after Hendriksen died. Volumes can be purchased individually or as a set. The set of 12 (covering the entire New Testament) can be purchased from CBD for \$200 (as of August of 2007). This is an excellent price (retail would be \$700). A software version is available for \$160.

#### 5. The Pillar New Testament Commentary set

This set is currently being developed. Each book is by a different scholar. So far there are only 8 of them out (covering 11 NT books). These commentaries are absolutely outstanding. I *highly* recommend them. This set is available at Monergism.com for \$235 (as of August of 2007).

#### 6. New International Commentary on the Old Testament

Easily the best commentary set available on the OT. 22 large volumes, each written by a different scholar. Extremely helpful. CBD has them for \$600, which is about half the price most places have them for right now (August of 2007).

#### 7. New International Commentary on the New Testament

17 large volumes covering 24 books, each written by a different scholar. Extremely helpful. Highly recommended. CBD has them for \$450. (August of 2007).

Summarize the following passage in less than 50 words. (Divide it into paragraphs first).

### **Colossians 1:15-23**

**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.**

In a couple sentences, summarize this text in less than 25 words:

**James 3:13-18 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.**

## Recommended Method (Bookmark)

### Prepare

#### **S.I.O.U.S.**

**Seek.** Ask God to seek after you and draw you near to Him.

**Incline.** Ask God to incline your heart in the direction of what you are about to read, so that it is welcomed and absorbed in your heart.

**Open.** Pray: “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.”

**Undivided.** Ask for an undistracted heart so you can focus.

**Satisfy.** Pray: “Satisfy me in this time with your unfailing love.”

### Respond to Scripture

Read a paragraph carefully four or five times. Think deeply, beyond the surface. Write down the answers to these questions:

- List of everything the passage tells you about God.
- List everything it tells you about yourself.
- List any:
  - commands to obey
  - promises to trust
  - new ways God wants you to think

After you have pondered all that you have written, pick whichever one or two strike you as the most important for today. Ask the following questions about those one or two:

- How would my life be different if this were explosively alive in my inner being – I *really* believed it?
- What would I gain?
- How would life be better for the people around me if this were real in my life?
- What problems result when I forget what’s in this verse?
- Why is God showing me this *now* - on this day?
- What do I need to confess?
- What should I be grateful for? (Try to think of a good praise song to express your joy over that thing.)

Chapter 1	Section Summary	Chapter Summary
<p>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.</p>	<p>Greetings to the 12 tribes</p>	<p>Persevere in trials so they bring you to maturity.</p> <p>Don't blame God for temptation, and don't look to sin for good. Good comes only from God's Word. So, having shed anger, receive the Word, remembering &amp; doing it (tongue, love, and purity).</p>
<p>2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.</p> <p>5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.</p>	<p>Consider trials joy because they work perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work (maturity).</p> <p>God will freely grant wisdom but only if you ask with persevering faith.</p>	
<p>9 The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. 10 But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.</p>	<p>Those made lowly by trials should boast in highness, and the rich in the lowliness of his impending death.</p>	
<p>12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.</p>	<p>The one who perseveres gets life.</p>	
<p>13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.</p>	<p>Don't blame temptation on God. The culprit is deceived desire, resulting in death.</p>	
<p>16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.</p>	<p>Don't be deceived by the bait. Good only comes from God, whose desire for you to have life never changes.</p>	

**James 1**

Darrell Ferguson

<p><b>19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man’s anger does not bring about the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, having gotten rid of all filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save your soul.</b></p>	<p>Listen instead of getting angry so you can receive the Word.</p>	
<p><b>22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.</b></p>	<p>But receiving means more than just listening. Don’t be a forgetful hearer, but a doer.</p>	
<p><b>26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.</b></p>	<p>And doing means controlling the tongue, caring for the needy, and remaining unspotted by the world.</p>	

