

LEADER NOTES FOR A VERSE ANALYSIS

LAKEFIELD MINISTRIES

This section is not required reading to complete this type of study. This section is for reference only. It is here to help study leaders and those who may not have a lot experience reading or studying the bible.

What is a Verse Analysis?

A Verse Analysis is the study of an individual verse of the Bible.

The Best Second Step in Master the Basics

Learning to do a Verse Analysis helps lay the basic foundation for Bible Study.

Verse Analysis is a great second step in completing Master the Basics. You can pick a verse you know to study or you can pick a verse from the Book Study you completed in the step before. Learning to do a Verse Analysis is the best setup for learning to interpret the Bible.

This lesson starts the process of developing three key disciplines:

1. Determining exactly what a verse says
2. Determining what a verse means
3. The importance of context

What a Verse Says

When you study the Bible, it is important to be able to identify what a verse actually says, not what someone says it says. When you are reading God's Word, you are 'going to the source. You are going directly to what God says.

Mike McFerren, author of *Master the Basics*, shares, "After years of studying and engaging in conversations with people about the Bible, It seems almost uncanny how easy it is for us, when asked what a verse says, to introduce our own spin, our own experience, our own interpretation, or a personal application of a verse, into the answer.

It is as important to determine what a verse is not saying as well as what the verse is saying.

What a Verse Means

Determining what a verse means, as opposed to what it says, is dependent on a couple key considerations.

- 1) The actual meaning of a verse is determined by its original intent
- 2) Who is speaking
- 3) To whom are they speaking
- 4) What is the circumstance or circumstances around what was written

Determining meaning will be covered in more detail in the mini-lessons that cover the subjects of translation, interpretation, and application, all part of *Master the Basics*. You will get started in this study. It will get easier once the mini-lessons are complete.

Expanding the context

The third discipline that is very important when a Verse Analysis study is that of expanding the context of the verse. Expanding context in this instance refers to expanding the scope of the study to the verse before and after the verse being analyzed.

Applying the Principle of Expanding Context means to continue to expand the context of the verse being analyzed. You start with the verse before and the verse immediately following the one studied to see how it sheds light on the verse being analyzed. You can continue to do this, expanding the context to include more and more verses before and more and more verses after until the context of the passage to see how it helps build understanding of the verse. However, you don't need to study the entire Bible to understand one verse. Usually, the surrounding verses will do the trick.

As you will learn as you go through the mini-lessons on interpreting the Bible, the Bible does not contradict itself. There may be instances where it appears that a single verse on its own does not make sense. It can seem inconsistent with a loving God. Expanding the context of the study helps address these instances and gives you a better understanding of the verse in discussion.

This does not mean it is necessary to study the entire Bible every time you study a verse. Usually considering a verse or two surrounding the verse being studied or expanding backward and forward to the beginning or end of a chapter gives you plenty of insight.

The key is to simply stay on task. If you are studying a verse, expand the context as needed to get the idea of what it says in context. Listing your questions and pursuing answers in further study will help you gain understanding of a specific verse.

(Step 1) Pick a verse, any verse you like

You can pick any verse to study that you like. The approach for analyzing the verse is the same. You can pick a verse you know, ask someone for a suggestion, or pick one that stood out to you when you did completed the Book Study.

(Step 2) Read the verse several times

This is pretty self-explanatory. Reading a verse 5 to 10 times or more should do it. You may even try recording yourself reading it several times and playing it back. It will give you a sense of how things like tone, voice inflection, and volume seem to impact what a verse is saying.

(Step 3) Write out or type the verse

Double or triple space so you have plenty of room to make notes.

Try breaking up the verse based on its natural grammatical sense and sentence structure. See the following example using. See the sample Verse Analysis on 2 Chronicles 7:14 at the end of this section.

(Step 4) What does the verse say?

Do your best on this one. This step can be tough. Do your best to write out what you think the verse says.

The reason it is difficult is because sometimes, 'it says what it says'. There is no way to put it except the way it is written. If that is the case, do not worry. Leave it at that.

What you want to do is write out in your own words what you believe the verse says, then compare it to the actual verse to make sure you are correct. This effort will help you 'get into alignment' your thoughts and how you would describe something with God's Word.

The tendency is to read a verse, then believe it says things that it really does not. This steps helps you ensure that, even unintentionally, you do not add what you have heard others say it says, what you think it means, or how you or someone else may apply the verse.

A couple final thoughts on this:

- It may help to list what it says as bullet points.
- No need to elaborate. Stick to the facts.

(Step 5) Examine the context

Begin by reading the verse immediately before and the verse immediately after the verse you are studying. How do these verses shed light on the verse being studied?

You can expand the context by including more verses before and after. You can expand the context to include what appears to be natural breaks in a passage. You can go all the way to the beginning or end of a chapter. You can expand the context as far as you like, all the way to the beginning and end of a book. Do what makes sense to help you study the verse you are studying.

Write out what you learn.

(Step 6) What does the verse mean?

Take your best shot at this. You will learn more about determining meaning, "interpretation", as you complete the mini-lessons on interpretation and application included in Master the Basics.

For now, see what you can do to write out what the verse means.

What was the original intent?

What did the writer or speaker mean when it was written?

What did the verse mean to the people who heard it?

(Step 7) How can you apply this verse to your life and circumstances?

Take your best shot at this, too. It may be a problem

You will learn more about applying the Bible to your life when you go through the mini-lesson on Application Basics.

(Step 8) Questions

What questions do you have as a result of studying this verse?

List them all. If something does not “sit right”, something does not make sense, or makes you wonder, make a note of it. AS you learned when you completed the Book Study, listing all of your questions and then seeking answers is a great way to learn and grow.

“Questions are the welcome mat for the greatest learning experiences” -Mike McFerren, author of Master the Basics

(Step 9) Summarize

Write out a summary of your study. You may include things like why you are studying this verse, what you thought it meant before you studied it, what you learned, and what questions, topics, or other things you may study next as a result of this study.

A Final Tip

Keep it simple

Do not worry about writing a perfect book outline or manuscript of what you learned.

Write down what comes easy to you. You can always go back and add more at a later time. The study guide is a tool to help you learn, not an exam for you to pass or fail. If God speaks to you through His Word, you win! Studying the Bible is not an academic exercise.

Studying the Bible, God’s Word, is the pursuit of a relationship with God, the one true God, the Creator of the universe.

Verse Analysis (Example)

Pick a verse (any verse you like) - 2 Chronicles 7:14 (New King James Version)

Read the verse several times

Write out (or type out) the verse

If
My people
Which are called by my name,
Shall humble themselves,
And pray
And seek my face,
And turn from their wicked ways;
Then
I will hear from Heaven,
And will forgive their sin,
And heal their land.

What does the verse say?

The verse says there is an if / then relationship for God's people (Israel in the OT and believers in the NT?) between their heart and their actions toward God's laws and their economic conditions.

Examine the context

Going back to verse 12, God is having a conversation with Solomon. He let him know that, if He (God) stops the rain or commands the locusts to devour the land, two things that would hurt their personal and national prosperity, that there would be a solution.

It also supports the idea that the heart of the people toward God impacts the way God deals with His people economically.

Not sure if these things are true as stated but they seem to be.

Based on verse 15, it seems that God is saying that, now that His house, the temple, had been built, He would be attentive to the prayer that is made in His house.

What does the verse mean?

This verse (seems to) mean that there is a direct correlation between people's behavior and 'favorable economic conditions'.

How do you see yourself applying this verse?

- Not sure yet. I probably have more questions first. For example, how would I apply this verse to myself?
- Should I apply it to our country?
 - oIf no, why not?
 - oIf so, how?
- If it is true, it would seem that I should let this influence my personal behavior and let others know.

What questions do you have?

- Is this an indicator of God's economic indicators – our righteousness versus business activity?
- If this be true, what are the implications?
- Who are "My people"?
- What does it mean to seek His face?
- What does it mean to be 'called by His name'?
- What ways of mine are wicked?
- How does this relate to a nation?
- How does this relate to our nation (USA)?
- America seems to have tried everything else. Why would we not give this a try?
- Would this really prove true? (answer seems obvious)
 - oBut how?
- What ways of our nation are wicked? Specifically? What does His Word say?
- How would / should / could we turn from them?