

How to Study the Bible
Class 6: Difficult & Familiar Passages

I. Studying Difficult Passages

A. Why are passages often difficult?

1. Culture Gap
2. Apparent Contradiction
3. Mystery

B. Four Principles

1. Pray

2. Examine the Context

3. Let Scripture Interpret Scripture
 - (1) Diagnose the difficulty

 - (2) Find relevant passages

 - (3) Synthesize

4. Ask for help

Example: Mathew 12:31-32

22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." 25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid

waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. 30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. 31 **Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.**

I. Studying Familiar passages

A. Five Principles

1. Pray

2. Don't Assume, Ask

3. Search for Surprises

4. Meditate

5. Express

Example: Psalm 23:1

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

3 He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

forever.