

## **REFLECTING ON SCRIPTURE: HOW TO FIND PERSONAL MEANING IN BIBLE TEXTS**

### Compare Different Versions

Read the same Bible text in several different English translations, noticing the different connotations that they offer.

### Ask Questions for Personal Application

Read the passage and ask questions like these (suggested by Donald Whitney):

- Does this text reveal something I should believe about God?
- Does this text reveal something I should praise or thank or trust God for?
- Does this text reveal something I should pray about for myself or others?
- Does this text reveal something I should have a new attitude about?
- Does this text reveal something I should make a decision about?
- Does this text reveal something I should do for the sake of Christ, others, or myself?

Another pattern (suggested by David Mann): Does this passage reveal a

**Sin** to confess?

**Promise** to believe?

**Example** to follow?

**Command** to obey?

**Knowledge** to gain?

And remember to look for this “speck” in your *own* eye (Matthew 7:3).

### Empathize with Characters

Read a Bible story repeatedly, pretending that you are a different character each time and sensing what you think and how you feel about what transpires. For example, read the story of the prodigal son from the perspective of the prodigal, the father, and the older brother.

### Paraphrase the Passage

Read a Bible passage and then summarize or re-write it in your own words. Then compare your paraphrase with the original, noting what you might have added, left out, or changed.

### Emphasize Different Words

Read a verse repeatedly, putting the stress on different words and thinking about how this brings out different dimensions of the meaning: “For *God* so loved the world”; “For God so *loved* the world”; “For God so loved the *world*.”

### Check Cross-References

Use a study Bible to note where you can find other passages in the Bible similar to one that has struck you (usually listed in the margins or at the bottom of the page). Or, use a concordance to find other verses that use one of the key words in your text.