

5. Ask yourself how each segment of thought relates to other segments. What is the author's flow of thought? How has the author arranged the segments together to communicate his message? [*you might draw connecting arrows connecting the various segments together, or key ideas within each segment on your line chart*]
6. What ideas, cultural practices, or words in the text do I need a better understanding of (culturally or historically) in order to better understand what is being said? [*at this point you might refer to a commentary or reference source*]
7. What seems to be the main point of the text/story you are studying? Does the grammatical or literary structure of the text draw attention to it?
8. What key themes or words in the text/story help us understand the author's main point?
9. What questions have come to your mind as you've been working through this process? Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? [*write them down and look for answers from the text itself... "carry on a conversation with the text"*].
10. Are there other portions of scripture I should reference that might be related in thought, or shed light on something in the present text/story? [*You might look in a concordance for other locations where a particular key word is used to gain a better understanding of it*].

II. Understanding & Translating Meaning (Mind/Heart): *What does the text mean?* [*Hermeneutics*]

[*There is usually one basic meaning of a text/story. We must first understand what it meant to the*

original readers and then carefully translate that meaning into our own cultural context.]

Step 2: Meaning in Original Context

1. Think about the *context* in which this main point was being communicated. *Who* wrote it, to *whom*, *when*, *where*, *why*? What comes before and what comes after this text? What does this text mean in its context; in the context of the whole book?
2. Does the *ordering* of the text (its structure) help us understand its meaning?
3. Are there *difficult words or phrases* you need to look up in resource helps to understand their original meaning?
4. How does this text relate to (or *connect with*) the greater Biblical Story of the Bible?
5. Put yourself in the *author's shoes*. If you were the author, what is the main point you be trying to communicate? Put in your own words.

Step 3: Meaning in Present Context

1. What area of life does this text/story address? (Behavior, attitude, relationships, etc.). Are they highlighted in the text?
2. Is there a similar context or life situations today in which the main message of this passage directly applies?
3. Is there a *general truth* or *principle* that encapsulates the meaning of this text?
4. Does my interpretation of this text/story agree with the rest of scripture?

III. Believing & Obeying (Incarnating His Kingdom): *How to put into practice*

(mind, heart, hands, feet) what we've heard and understood?

[Only after we have interpreted carefully the meaning of a text/story can we respond to God faithfully and obediently. There can be any number of applications to one original meaning of the text/story.]

Step 4: Identifying/Incarnating/Communicating

1. Is there application already highlighted in the text to put into practice?
2. Put yourself in the place of the recipient. If you were the recipient, what would you be hearing?
3. Is there an example to follow or avoid in this story/text?
4. Can I communicate this story or the meaning of this text spontaneously?

Step 5: Believing/Persevering/Reproducing

1. Is there *new truth*, or *promise* for me to believe?
2. Is there *error* in my previous *thinking* (*mind*) to be corrected—put off?
3. Is there a *new attitude of mind* I need to “put on”?
4. Is there a *command* to obey—behavior to change?
5. Is there *sin* to forsake?
6. Is there a *prayer* to pray?
7. How can I/we *retain* (meditate, memorize) and *persevere* in faith/obedience to what I/we've heard? (...those with a noble and good heart, who *hear* the word, *retain* it, and by *persevering* produce a crop (Lk 8:15))

8. How might you stimulate others in the faith-obedience you are making in response to this story?

Step 6: Pursue/Pray/Commit Together with Missiological Insight

1. Is there something I should pursue further?
2. What do I need to pray about in response to this story/text?
3. Share your blessing with others. Share what you think, what you feel, what new attitudes of heart and mind that you will walk in; what new acts of faith-obedience you will do.
4. Are there others whom I could ask to join me in committing to an act of faith-obedience?

[Be accountable and a wise steward of what God entrusts into your hands. Faithfulness in small things opens doors to greater entrustments!! Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says! (Jms 1:22)]