

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

Romans 15:4 NIV – For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

DESCRIPTION

When we read the Scriptures to delve deeper into our knowledge of God, it is important to understand the context surrounding any passage we may be reading. There is always an original voice, audience, purpose, and history surrounding what God intended when He first spoke those words. By asking questions such as: who, what, where, when, how, and why, we gain insight into God's heart, plan, and purposes. Plus, we grow in our confidence that we are not misquoting or misunderstanding Him.

Practicing Context, Context, Context is about pulling our interpretive lens back to see the bigger picture of what God is saying in any given passage.

EXAMPLE (ABBREVIATED)

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11: For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

1. **First Impression** – A promise of blessing for my life.
2. **Who** – The Prophet Jeremiah, mid-life, in a written letter. Called by God at a young age, rejected by leaders due to his prophecies of impending doom.
3. **To Whom** – The surviving exiles of Judah who have been deported to Babylon as captives.
4. **What** – Announcement of seventy years of exile. Exiles encouraged to live decently. False prophets denounced. Preceded and followed by false prophecies promising imminent blessing.
5. **Audience Interpretation** – Exile in Babylon was going to be long but God would eventually restore them and bring them back to the land of Judah.
6. **Look Again** – God's plan of discipline and redemption for Israel.



PURPOSE:

To accurately and objectively understand what God is saying in His Word.

To gain insight into God's redemptive plan through identifying the original setting of the text.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT:

Deeper knowledge of God through His Word.

Increased revelation of God's ways and dealings.

Improved understanding of what God is speaking through His Word.

PRAYER

Father, thank you Word is truth. I ask you now to grant me wisdom and understanding of what you are truly saying in your Word the way you originally intended it. Help me to grow in my knowledge of you by learning of your ways through your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.



PRACTICE

1. As you read your Bible, ask the Holy Spirit to highlight a particular verse to you. (We'll call this the "Verse.")
 - Summarize your First Impression of the verse.
2. Use the following questions as a guideline to research some information about the context of your Verse.
 - Who is speaking? The person who wrote the Book, a person in dialog, God, or someone speaking for God?
 - To whom is the speaker speaking? Why?
 - What are the highlights in the lives/backgrounds of the speaker and the audience up to this point?
 - Where does it take place? Is it referring to another place?
 - When was it first spoken? Is it referring to its own present time, the past, the future, or the end of time?
 - Is it part of a greater story, proclamation, or dialog? When does the full story/speech begin and end?
 - What is being said in the Verse? Summarize it in your own words, including how it fits into the full story/speech.
 - Are there any Scriptures quoted within the Verse? Are there any symbols or figures of speech being used? How did the original speaker or audience interpret or understand these symbols from their culture background?
3. Look Again at the Verse by considering the following:
 - How does the context clarify what God is really saying?
 - Does the context alter or confirm your interpretation of what God is speaking through your Verse? If so, how?
 - Summarize what the Verse is about in its proper context.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

2 Timothy 3:16

Acts 20:27

1 Corinthians 2:13

Isaiah 55:11

Matthew 24:35

Jeremiah 23:29

Joshua 1:8

Psalms 119:105

NOTES: _____
