

AN ABIDE DISCOVERY SESSION

The Exegetical Guardrail

Discovering the joy of what God actually said,
rather than what we assume He meant.



Meditate & Obey • Study & Apply • Hear & Do

The Heart of Abiding

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom...”
(Colossians 3:16, LSB)



Scripture is not a collection of fortune-cookie phrases to be pulled at random. It is a living communication from a precise Author.

God loves us and created us for fellowship. We come as we are, but His grace calls us to grow. Obedience is not a burden; it is the path to joy.

Drawing Out vs. Reading In

- **EISEGESIS**

- **Action:** Reading In
- **Posture:** The Generator
- Forcing our own ideas, desires, or cultural assumptions onto the biblical text.

- **EXEGESIS**

- **Action:** Drawing Out
- **Posture:** The Receiver
- Finding the meaning that is already in the text; letting the Bible speak for itself.

“Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes by one’s own interpretation.” (2 Peter 1:20, LSB). Meaning is not ours to create. It belongs to the Author.

The Pre-Understanding Audit

Step 1: Humility

What do I believe before I start reading?

Identifying our pre-understandings, cultural biases, and inherited assumptions.

Action: HOLD LOOSELY. Be willing to release any notion that does not match the text.



Step 2: Confidence

What convictions am I right to hold?

Identifying our presuppositions (e.g., The Bible is God's authoritative Word; it has one intended meaning).

Action: HOLD TIGHTLY. These are the anchors for faithful reading.

Practice Case 1: The Greater Works

THE TEXT: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.” (John 14:12, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: An invitation to perform individual, spectacular miracles greater than Jesus did.

GUARDRAILS APPLIED: Contextual & Literal
Focusing on the interpretive hinge phrase: “because I go to the Father”

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

A promise regarding the awe-inspiring global scope and reach of the Spirit-empowered Gospel.
The “greater works” are the global mission of the church.

Practice Case 2: Plans for a Future and a Hope

THE TEXT: “For I know the plans that I have for you... plans for peace and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: A personalized promise of a quick escape to an easy, comfortable, and prosperous life.

GUARDRAILS APPLIED: Contextual & One-Meaning.

Identifying the audience: A nation just taken into Babylonian exile.

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

A communal promise of a God who is faithful IN the fire and across decades of suffering. He keeps promises on a timeline larger than our comfort.

————— 70-Year Exile —————

Practice Case 3: All Things Through Christ

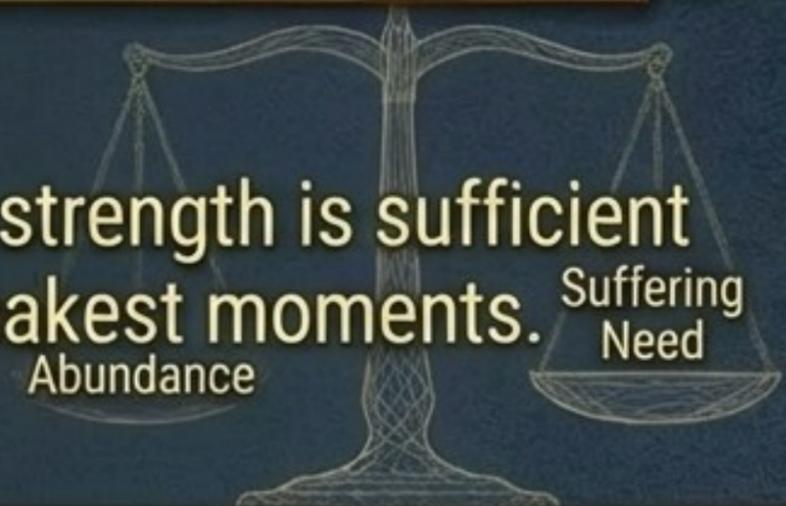
THE TEXT: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: A motivational blank check for personal achievement and success in our striving.

GUARDRAILS APPLIED: Contextual & Literal.
Recognizing this is a letter written by Paul from prison.

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

The profound secret of contentment. Christ’s sustaining strength is sufficient for every circumstance we endure, especially our weakest moments.



Walking with the Teacher

The Exegetical Guardrail never works alone. It partners with the context, the literal genre, and the harmony of Scripture.



“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” (John 14:26, LSB)

The Holy Spirit's role is not to give us new meanings for old passages. His role is to illumine the meaning already placed there by the Author.

Practice Case 4: Where Two or Three Are Gathered

THE TEXT: “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” (Matthew 18:20, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: A comforting validation for small attendance at a prayer meeting or worship gathering.

GUARDRAIL APPLIED: Contextual

Looking at verses 15–19 detailing the three-step process of church discipline.

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

Jesus affirming His supreme authority behind the faithful, hard work of church discipline and accountability. He is present with authority when His people hold one another accountable.

Practice Case 5: If My People Who Are Called by My Name

THE TEXT: "...and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray... then I will listen from heaven, I will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: A direct covenant formula guaranteeing modern national revival if enough people pray.

GUARDRAILS APPLIED: Contextual, Progressive, & Harmony
God speaking to Solomon at the Temple under the Old Covenant.

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

A revelation of God's timeless character. He is sovereign over all nations and always responds to true humility and repentance.



Practice Case 6: Stand at the Door and Knock

THE TEXT: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him...” (Revelation 3:20, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: A gentle evangelistic plea to the unregenerate heart of an unbeliever to accept salvation.

GUARDRAILS APPLIED: Contextual & Literal

A specific letter addressed to the CHURCH in Laodicea.

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

A convicting, loving call to repentance directed at a comfortable, lukewarm church that has self-sufficiently shut Jesus out of their fellowship.

Practice Case 7: Train Up a Child

THE TEXT: “Train up a child according to his way, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: A crushing, absolute guarantee that faithful parenting will always result in a faithful adult.

GUARDRAILS APPLIED: Literal & Harmony

Recognizing the Wisdom Literature genre of Proverbs; noting faithful Samuel's corrupt sons.

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

A general wisdom principle highlighting the vital importance of intentional formation. It frees parents from false guilt while honoring the weight of faithful instruction.



Practice Case 8: Cease Striving and Know

THE TEXT: “Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Psalm 46:10, LSB)

THE SURFACE ASSUMPTION: A gentle invitation to personal quiet time, relaxation, and self-care.

GUARDRAILS APPLIED: Contextual, Literal, & Linguistic

Understanding the original Hebrew word as a command to surrender amidst warring nations.

THE BEDROCK TRUTH

A thundering, cosmic command for warring nations to drop their weapons and surrender to God’s supreme sovereignty.

It is a call to release our grip, not just take a breath.

The Joy of Hearing Him Clearly



THE PROMISE

“So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what pleases Me...” (Isaiah 55:11, LSB).

God’s Word accomplishes HIS purposes, not our projected wishes.

THE BLESSING

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law... not having become a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man will be blessed in what he does.”
(James 1:25, LSB).

When we stop demanding the text say what we want, we finally receive the blessing of what God sent it to do. Good exegesis always produces something better than eisegesis.

An Invitation to Abide

God deeply desires to be known by you.
He wants to reveal Himself to you more than you want to know Him. As you learn to apply these guardrails,
He will meet you in the text.

Meditate & Obey. Study & Apply. Hear & Do.

This is how we abide in Christ.
This is how we demonstrate our love for God.