

How to Study the Bible

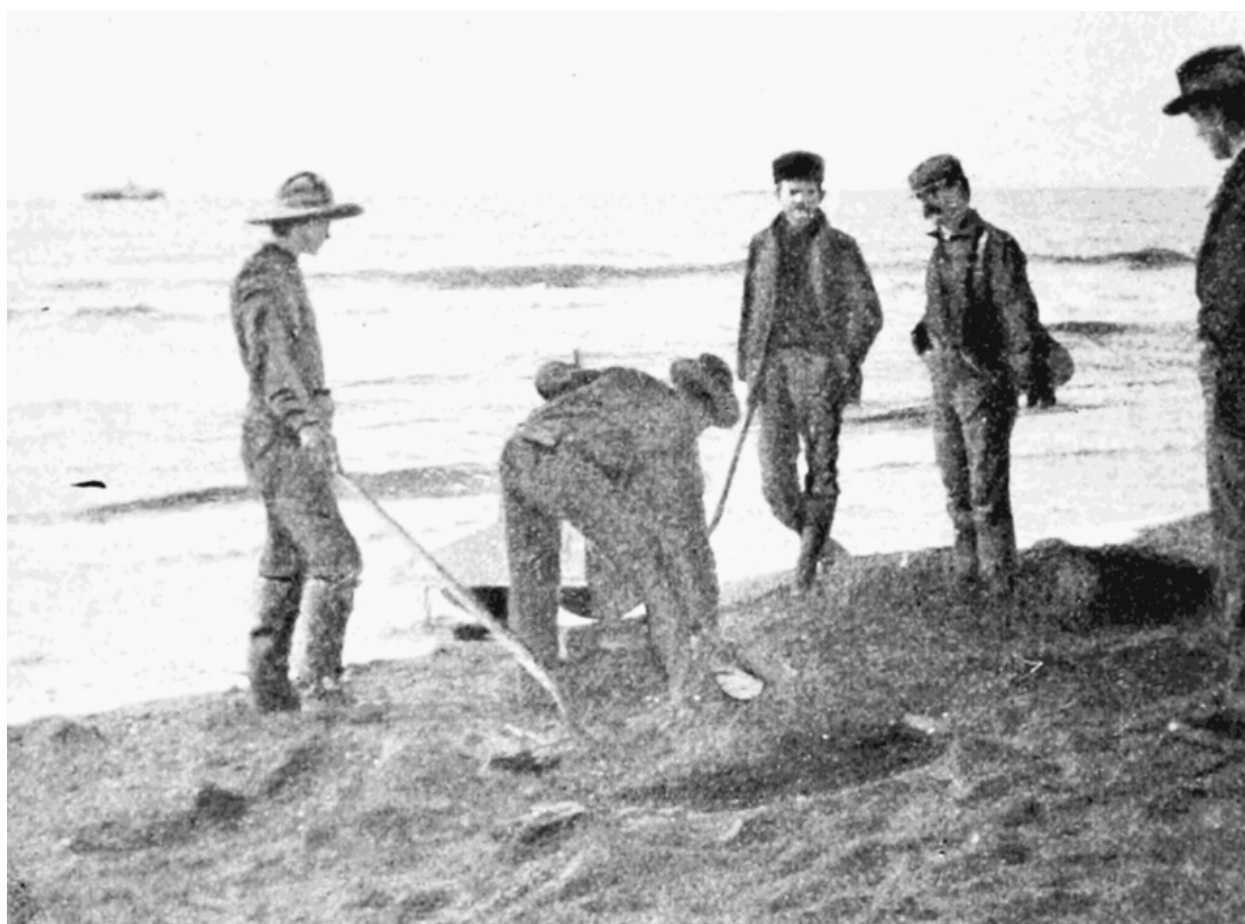
Spring 2017 Discipleship Class

Session 1

I. INTRODUCTION

- Bible study...
...It's worth it!
...But it is work.
- Why?

Let the Bible speak for itself: Proverbs 2



- What do you hope to get out of the class?

II. *Journey into God's Word* by Duvall & Hays

- Both have PhD's from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, are pastors in Arkadelphia, Arkansas (pop. 10,000), and teachers at Ouachita Baptist University.
- Good basic intro to the topic of studying the Bible.
- They are attempting an *inductive* approach as opposed to a *deductive*.
 - Inductive: Start with the evidence and see where it leads.
 - Deductive: Start with conclusion and make inferences.
- Good Bible study is a combination of these, but our goal always is to *let the Bible speak!*

III. Their Four Steps for Interpretation

- Their basic metaphor...



- Grasp the text in *their* town.
 - Read closely
 - Read for details
 - Read the words
 - Determine what the text is saying.

- Measure the width of *the river* to cross.
 - Assess the gap(s) between you and the passage.
 - Consider the differences.
- Cross the principalizing *bridge*.
 - Consider the common ground between you and the passage.
 - There is *always* significant common ground, but sometimes takes a little work to articulate it.
- Grasp the text in *our town*.
 - Apply it *specifically*.
 - Not just, "obey God." But, "work harder at my homework because of Colossians 3:23."

IV. "You're Not Hearing What I'm Saying!": Reading Closely

- Repetition, contrast, comparisons, lists, cause-and-effect, figures of speech, conjunctions, verbs, pronouns

Our first step is to read seriously, to note as many details as possible, to observe our text as closely as Crime Scene Investigators do a crime scene. Keep in mind that we are not yet asking the question, "What does the text mean?" We are simply asking, "What does the text say?" (24).

Try it out: Psalm 1

V. "What's That *Therefore* There For?": Sentences, Paragraphs, and Beyond...

- What is the *sentence* saying?
- How does it *connect* to the sentences before and after it? (Announce topic and then elaborate, question and answer, dialogue, purpose/result statements, conditions)

Try it out: Philippians 4:13

- What is *God* doing in the paragraph? What are *people* doing?
- How does this *paragraph connect* to the paragraphs before and after it?

Try it out: Exodus 20:1-17

If you bypass the careful reading you will almost certainly miss the meaning of the passage. In addition, the Bible will become boring for you, because you will never see anything in it that you haven't already seen (40).

VI. Conclusion (and Homework!)

- Do a close reading of 1 Corinthians 13:
 - Look at the repetition and how different words are used.
 - Look at the flow of the sentences.
 - How does this chapter connect to the paragraphs before and after it?
 - How does this change your understanding of 1 Cor 13?
- Next time: Key Issues by John McLeod (chapters 4-7 of *Journey into God's Word*)