

Hermeneutics: Breaking Down a Passage
Psalms 19:7-8

In many instances, you can make it easier to read the Bible when you break down a passage into easier parts to study. Look for natural divisions of the passage and take the time to fully understand its words. Here is an example of breaking down the passage into its natural divisions of thought using Psalms 19:7-8. What do you learn when you understand all the words within the passage?

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. (Ps 19:7-8, NASB)

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Teacher Notes

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This class exercise is intended to be completed corporately. If the class size is large, then this exercise could be divided among teams of students. The reading skill developed through this exercise is transferrable to a general reading skill.

Ask the student the meaning of key words, and help him use resources, like dictionaries, to discover their meaning.

The Law of the LORD is perfect,

Law of the Lord = the first 5 books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

Perfect = flawless

restoring the soul.

Restoring = resuscitate, reinvigorate

Soul = the spiritual nature or immaterial of a human being

The testimony of the LORD is sure

Testimony of the Lord = public formal / written evidence of truth by God

Sure = reliable, worthy of trust, without any doubt

making wise the simple.

Making wise = to cause discernment of what is right, true, and lasting

Simple = humble, lowly

The precepts of the LORD are right,

Precepts of the Lord = principle defining a standard of God's

Right = conforming to law, being with accord with truth, most beneficial

rejoicing the heart.

Rejoicing = to delight

Heart = vital center of one's being, emotions, and sensibilities

The commandment of the LORD is pure,

Commandment of the Lord = direct order of God's

Pure = without deceit, righteous

enlightening the eyes.

Enlightening = illuminating, perceptive consideration

Eyes = see, understand

A sample summary of this passage:

The Bible, God's word, restores the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, and enlightens.