



# Connecting Point 1

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

February 21, 2018

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## THE BIBLE SAYS WHUT?: “How to Read the Bible For All It’s Worth”

### GUIDELINES for The Epistles

1. They were not written for us. We may need to be content with our lack of knowledge.  
2 Thessalonians 2:5-6
2. Even if we can’t have full certainty about some of the details, very often the *point* of the whole passage is still within grasp.  
1 Corinthians 15:29
3. Learn to ask what can be said for certain about a text (and what’s not possible to be certain about).  
Look again at 1 Corinthians 15:29
4. Have a good commentary. The good ones will list and discuss the various options suggested as solutions, with reasons for and against.
5. Use a good translation of the bible and compare it to others.  
Translation Quick-Guide: *See attached*

### COMMON HERMENEUTICS

#### **Hermeneutics – the study and interpretation of scripture.**

We bring our enlightened common sense to the text and apply what we can to our situation. What does not seem to apply is simply left in the first century.

2 Timothy 4:13 – We do not obey the command to bring a cloak to Troas.

2 Timothy 2:3 – We do believe we are to endure suffering like good soldiers in Christ.

Issues come up when we’re not sure what to obey and what to leave in the first century.

1 Corinthians 11:4-5 – we don’t follow these instructions about head coverings.

1 Corinthians 11:23-28 - we do follow these instructions about the Lord’s Supper.

Rule #1: A text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or readers.

*1 Corinthians 13:10 cannot refer to the completion of the New Testament because the first readers would not have any context for that.*

Rule #2: Whenever we share comparable particulars (similar life situations) with the first-century setting, God’s Word to us is the same as His Word to them.

*Colossians 3:12*

Rule #3: When the particulars are not similar (as in food offered to idols – *1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1*) use the context to understand the principle being taught.

## ISSUES OF CULTURAL RELATIVITY

Doesn't this leave a dangerous gap? Can we justify anything when we compare first-century culture to twenty-first-century culture?

1. Distinguish between the central core of the message of the Bible and what is dependent upon or peripheral to it. *Think of the difference between the redemptive work of Christ's death and resurrection versus the holy kiss and women's head coverings.*
2. Distinguish between what the New Testament itself sees as inherently moral and what is not. Paul's sin lists (i.e. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-20) never contain cultural items.  
*Cultural matters become moral matters only by their use or abuse in given contexts when such use or abuse involves disobedience or lack of love.*
3. Make note of items where the New Testament itself has a uniform and consistent witness and where it reflects differences.  
*Consider the New Testament's teaching on love as the Christian's basic ethical response versus matters of women ministering in the church.*
4. Distinguish within the New Testament itself between principle and specific application.  
*Would this have been an issue for us if we had never encountered it in the New Testament? (1 Corinthians 11:2-16 – orderly worship is certainly a relevant issue but head coverings are not.)*
5. Keep alert to possible cultural differences between the first and twenty-first centuries that are not immediately obvious.  
*Romans 13:1-7 – in a participatory democracy we expect bad laws to be changed and bad officials to lose their positions. This affects how we bring this scripture into this century.*
6. Exercise Christian charity. Recognize the difficulties, open communication, define principles, have love for those who differ from us.

And remember... sometimes our theological problems with the Epistles derive from the fact that we are asking *our* questions of the texts that by their occasional nature (written for a specific occasion) are answering only *their* questions.

*Think abortion, remarriage, or infant baptism.*

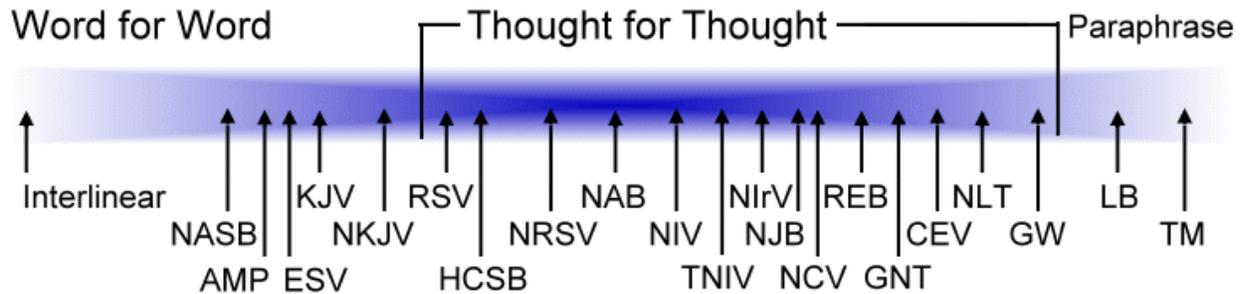
*We sometimes want the Epistles to answer specific questions from a later time.*

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Apply the hermeneutical principles above to the passage: **1 Timothy 2:8-10.**

These are very specific commands. Are they for the first-century church or should we bring them into our time and apply them? Why or why not? If so, would you qualify the commands in any way?

# English Bible Translation Comparison



NASB - New American Standard (11.5)  
 AMP - Amplified Bible (11)  
 ESV - English Standard Version (8)  
 KJV - King James Version (13)  
 NKJV - New King James Version (9.5)  
 RSV - Revised Standard Version (11)  
 HCSB - Holman Christian Standard (8)  
 NRSV - New Revised Standard (10.5)  
 NAB - New American Bible (7)  
 NIV - New International Version (8)  
 TNIV - Today's NIV (7.5)

NIrV - New International reader's (3)  
 NJB - New Jerusalem Bible (7.5)  
 NCV - New Century Version (3.5)  
 REB - Revised English Bible (7)  
 GNT - Good News Translation (6)  
 CEV - Contemporary English (5.5)  
 NLT - New Living Translation (6.5)  
 GW - God's Word (4.5)  
 LB - Living Bible (8.5)  
 TM - The Message (4.5)

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\* The numeric value in parenthesis is the grade level of readability.

