

# Interpretive Journey Assignment Instructions

This assignment is a culmination of all the previous assignments you have turned in this semester. You will use the skills and knowledge you learned from the previous assignments to complete this assignment. We have talked a lot about the Interpretive Journey this semester. If you have not yet memorized each of the 5 steps of the journey and the descriptive questions that go along with them, now is a good time to do that. I also encourage you to reread chapter 2 in your textbook prior to completing this assignment. Below are some basic instructions followed by detailed steps of how to complete this assignment.

## **Basic Instructions:**

- This assignment is based on our passage for the semester. You are completing each step of the Interpretive Journey only on that one passage (same passage we've been studying and turning in assignments for all semester).
- Make sure to include the standard cover page as Page 1 of the assignment.
- The assignment must be turned in through Blackboard in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF (.pdf) format.
- The entire assignment should use one inch margins on all sides and Arial 12 pt. font.
- The last page of the assignment must be a Works Cited page. You must use at least one outside resource in order to complete this assignment. You might choose to use resources in various sections, but at least one outside resource is required in Step 1—Part D. See the detailed instructions below for more information.
- Make sure to include each step of the journey and the question that goes along with that step as headings throughout the assignment. This makes it easy for me to tell that you have transitioned to the next step. For example, following the cover page, your assignment should begin on page 2 with a heading that looks like this:

### **Step 1—Grasping the Text in Their Town:** ***What did the text mean to the biblical audience?***

- Also, make sure to label each part (Part A, B, C, etc.) within each step so that I can clearly see that you have completed each required part. See the detailed instructions below for more information.
- Make sure to follow the instructions below and complete each required section within every step of the Interpretive Journey. If you follow these instructions carefully, put forth effort and turn in quality work, you should make an excellent grade on this assignment.

**NOTE:** The detailed step by step instructions begin on the next page!

## **Detailed Instructions:**

### **Step 1—Grasping the Text in Their Town:** ***What did the text mean to the biblical audience?***

#### **Part A:      *Personal Observations***

- Include a numbered list of at least 30 personal observations from this passage. Read through the passage. What do you notice? What stands out to you? What questions do you have? You've already turned in some observations from previous assignments. You can use those same observations here but include even more. Read and reread. Think and keep thinking. Look and keep looking. Ask others what they notice. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see. You can also review chapters 3-5 in the textbook for help on what to look for when making observations.
- Make sure your observations are numbered so I don't have to count them.

#### **Part B:      *Previous Passage***

- Read the passage prior to the passage we are studying. You could even read 2-3 passages prior to ours if you would like.
- Write a brief description (3-5 sentences) explaining how the previous passage connects to our passage. How does it add to our understanding? Are the passages connected in some way? If yes, explain how they are connected. If not, explain why not.

#### **Part C:      *Following Passage***

- Read the passage following the passage we are studying. You could even read 2-3 passages after ours if you would like.
- Write a brief description (3-5 sentences) explaining how the following passage connects to our passage. How does it add to our understanding? Are the passages connected in some way? If yes, explain how they are connected. If not, explain why not.

#### **Part D:      *Historical-Cultural Context***

- Write a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) explaining the historical-cultural context of our passage. This is where you should include information about the situation going on back then and there. What was happening back then that could help us understand our passage?
- **You need to use outside resources in this section.** Commentaries and other Bible resources will help explain historical/cultural and situational details for you.
- Make sure you cite the resources you are using in this section and include them in the Works Cited page at the end of the assignment.

**Part E:        *Interpretation (The Meaning in Their Town)***

- Write a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) that summarizes the meaning of this passage to the biblical audience. This is where you are actually completing step 1 of the Interpretive Journey. What was the biblical author trying to communicate to the original audience?
- Remember, this is an interpretation/meaning of our one passage, not the entire book of the Bible in which the passage is found.
- This should be written from the perspective of the author and original audience. Use past tense verbs to describe what the biblical author wanted the original readers to know, understand, believe, do, etc.
- Do NOT write about what it means to us today in this step.

**Step 2—Measuring the Width of the River to Cross:**  
***What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?***

**Part A:        *Differences***

- It is important to identify the differences between the biblical audience back then and there and us here and now. In the first step, you already addressed the historical/cultural context and the situation they were facing. What is different about our situation? What differences do we need to understand before coming up with our overarching theological principle?
- You can either write a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) explaining the differences between the biblical audience and us or you can include a bulleted list detailing the various differences that you have identified.

**Part B:        *Similarities***

- Now that you have addressed the differences between the biblical audience and us it is important to also understand the similarities. Are there things that we face today that are similar to the situation they were facing?
- You can either write a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) explaining the similarities between the biblical audience and us or you can include a bulleted list detailing the various similarities that you have identified.

**Step 3—Crossing the Principilizing Bridge**  
***What is the theological principle in this text?***

**Part A:        *The Theological Principle (Big Idea or Key Center)***

- You summarized the author's message to the biblical audience in step 1, and you have evaluated the differences/similarities between them and us in step 2. Now, your goal in this step is to discover the overarching theological principle being taught in the passage. The author had a meaning in mind to the original readers, but there is a big overarching principle behind the author's meaning that is true for all believers in all times. Your goal in this step is to find that theological principle.
- Sometimes the theological principle here in step 3 is very similar to the meaning in their town you discovered in step 1. This is especially true when the river of differences from step 2 is very narrow. In other words, when there aren't many differences between the biblical audience and contemporary Christians the theological principle may be very close to the original meaning.
- Write a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) that summarizes the theological principle(s) from our passage that applies to all Christians from all time periods. If there is only one theological principle, say that and explain it. If there are several theological principles, list them out and explain how they all tie together.

**Part B:        *Memorable Phrase***

- Summarize the theological principle(s) in one simple and memorable phrase. This is a phrase that helps you and others to easily understand the truth of the meaning of this passage but also to remember it long term and meditate on it as you seek to live it out in your life.

**Step 4—Consult the Biblical Map**

***How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?***

**Part A:        *Does your principle fit with the rest of the Bible?***

- In this part, just include one of the following statements showing that you have consulted the Biblical map:

**Option 1:**    My theological principle from Step 3 fits with the rest of the Bible. I did not have to modify it at all after consulting the rest of Scripture.

**Option 2:**    After consulting the rest of Scripture, I had to modify my original theological principle to make sure that it was consistent with the teaching of God's word, but now my theological principle from Step 3 fits with the rest of the Bible.

**Part B:        *Supporting Scriptures***

- List three other Scriptures from the Bible that would support your theological principle. Give the actual verse and the Scripture reference where it is found.

**Step 5—Grasping the Text in Our Town:**  
***How should individual Christians today live out the theological principle?***

Here's some initial hints regarding application:

- Think about specific ways that all believers (or non-believers if applicable to your passage) should apply the author's original meaning.
- Also, think through specific ways that you personally can apply the author's original meaning.
- Be specific. For example, do not just say that the application is to "be holy." What specifically should modern day Christians do to be holy? What specific things do you need to do in your life to be holy?
- Make sure the application ties back to the meaning of the passage. There's lots of ways to love and serve God, but you are looking for specific ways to live out the meaning found in the passage you are studying.
- Applications answer the question of "how." They show how we are to do something. If the meaning (theological principle from step 3) is that we should love others, the applications should show "how" we can and should love others.

***Part A: Specific Applications to All Christians Today***

- Identify a situation today that applies to the one in the passage. You will need to list specific applications for how present day Christians (in general) can live out the meaning of this passage. Remember that there is only one original meaning and that meaning is still relevant today. But there are many different applications for that original meaning, and those applications will continue to change as our contemporary world and culture changes.
- In this part, list 5 **specific** ways that all Christians today could live out the meaning of this passage. These need to be very practical in nature. Remember, an application should answer the question of "how." If the meaning (theological principle from step 3) is that all believers should be holy because God is holy, then this application step should list out specific ways that show "how" a Christian can be holy or remind ourselves of God's holiness, etc.

***Part B: Specific Applications to You Personally***

- In this part, list 5 **specific** applications that you personally should do to live out the meaning (theological principle) of this passage. These need to be very practical in nature. There certainly could be some overlap between Part A and Part B in this step. However, here in Part B I want you to be very specific to your own personal situation. For example, if the theological principle from step 3 was to forgive others as Christ as forgiven us, then in this step you could identify a specific person in your life that you struggle with forgiving (parent, friend, roommate, etc.) You could list the specific steps you would take in order to overcome unforgiveness in your life. You could also address people that you have hurt and need to make things right with.

- If more appropriate in your situation, you could write a paragraph of at least 5 sentences explaining how you would specifically live out the meaning of this passage instead of including a bulleted/numbered list.

**Part C:        *Communication to Others***

- At this point, you should understand the meaning of the passage we are studying. You should know how you plan to live out this meaning in your own life. But our calling to make disciples means that we teach others to obey everything God has commanded.
- Spend a moment praying and asking the Holy Spirit to give you direction as to who in your life that you could communicate this passage to.
- Write a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) explaining who you could share what you have learned in this passage with and how you could share with them.

**REMINDER!**

- Don't forget to include your Works Cited page at the end of the assignment.