

Some Guidelines for Biblical Interpretation

1. In matters of laws or commandments, the purpose behind the law matters more than the particular law itself.
2. Comparisons in reasoning or making analogies is an appropriate and necessary method for applying scripture to contemporary issues.
3. The best interpretation of a text is one that is countercultural, instructive or prophetic.
4. The Bible does not answer scientific questions, nor does it offer any scientific knowledge. Scientific truth is a later way of understanding the world.
5. Our morals of right and wrong should guide our interpretation of the Bible.
6. One should keep in mind the knowledge of God as a creator, who created us good. Each one of us has the breath of God in them. So our interpretations of scripture should not do harm to groups of people who also have the breath of God in them.
7. One should keep in mind what our image of God and Christ is and how we imagine them should guide our interpretations. In matters of law, we remember Jesus' two commandments: Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:34-40).
8. One should keep in mind that the Bible is a time-bound conversation and our interpretations of the Bible should be careful to distinguish what is universally true and what was true for the ancient society that produced the Bible.
9. One should have integrity in thought and action. Love and hate cannot coexist in our psyches. Our experience of life and love can and should inform our interpretation of the Bible. We gain insight only by constant prayer and seeking out the Holy Spirit in community. We look to each other for guidance in biblical interpretation—it is best done in community.
10. One should allow for the integrity of the Bible. We must ask if ourselves if the interpretation of one passage of the Bible matches the witness of the WHOLE Bible as a book about God as creator and covenant-maker.
11. Others????