Interpretation Questions

**DEFINITIVE QUESTIONS**

What does this mean?

1. Ask meaning of questions. What is the meaning of this term to the original reader? What is the meaning of this phrase, statement, or theological concept?

2. What did it mean to the author? Does the author give his own interpretation?

3. What did it mean to his audience?

4. To develop this, ask how is this term, phrase or concept used in the context of this passage? The rest of the book? Other writing by the author?

5. Look it up: a concordance, a Bible dictionary, other word study books, and a dictionary in your own language. Relate

6. Does the author quote Scripture? Look up the passages quoted and observe his context.

7. Take into consideration the type of literature.

8. Is this literal or figurative language?

9. Interpret figures of speech. Does the author interpret his use of symbols?

10. What elements of composition or structure are used in this book or passage?

11. Consult Bible dictionaries, atlases, and historical background resource materials for unanswered questions or more information.

**REASON QUESTIONS**

Why is it used here?

12. From the text, what do you see are the author’s concerns, characteristics, convictions, emotions?

13. Likewise, list the reader’s concerns, questions, emotions, characteristics, convictions, strengths and weaknesses.

14. Does the author state why he wrote the book?

15. Why does the author quote Scripture in this passage? Does it prove a point, illustrate a truth, support the author’s argument, or contribute to the emotion of the passage?

16. Pay careful attention to the context. How does this passage fit in with the overall message of the whole book? What is its relation to the surrounding paragraphs?

17. What is the historical context? Who is addressed? What cultural issues need consideration? When did the events occur?

18. In the Epistles, determine from the text what questions the believers were asking, and what struggles they were encountering. This is like listening to on side of a phone conversations. For example, in Paul’s letters we know what Paul says, but we must do some thinking as to what the congregations may have been asking or thinking that would result in Paul responding as he does.

19. Why use this figure of speech?

20. Bombard the text with “why” questions.

21. Ask- “Why is this said?”

22. Why are certain elements of composition or structure used in this book or passage?

23. Why is this type of literature used here? For example, what is the impact of poetry instead of prose?

24. Why this literary context? How does this passage prepare me for what follows? For what wen before?

25. How would the meaning be affected if this term or passage was missing?

**IMPLICATION QUESTIONS**

What is the significance of this?

26. What is the significance of this passage, idea, word, or statement?

27. Determine whether the issues addressed apply to the local situation in the author’s day or universally apply to all believers.

28. Ask – “What does this imply?”