

SELF-FEEDER

Traps in Bible Interpretation
November 5, 2023

1 Corinthians 13:12

2 Peter 3:16-18

“It’s not enough to read the Bible – we must study the Bible.” **R.C. Sproul**

7 Traps...

1. THE ALLEGORY TRAP

“Allegorical Interpretation” = “The interpretation of Scripture by use of allegory in which passages are seen to have a hidden, spiritual meaning beyond the literal reading.” **Donald McKim**

The Bible contains allegory. We must recognize that to be true; however, we should be on guard against a method of Bible interpretation known as “allegorizing.”

Better Approach = “the Historical/Grammatical approach.”

“The historical/grammatical method does not necessarily exclude an allegorical approach...if the clear meaning of a passage indicates that it be interpreted in that light.” **Jefrey Breshears**

2. THE ME TRAP

“No man is capable of virtue as long as self is his object.” **Charles Spurgeon**

3. THE WORD-MEANING TRAP

To understand the Bible well, one must understand what words mean. After all, the Bible is a book of words. Consider this — the first edition of the King James Version of the Bible contained 788,820 words! Most modern translations have at least 750,000 words.

4. THE CONTEXT TRAP

“Context is king!”

“The premodern biblical interpreters sought to discover the author's intent because they believed that thereby they would discover God's intent. As Calvin put it, “It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.” **Stephen Wellum**

5. THE WRONG-VERSE TRAP

6. THE ONE-VERSE TRAP

“Anyone can make the Bible say anything they want it to say.”

“The Analogy of Faith” = “The Protestant principle that individual doctrines are to be understood in the light of the whole understanding of Christian faith, that obscure passages of Scripture are to be understood in light of clearer portions, and the Old Testament in light of the New Testament.” **Donald McKim**

“The Bible is the best commentary on the Bible.”

Romans 15:4

1 Corinthians 2:13

7. THE LAW AND GOSPEL TRAP

“Confusion about preaching both the law and the gospel is not confined to recent times. Since the Reformation Christians have struggled to express the biblical relationship between the law and the gospel.” **Thomas Richwine**

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION/GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Which one of the traps we talked about is the toughest for you to avoid? With which one do you have a tendency to have the most confusion?
2. Can you think of a time in which you made an error in regard to one of the traps we discussed?
3. Have you heard a preacher or teacher make an error in regard to one of the traps we discussed?
4. What actions might you take to avoid some of the traps we talked about?