

Step 1: Pray

Ask the Spirit to help you understand what God is saying in this passage

Step 2: Remember 2 truths

1. The Bible is about God. God is the hero
2. The Bible is one, unified, harmonious, multi-faceted story

Step 3: Ask these questions of the passage

Question 1: Historical, Cultural Details

- a) Who was this written to?
 - i) What were they like?
 - ii) What was important to them?
 - iii) What issues were they dealing with?
 - iv) What was the world they lived in like?
- b) Are there any details that seem important, e.g. people, places, events, customs, objects etc. What/who are they? Why are they important?
- c) Who is writing?
- d) Why are they writing it?

Question 2: What do the words mean?

- a) What form of literature is this?
- b) How am I supposed to understand this form of literature?
- c) Are there any important words in this passage? What do these words mean in this passage (sometimes the way we understand words now is different to their meaning when they're in the Bible)

Question 3: How does the message of this passage line up with the rest of the Bible?

- a) Is the message of this passage consistent with the message of the rest of the Bible as a whole?
- b) What is the message of the book that this passage is in? Does the message of this passage line up with the message of the books it's in?
- c) What is the unique contribution to scripture of this particular passage? Why did God put this passage in this place and not leave it out or put it somewhere else?
- d) What other passages talk about similar things as this passage and how is this passage in harmony with them?

Finally

- What did this passage mean to the people it was originally written to in their context?
- What does this passage mean to us in our context