

MIDWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ABSTRACTING CONCRETE PHRONESIS: A METHODOLOGY TO GUIDE THE
DERIVATION OF BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREACHING

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To Julia, my bride, she is
Adorned with godliness,
Filled with kindness,
Clothed with joy,
Adored by her children
Loved by her husband

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be
ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth.

–2 Timothy 2:15, The Apostle Paul

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ABSTRACT

To principlize Scripture is to derive statements of theological truth from Scripture that accurately articulate the essence and extent of the text. To this date, writing on principlization has been fragmentary. This dissertation provides the biblical justification of principlization, followed by a review and analysis of relevant literature. Beneficial contributions are synthesized and supplemented by original contributions to form a more complete methodology of principlization. This dissertation successfully answers the question, “Can a methodology for deriving principlized truth from Scripture, which is accurate hermeneutically and more beneficial for the purpose of preaching, be developed beyond its present limited state?”

CHAPTER 1: BIBLICAL RATIONALE

Introduction

In *Lectures to My Students*, Charles Spurgeon referred to a part of the sermon-building process he called “spiritualizing,” which he described in these words, “Then, too, the faculty which turns to spiritualizing will be well employed *in generalizing the great universal principles evolved by minute and separate facts*. This is an ingenious, instructive, and legitimate pursuit.”¹ Others have referred to this pursuit of generalizing great universal principles as theological exegesis,² contextualization,³ and the search for relevance.⁴ In this dissertation this process will be referred to as “principlization.”⁵

¹C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 108.

²Abraham Kuruvilla includes the term “theological exegesis” in his definition of preaching. He writes, “Biblical preaching, by a leader of the church, in a gathering of Christians for worship is the communication of the thrust of a pericope of Scripture discerned by theological exegesis, and of its application to that specific body of believers, that they may be conformed to the image of Christ, for the glory of God—all in the power of the Holy Spirit.” Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 20.

³Grant Osborne gives *principlization* another name, “contextualization.” He connects contextualization to the discipline of homiletics and has a section of his book *The Hermeneutical Spiral* devoted to teaching how to contextualize. Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 410-433.

⁴Craig Skinner, *The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit: Its History, Theology, Psychology, and Practice for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 133-136. Richard L. Mayhue, “Rediscovering Expository Preaching” in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 13.

⁵In this work, Kaiser calls a process he labels “theological exegesis,” which is identifying the central point of the text, a “unifying theological principle.”⁵ He contends

Principlization is the process of deriving statements of theological truth from Scripture that maintain authorial intent.⁶ This writer believes that exegetically derived principles of theological truth are the seeds of practical application. While Spurgeon and others have identified this step in the sermonizing process, none have formulated a complete methodology of principlization. The purpose of this dissertation is to further develop and provide a methodology for biblical expositors to use in order to be exegetically faithful to the authorial intent of a biblical text, while making authoritative practical application. This writer is seeking to answer the question, “Can a methodology for deriving principlized truth from Scripture, which is accurate hermeneutically and more beneficial for the purpose of preaching, be developed beyond its present limited state?”

The abundance of terms for principlization is likely to be a result of the newness of the discussion, such that some terminology has not yet been agreed upon and established. Principlization is necessary for preaching an expository sermon.⁷

the bridge from exegesis to homiletics is “principlization.” This is the formation of “propositions that will call the hearers to some type of response.” Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic) 1998, 133-134,151. In his chapter within *Four Views On Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, Kaiser argues for a model of principlization. His contributions will be included in Chapter 2 in this dissertation. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “A Principlizing Model” in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 19-50.

⁶Kaiser defines principlization in this way: “To ‘principlize’ is to state the author’s propositions, arguments, narrations, and illustrations in timeless abiding truths with special focus on the application of those truths to the currents needs of the Church.” Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*,152.

⁷“Having discovered what the text meant originally, we can establish the meaning that the text should have for our present time, culture, and circumstances. What we intend to do in preaching is to codify the timeless truths of Scripture. In order

Principlization is the midpoint and necessary link between exegesis and authoritative application. Making authoritative practical application to modern hearers from the biblical text is the delineating factor between a theological lecture and a sermon.⁸

Making application in a sermon (bringing people into the knowledge of how to know God, fellowship with Him, and walk in a manner worthy of Him) is *the objective* of the sermon, just as MacArthur says, “It obligates the will.”⁹ Obligating the will is the aim, but the preacher has to be sure he is obligating the will to obey *God’s Word* and not his own contrived opinion. So then, he must be careful to understand the authorial intent of the passage of Scripture and then rightly apply that intention to the hearer.¹⁰

to do this we must principlize the passage.” Ben Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2011), 134.

⁸Craig Skinner humorously states the problem to which this research seeks the solution: “The great gulf that yawns between the Bible world and the twentieth century demands bridging.” Skinner, *The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit*, 95. Awbrey also states, “Failure in preaching is marked by being biblical but not contemporary or contemporary without being biblical.” *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 130.

⁹The full quote reads, “An expository sermon does more than simply explain the grammatical structure of the passage and the meaning of its words. A true expository message sets forth the principles or doctrines supported in the passage. True expository preaching is doctrinal preaching...preaching is doctrinal in content. It obligates the will.” MacArthur, “Moving from Exegesis to Exposition” in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, 236.

¹⁰“But changed behavior is a legitimate effect of preaching only if behavioral change is effected through a conscience that has been changed by an accurate understanding of Scripture. This requires explanation of its contents. Behavioral change based upon a coerced conscience, a conscience that is compelled to act without a biblical rationale, is manipulation not persuasion. One who is coerced to act without sufficient reason is not an individual who has been persuaded, but rather an individual who has been manipulated.” Ben Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Begin* (Fearn, UK: Mentor, 2008), 202.

In order to make *authoritative* application, the expositor must prove the vital connection between the original meaning of the text and the exhortation given in the modern context.¹¹ The purpose of this research is to provide biblical expositors with a methodology that maintains this vital connection in the move from exegesis to application while maintaining hermeneutical integrity. The crucial nature of this connection between hermeneutics and homiletics cannot be bypassed, or else application will be inaccurate, without authority, and potentially harmful in the highest degree to the hearer.

The methodological solution presented in this research is principlization.¹² Exegesis is the hermeneutical process concerned with the identification of the timed meaning of the text, which is the meaning of the text as it was intended for the original readers. Principlization is the move from the *timed meaning* to the timeless truth in the text. Timeless truth is principlized theological truth statements derived from a passage of Scripture and verified by the Canon of Scripture. After distilling the *timeless truth*, it can then be translated to a timely application. Principlization and subsequent application is the distinguishing difference between a sermon and a running commentary on a passage of Scripture and is a chief and necessary component to becoming a doer of the

¹¹Walter Kaiser expresses this issue well when he writes, “Application of Scripture calls for the fine art of retaining the truth of what the text *meant* while also moving to those legitimate illustrations of what that same text *means* in the new situations of our day.” Walter C. Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 177.

¹²William Klein writes, “Recent evangelical analysis has come to a consensus that the key to legitimate application involves what many writers call ‘principlizing.’” William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Revised and Updated Edition (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2004), 483.

Word rather than a hearer.¹³ When one follows this methodology of principlization, application is ascertained directly from the text, thus it is accurate and authoritative. This methodology can and should be used across the entire Canon, including all biblical genres.

The Biblical Warrant for Principlization

In the following, the biblical warrant for deriving principlized truth from Scripture is provided and explained. Also, it is shown that there is widespread agreement amongst theologically conservative scholars that this pursuit is needed.¹⁴

2 Timothy 3:15-17—All Scripture is Applicational

In the Second Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul writes to the young pastor to instruct, encourage, and exhort him in the work of the ministry. Paramount in the work of a pastor is the preaching of God's Word. Paul assures young Timothy of the veracity

¹³Awbrey rightly asserts that deducing propositional truth from a given passage of Scripture is the distinction between a running commentary and a sermon. Further, the statements of theological principles, which have been derived from the text, show the main points of contribution the author is making to his overall intention and provide the preacher with the necessary structure for a faithful expository sermon. In fact, Awbrey states unequivocally that good structure in an expository sermon cannot be produced without concise statements of theological truth, "Without general organization of material and specific organization of concise statements of theological principle, good sermon structure cannot result." Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 121-125.

¹⁴Seahawk Lun, "After God's Heart: A Seminar to Equip Pastors with the Process of Theological Principlization," (DMin thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, May 2007). This dissertation is essentially a compilation of resources demonstrating widespread consensus that principlization is necessary. This is not a source of significant contribution to the development of a more thorough methodology of principlization, but it does prove widespread agreement with the general steps of principlization. This present dissertation is concerned with fleshing out the steps of the principlization in significant detail for a more complete methodology.

of Scripture as he declares, “All Scripture is breathed out by God...” (3:16). When Paul speaks of Scripture (γράφη) he is using a word that appears fifty-one times in the New Testament, each of them in reference to the Old Testament.¹⁵ Paul also says “all” of Scripture is God breathed, and not only that but that it is ultimately “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” So then, according to the Apostle, all of Scripture is worthwhile and profitable for these four tasks: teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.¹⁶ Notice that these four nouns are each applicational in nature: teaching is putting forth doctrine; reproof and correction refer to pointing out error in thought and behavior; and training in righteousness refers to teaching someone the right way to live before God. The question must then be asked, “How is it that every Old Testament text is profitable for doctrinal and practical application?” The concern in this question becomes clear when one considers the fact that the Old Testament is not a book of abstract theological truths, ready-made for immediate doctrinal and practical application. Yet, Paul says that all of the Old Testament is *profitable* for these applications. How then does one arrive at these applications honestly and accurately? Paul does not describe a method, but he has

¹⁵Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 74.

¹⁶To be clear, while Paul uses γράφη to refer to the Old Testament, Christians certainly understand the New Testament is the “word of truth” as well. Take note, for example, that the Apostle Peter equated the writing of Paul as Scripture just as much as the Old Testament Text. Peter wrote of Paul’s writings, “as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matter. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures [γράφεας]” (2 Pt 3:16).

already told Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (cf. 2 Tm 2:15) Timothy’s commission to be a “worker” has come in the context of handling the Word of God. Correct handling of God’s Word takes work, and Paul describes the work when he says “rightly divide” the Word of truth. To “rightly divide” is the word, ὀρθοτομοῦντα, defined literally as, “cutting a straight road through difficult terrain; *make a straight path*; figuratively in the NT, with reference to correctly following and teaching God’s message *hold a straight course, teach accurately*.”¹⁷ Timothy is going to have to work to stay true in his teaching of God’s Word. He is going to have to labor to rightly divide it and understand its purpose of teaching, reproof, correcting, and training in righteousness.

With the understanding of what Paul has taught and commanded concerning the profitability of Scripture for doctrinal and practical application, one only need make a cursory reading of the Old Testament to find that making application from Scripture is not as simple as reading a passage and explaining what it means. A preacher might read and teach the accounts of Cain and Abel, Samson and Delilah, and the foul-mouthed youth mauled by she-bears, but how are these accounts profitable for reproof, correcting, and training in righteousness? There must be a way to distill from these texts the principled statements of theological truth that can be used for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.

¹⁷Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), BibleWorks, v.8.

Diligent work must go into understanding what truths can be found in a text so that application can be made. This writer believes there is scriptural warrant for the process of principlization. This writer also asserts that the Holy Spirit has indicated this intention through the biblical writers, first noted here in the command given by the Apostle Paul to *rightly divide* the Word of truth. Christians should be identifying the wisdom principles in Scripture for the purpose of practical application.

A simple exercise of logic dictates the necessity of identifying the principles of truth in any given biblical text. For example, Genesis 38 contains no explicit statement of theological truth designed for practical application. Either the Apostle Paul was not intending that Genesis 38 be included in his statement in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, or he was in error when he wrote it. Or perhaps he is assuming the young preacher Timothy knows how to ὀρθοτομοῦντα (rightly divide) the Word of truth. While there are no explicit truth statements in the pericope of Genesis 38, there are nevertheless numerous theological truths at work in the text. Such truths would address the consequences of faithlessness, dishonesty and fornication, and certainly this text is a treatise on the dire need for the Mosaic Law. Genesis 38 is not merely a genealogical record of the origins of Judah's offspring: it was also intended for practical exhortations.

James 1:22-25—Being a *Doer* of the Word

In James 1:22-25, believers are told to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only,” which means the expectation of God is that His people live out the truth of His Word. For James, it seems the problem is that he is addressing the tendency in people to pay lip-service to God's Word, studying it and acknowledging it, but then failing to live

according to what they have learned. This is religious hypocrisy, which he describes as “worthless” (Jas 1:26). So then, it is clear that believers in Jesus are expected to know Scripture and live accordingly. However, this requires that a person is able to see the truths in Scripture, which are demonstrated in various ways in the respective genres.

The work of the expositor is to explain the passage of Scripture, but if the passage is only explained, how has the preacher obeyed the expectation of James 1:22-25 or 2 Timothy 3:16-17? The preacher must explain the text, distill the timeless principles imbedded in it, and then put forward doctrine, correct, reprove, and train the listeners in how to live out those principles in righteousness before God. Unmistakably, this is the expectation of God. However, the preacher must have a process to follow in order to ensure he is being faithful in ascertaining the biblical author’s intended meaning and purpose for the particular text of Scripture, while distilling the timeless truths and making authoritative application to the listeners.

One cannot *be a doer* of 1 Samuel 4:1-11 without understanding the truths implied by the actions of the sons of Eli (Hophni and Phinehas) in bringing the ark of the covenant into battle with the Philistines. Surely, this process would be much more straightforward if 1 Samuel 4:1-11 was a simple listing of commands and dictates that God expects of His people regarding His presence and His willingness to be their shield and defender. However, the text is a description of what happened in the life of Israel in a particular instance along with the consequences of the decisions. This text has incredible truths contained within the fabric of the narrative, but those fibers of context (historical, grammatical, canonical, covenantal, redemptive, etc.) must be unraveled to reveal the timeless truths out of which the entire narrative is woven. When truths in the

text are distilled, the preacher can then make provable and authoritative application. The preacher can authoritatively exhort his listeners to fearfully avoid the thought that a human can ever manipulate God into acting contrary to His will. He could warn his people of the consequences of sin, as it is evident the Lord permitted the sons of Eli to act foolishly in order to carry out the death sentence He prophesied in 3:13. Thus a truth can be stated: The foolishness of sinful men will be their own undoing, for the Lord does not support those who dishonor His name.

Matthew 12:9-14—The Man with the Withered Hand

In his account of Jesus healing the man with the withered hand, Matthew records Jesus's interaction with the Jews who ask Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him" (12:10). Jesus responds, saying, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?" (12:11). Jesus's response appears to be an appeal to Exodus 23:4-5 and Deuteronomy 22:4, which are commands to help a neighbor's [or even an enemy's] animal that is lost (Ex 23:4-5) or hurt (Dt 22:4). The commonalities between the two passages are, first, there is a creature that is helpless and in trouble. Second, in both passages the demand for rescue comes immediately upon seeing the creature suffering.

There is a common principle behind both of these commands, which is powerfully at play here when Jesus heals the man on the Sabbath. The principle appears to be: God requires that we help the helpless immediately upon recognizing their condition. Therefore it stands that, according to the Law of Moses, it is right for Jesus to heal the man on the Sabbath, since that is when Jesus comes into contact with the man.

There is never a wrong time to do the right thing. This same principle also appears as the principle condemned in the text prior to this as well, where the Pharisees chastise Jesus because His disciples pluck heads of grain on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8). Jesus responds by saying, “And if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’ You would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath, knows precisely how the Sabbath Law is to be applied. His application of the Sabbath Law is perfectly consistent with the entirety of the Law of God, and His point is that the Pharisees have ignored the command to be merciful (Hos 6:6, Mic 6:6-8). It was the mercy of God toward David that permitted him to violate the law and eat the bread of the Presence; it is the desire of God to show mercy to the weak that requires a distressed animal be helped on the Sabbath; and it is God’s desire to be merciful and help the weak that permits and requires Jesus to heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath.

1 Corinthians 9—Muzzling the Oxen

The Apostle Paul demonstrates his intention that the reader identify the truth principles at work in Scripture when he speaks of ministers having a rightful claim to being paid in 1 Corinthians 9. The application commanded in v.11 is in the form of a question, “If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?” However, Paul bases the application on a truth principle found in a law in Deuteronomy concerning oxen, as he writes, “For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.’”¹⁸ Then the

¹⁸1 Corinthians 9:9 is a citation of Deuteronomy 25:4.

Apostle reveals his use of principlization when he writes, “Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?” (9:10-11). The principle that Paul bases his entire argument on is one which relates to oxen. He is contending that it is God’s design that workers be compensated for their labor, even the animals. Thus Paul demonstrates his use of a biblically-derived principle to make authoritative application. In this text, the reader sees Paul identify a general and timeless principle, which was first applied in a particular case to oxen. Identifying what theological principles are particularly at work in any given passage of Scripture is the task of principlization. Here, Paul identifies a *particularism* of the biblical principle of compensating a worker.¹⁹

Principle Explicit and Principle Implicit Texts

As shown in an example from Genesis 38, this writer believes Scripture presents two kinds of texts when one is speaking of principlization.²⁰ Again, principlization is

¹⁹Kaiser refers to the principles applied in specific instances in Scripture as “*particularismus*.” He identifies one such particularism in Philippians 4:2 where Paul commands Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Kaiser says this is a particularism of the principle that is found in general terms in Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 20-21.

²⁰Kaiser takes this position as well and uses Zechariah 4:6 and 1 Corinthians 9:8 as examples of explicit principles. He uses the narrative text in Genesis 37-50 as an example of a passage that is governed by the implicit principle of God’s providence as pointed to in Genesis 45:5-7 and Genesis 50:20. There are texts that contain neither explicit nor implicit principles and for such cases Kaiser says, “here the search for a

the method of deriving principled truth from Scripture. However, the vast majority of Scripture is narrative, which is a genre of literature that very seldom, if ever, employs explicit truth statements. Narrative is recounting or describing a transpired event. Nevertheless, scriptural narrative is not devoid of propositional truth, which provides the foundation from which principization can proceed. Truths concerning rebellion, unfaithfulness, covetousness, lust, fornication, and the wrath of God are all present in the text. These principles are clothed in the narrative; they are *behind the text*.

Principles in narrative texts are generally implicit, which is why I refer to such texts as *principle-implicit*. Genesis 38 is one such text that is *principle-implicit* in that it does not contain explicit statements of theological truth. Principle-implicit passages are found in more than just narrative literature; they are also found in prophecy, poetry, parables, and even portions of wisdom literature.²¹ In principle-implicit texts, the passage must undergo thorough exegesis, rightly interpreting the cultural, historical, and grammatical issues. Once this is done, the expositor will understand *what the text meant*. But he is still not ready to apply the text. Understanding what the text meant to the pre-Mosaic Israelite culture does not immediately result in authoritative application for the preacher. Many questions arise that must be answered before application can be made, or else the preacher will start instructing his hearers to practice Levirate

general principle must proceed with thoroughness of detectives sifting through a murder scene for clues.” Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 277.

²¹Wisdom literature often shows the reader the outcome of a given action. Behind those actions and outcomes are timeless truths, or principles. For example, Proverbs 14:4 states, “Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.” A principle at work behind the text could be stated thus: “Fruitful work comes at a cost.”

marriage, and possibly even prohibit of birth control.²² Understanding what the text meant is the first step, but the process that must be followed is principlization, which this research is designed to further develop. This process will yield distilled timeless truth that can then be translated into timely applications.

The second type of text is the *principle-explicit* text. One finds such passages in the Psalms, wisdom texts, epistolary literature and law code.²³ Most often, principle-explicit passages will contain the principle within an imperative.²⁴ One might be tempted to think principle-explicit texts do not need to undergo any further principlization because the principle is already explicitly stated. However, principle-explicit texts are still wrapped in cultural, historical, and grammatical layers that must be exegeted. How many preachers have falsely used 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 to declare emphatically that women must wear hats? Paul's concern was the temptation of the

²²Haddon Robinson has spoken of this kind of false application as, "the heresy of application." Ed Rowell, "The Heresy of Application," *Leadership Magazine* (Fall 1997): 22.

²³It is not the intention of this writer to state unequivocally that *all* historical narrative is principle-implicit or that all epistolary literature is principle-explicit. Each individual preaching pericope must be examined on its own to determine whether or not the biblical writer has stated his principle explicitly or not. As will be explained later on, the preacher must ask during his study, "*Did the biblical author make an explicit statement of theological truth that can be directly applied to the modern hearer? Are there theological principles within the text that are implied or at work?*"

²⁴Paul fires a battery of imperatives in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." These commands are the core conduct of all Christians in their pursuit of what is good for themselves and for others. A distilled principle would be, "For one's life to be of personal or corporate benefit, one must rejoice always." The Decalogue in Exodus 20:1-17 is an Old Testament example.

Corinthian Christian women to cast off the symbol of their submission to authority. He was not handing down a timeless dictate that all women must wear hats when praying or prophesying. Thus, while the propositional expression, “But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved,” is explicit in the text, it must still be exegeted and principled before application is made.

Theological Truth Preserved

The principization methodology assumes the truth that Paul is alluding to in 1 Corinthians 9:9, i.e., that there are theological principles embedded within Scripture. For this reason, theological truths can be spoken of as *concrete* in Scripture. Scripture is not entirely a list of abstract principles, though there are abstract principles in various places such as the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. The overwhelming majority of Scripture is concrete theological principles being lived out or violated by the characters, or written about in song or wisdom literature. As noted in previous comments on Genesis 38, there is no explicit statement against adultery or faithlessness in the narrative, but it is clearly understood that principles concerning those issues are embedded in the text—they are concrete. In order to apply those truths, they must first be abstracted or distilled from the text. The concrete nature of Scripture serves to preserve the truth within as the evil of Judah’s actions are forever embedded in elements of the narrative, and so the context preserves the principles. Concrete, embedded principles, once understood in their original context, must be abstracted, and can then be transferred and given modern application.

The cultural elements and context of any given biblical passage do not prohibit the locating of theological truth. Instead, these elements are preservative, as they forever establish the meaning of the passage. Kaiser writes, “Meaning is fixed and unchanging; significance is never fixed and always changing.”²⁵ What Kaiser means here is that the original meaning and intention of the author in writing the text never changes. That authorial intent must be discerned through thorough exegesis and then transferred to *significance*, or application to the modern hearer. This is a very general statement of what happens between exegesis and preaching. It is the contention of this writer that exegetically-derived principled statements of propositional truth are the bridge between hermeneutics and homiletics.²⁶ It will be shown that while many scholars agree that this step is necessary, at this point there has been insufficient research.²⁷ There are no thorough discussions of a formalized process the expositor can follow for moving from exegesis to application while maintaining the vital hermeneutical connection. It is stated that such should be the case, but none have made a thorough presentation of a method to accomplish the task. While there are a growing number of contributors to this discussion, it will be shown that a complete methodology

²⁵Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 41.

²⁶The term “principled bridge” is found in *Grasping God’s Word*, but I started using this language before coming across their work. I believe the Hays do a fine job of pointing out the existence of the bridge, the need to cross it, and some generalizations about how to cross the bridge, but I do not believe their work here to be complete and sufficient in addressing the issue thoroughly. J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 43.

²⁷Research and writing on principledization is currently available; it is insufficient, however, and presently there are no complete systems for the principledization of Scripture.

is not the intention or accomplishment of any of their contributions. Rather, the contributions that have been made are fragmentary and address different aspects of the principlization process.

Relevance of Principlization

Many have identified the need for making practical application in preaching that is in accord with the truth of Scripture, but a formal methodology for deriving the truth to apply has not been sufficiently developed.²⁸ Awbrey has even stated that principlization is an essential key to and distinguishing mark of expository preaching.²⁹ Though the importance of this issue has been recognized amongst theologically conservative scholars, the subject has received only basic acknowledgement and inadequate treatment. Discussions about principlization are relatively recent and therefore have not been thoroughly developed and refined.³⁰ Those concerned with the

²⁸Mayhue summarizes this issue well, writing, “Preaching does not stop with understanding ancient languages, history, culture, and customs. Unless the centuries can be bridged and the message made contemporary and relevant, the preaching experience differs little from a classroom encounter. One must first process the text from original meaning and then principlize the text for current applicability. One’s study falls short of the goal if this step is omitted or slighted.” Richard L. Mayhue, “Rediscovering Expository Preaching,” in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 13. MacArthur reinforces this point, “The task of the expository preachers is to take the mass of raw data from the text and bridge the gap between exegesis and exposition.” John MacArthur, “Moving from Exegesis to Exposition,” in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005) 237.

²⁹“It is the bearing of the truth-claims of a passage that provides expository preaching its distinguishing characteristic—an authoritative disclosure of God’s truth to mankind as his Word is explained and applied.” Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 132.

³⁰Meadors recognizes this fact as a preface to his counterpoint book on the subject. He writes, “As you read the views and responses in this book, you will discover

field of hermeneutics recognize there is more work to be done after understanding what the text of Scripture meant in the original setting.³¹ Those in the field of homiletics take up the task of making practical application in preaching, but they also recognize a presentation of exegesis makes for a good lecture but a poor sermon. Preachers must make practical application, but there is discontinuity created by centuries and millennia of separation between the ancient text of Scripture and the modern person.³² There is a

that this subject is very much a debate in process.” His footnote on this says, “Counterpoints series volumes usually provide views that have become rather fixed representatives on a given subject. This volume, however, is providing an entrée into a subject that is currently emerging. Hence the three final reflective essays are unique for a Counterpoints volume.” Meadors, ed., *Four Views On Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 14.

³¹Osborne writes, “It is my contention that the final goal of hermeneutics is not systematic theology but the sermon. The actual purpose of Scripture is not explanation but exposition, not description but proclamation. God’s Word speaks to every generation, and the relationship between meaning and significance summarizes the hermeneutical task. It is not enough to recreate the original intended meaning of a passage. We must elucidate its significance for our day.” Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 2006. Kaiser also uses the term “significance” to refer to the meaning of the text for the modern audience. He writes, “It would be just as tragic to conclude one’s interpretational responsibilities with the task of what a text meant to the author and the original audience without going on to deal with the contemporary significance of the text. The hermeneutical task must continue on to say what the text means to the contemporary reader or listener.” Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 41-42.

³²Gary Meadors writes about crossing this gap with the term, “beyond the Bible.” By this, he means that the reader of Scripture is supposed to take the original intention of the author and make application to his or her life. In this way, the reader has not violated Scripture’s authorial intent, but has instead taken that authorial intent and made a move to ask how that intention is to be acted upon now in modern times. Even though some have never heard of principlication or theological exegesis, they are still practicing some form of it when they seek to make application of an ancient text to their modern lives. Meadors writes, “Consequently, ‘going beyond the Bible’ is not only a legitimate task, it is a necessary one. Every time we make a judgment about how we relate to biblical patterns or commands and decide that ‘it doesn’t apply to us now,’ we have made a ‘beyond’ judgment to a greater or lesser extent. Or, if we fail to find a

cultural, historical, geographical, and grammatical gap between the biblical world and the modern pulpit.³³ There is also a gap between the disciplines of hermeneutics and homiletics.³⁴ Those in the field of hermeneutics do not venture much further than providing and explaining the method of arriving at the original meaning of the text or the rules of exegesis. Those in the field of homiletics are concerned with sermonic elements such as introductions, illustrations, practical applications, and conclusions. They speak of form, style, unction, outlines, and wordsmithing. Too often, the move from hermeneutics to homiletics is assumed to have taken place honestly and accurately, but in actuality that may not be the case. This is a dangerous assumption and a “stumbling block” that must be set aside through principization.³⁵

specific biblical context that addresses an issue of current concern, we do not assume the Bible has nothing to say, but we make a ‘beyond’ judgment on the basis of our theological understandings. The questions we need to face is, how do we justify our judgments? What model guides our process of applying ancient texts to modern questions?” Meadors, *Four Views On Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 10.

³³Michael Fabarez recognizes the difficulty of transitioning from meaning to application and the need to do it correctly. He writes, “Bringing an application over the centuries from ‘then’ to ‘now’ is not to be improvised in the pulpit, or even left to a few fleeting moments in the study. This is, in fact, the essential discipline that separates an aimless sermon from a truly life-changing sermon.” Michael Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002), 43.

³⁴Daniel Doriani writes, “In an era of specialization, application falls through a crack separating exegesis, ethics, and homiletics. Homileticians stress communication, exegetes discover original meanings, and ethicists typically work with principles.... Scholars pause before publishing outside their field, leaving the integration of exegesis, application, and ethics to others.” Daniel Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: the Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), viii.

³⁵Mike Abendroth, *Jesus Christ: the Prince of Preachers: Learning from the Teaching Ministry of Jesus* (Leominster, UK: Day One Christian Ministries, 2008), 119. Abendroth states it well, when he writes, “Care is needed with this potential stumbling

Conclusion and Methodology of Dissertation

The purpose of this research is to answer the question, “Can a methodology for deriving principled truth from Scripture, which is accurate hermeneutically and more beneficial for the purpose of preaching, be further developed beyond its present limited state?” Biblical justification for the work of principization and a need to further develop a more complete methodology was demonstrated. This writer does not claim that this is the first writing on principization, but believes that the methods presented historically are incomplete and that it is possible to further develop a method of principization. In Chapter 1, the biblical rationale for principizing Scripture and the relevance of such a pursuit has been given. In Chapter 2 a review of the relevant literature will be presented. In Chapter 3 the relevant literature will be evaluated. In Chapter 4, those contributions will be elaborated upon, and synthesized, along with my own contributions, in order to further develop a complete and viable methodology for deriving principled truth from Scripture for the purpose of preaching. In Chapter 5, this principization methodology will be applied to a selected passage from each genre represented in Scripture.

block because many simply breeze right into application without regard for biblical accuracy.”

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

State of the Question

This dissertation is designed to answer the question, “Can a methodology for deriving principlized truth from Scripture, which is accurate hermeneutically and more beneficial for the purpose of preaching, be further developed beyond its present limited state?” To narrow the scope of the question, this research is not intended to address application in a sermon, but rather is designed to formulate a method by which principlized truths can be derived from Scripture, which can then be translated into application points in a sermon. This method of deriving principlized truth, which can then be translated into application points in a sermon, is the gap in research that is insufficiently addressed in discussion of the transition between hermeneutics and homiletics.¹

Scholars, especially in recent times, agree that the pursuit of principlization is necessary.² Jack Kuhatschek describes the research gap well when he writes:

¹Sidney Greidanus identifies this reality, which is his purpose in writing *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. He calls it “a tool to bridge the gap between the department of biblical studies and that of homiletics.” Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), xi. Though he identifies the issue at hand, he does not provide a thorough presentation of the path between hermeneutics and homiletics. His solution is to ascertain the authorial intent of the text and then make that the intent of the sermon. While this is true, there is more to be said and more questions to be asked.

²Gary Meadors, *Four Views On Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 10. Here, Meadors calls the pursuit of biblical theology “a noble task.”

Many books on hermeneutics devote hundreds of pages to interpreting the Bible but spend only five or ten on how to apply it. Typically such books will go to great lengths explaining how to interpret according to the grammatical, cultural, historical and literary aspects of a passage. We learn about figures of speech, typology, symbols, prophecy and poetry. But when it comes to the most important aspect of Bible study, the ultimate goal of all this thoughtful labor, they suddenly run out of things to say!³

Books on hermeneutics are designed to answer questions about what the text means.⁴ Namely, they are useful for discerning the historical and grammatical context of the biblical text. This only presents the *time-bound meaning* of a text, which might provide interesting insight for a biblical lecture, but does not provide sufficient material for an authoritative application to modern hearers.⁵ Forming principled statements of theological truth has been taken up only infrequently as a major concern of those in the field of hermeneutics. For those who have addressed

³Jack Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 8-9.

⁴MacArthur defines hermeneutics/exegesis in this manner: “Exegesis can now be defined as the skillful application of sound hermeneutical principles to the biblical text in the original language with a view to understanding and declaring the author’s intended meaning both to the immediate and subsequent audiences. In tandem, hermeneutics and exegesis focus on the biblical text to determine what is said and what it meant originally.” John MacArthur, “The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy: Expository Preaching” in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005) 22.

⁵There are many scholars who note this same issue. Henry A. Virkler, “A Proposal for the Transcultural Problem,” in *Rightly Divided*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996), 240. Walter Kaiser writes, “It would be just as tragic to conclude one’s interpretational responsibilities with the task of what a text meant to the author and the original audience without going on to deal with the contemporary significance of the text. The hermeneutical task must continue on to say what the text means to the contemporary reader or listener.” Walter C. Kaiser Jr. and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 41-42.

the subject, it is most often given only a basic treatment, if any at all. Many of the previous comments about scholars of hermeneutics are also true of homiletics scholars.

The fragmentary discussions from scholars in the fields of hermeneutics and homiletics will be compiled here in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this research, only those who hold the highest view of Scripture will be considered for insight, as the goal of answering the question at hand is to maintain hermeneutical integrity. Scholars who are dismissive of the inerrancy of Scripture do not provide wise or helpful insight in this regard. The material examined here has been gleaned from fragmentary discussions found in various published works. There are both major and minor contributors, so the material is organized in accordance with the significance and volume of the contribution. As a matter of clarification, in the process of this research it was discovered that the major contributors have proven to be fountainheads for the discussions of others. Several minor contributors have built from the major foundational discussions, but not in a significant fashion. All of the contributions are fragmentary, yet yield enough material to synthesize and build from in order to formulate a more complete methodology of principlization.

A Compilation of Relevant Literature

In his Doctor of Ministry dissertation, Seahawk Lun describes principlization as “extracting application from exegesis”. He finds that much of the discussion surrounding principlization is part of homiletical discussions on application. He notes in his research that, “not much was written about application in a preaching

context before 1980.⁶ According to Lun's research, there has been extensive writing on various aspects of application in preaching since the 1980s, but even within this expansion of interest there has been little written that addresses principization, or "abstracting a theological principle from a biblical text."⁷ Many of the resources that contribute to a methodology of principization were written after 1980.⁸

⁶He comments that in *Biblical Preaching* Haddon Robinson twice uses the word "applies" in his definition of expository preaching, but does not write much on application in that work. He then writes, "*Biblical Preaching* is one of the few standard homiletical texts that are weak or without application in their definitions." James Barga, *How to Prepare Bible Messages* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1969); Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1986); Harold Freeman, *Variety in Biblical Preaching: Innovative Techniques and Fresh Forms* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1987); Donald L. Hamilton, *Homiletical Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992); Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching Without Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House, 1962); Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994); Merrill F. Unger, *Principles of Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995);" Seahawk Lun, "After God's Heart: A Seminar to Equip Pastors with the Process of Theological Principization," (DMin diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, May 2007), 1.

⁷Lun, "After God's Heart," 2.

⁸Kaiser notes the same phenomenon, "One of the largest gains, and unusual benefits, that we have seen in the second half of the twentieth century is the emphasis on the idea that our hermeneutical task is not finished until we, as the contemporary audience, have applied the meaning that we think the author is communicating. There should never be a gap left, yawning between what the text meant and what it means, between the then and the now. That gap may be said to exist only as an academic convenience for a momentary separation in the task of examining two inseparable parts of one whole." Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 272.

Walter C Kaiser Jr.

Walter Kaiser has made, arguably, the most significant contribution to the development of a methodology of principlization. His complete contribution is not found in a single volume, but he has a multitude of comments spread across multiple volumes and various publications. He writes plainly, “A major part of the art of interpreting passages is the task of moving from the specific matters mentioned in the biblical text to the general principles that stand behind those specifics.”⁹ In the seminal book, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, Kaiser places a significant focus on the subject of principlization. In this work, Kaiser points out that theological education has “failed” to teach preachers how to move beyond the basic work of exegesis to viable application. He writes, “None of the theological departments has been specifically charged with assisting the student in the most delicate maneuver of

⁹Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 273. Abraham Kuruvilla wrongly characterizes Kaiser’s principlization model when he says that Kaiser views cultural issues within the text as “seemingly a distraction from the principle in the text” and he asserts that Kaiser claims that “the biblical writer, so it would seem, began with a principle (*behind* the text) and then hunted in his illustration database for an appropriate story in which to couch his principle. Such principles end up having a self-contained existence denuded of all that is textually specific.” Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013), 128. It appears that Kuruvilla has misunderstood Kaiser’s argument or he has simply not read it closely enough to clearly articulate an honest representation. Kaiser does not assert that biblical authors fabricate their writing around principles they were trying to convey. Ironically enough, the process that Kuruvilla offers in his *pericopal theology* is the very idea Kaiser was communicating. Kuruvilla contends the same thing as Kaiser, that there are theological principles to be distilled and generalized in every passage of Scripture that must then be applied with specificity to the modern hearer.

transferring the results of the syntactical-theological analysis of the text into viable didactic or sermon format.”¹⁰

In one of his earliest works, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, Kaiser briefly addresses principlization by boiling down his methodology to three questions:

1. Does the author explicitly state a principle in the passage at hand?
2. If not, does the broader context reveal such a general principle?
3. And, does the specific situation of the text contain any reasons, explanations, or clues that suggest what motivated the writer to be so concrete, rather than abstract, in mentioning the specific illustrations that he chose?¹¹

He then gives careful instruction about where to find principles:

The search for principles in the biblical text is usually not to be found in isolated words or phrases, and it certainly is not to be found in verses used as proof-texts. Such principles, rather, are set forth as the controlling theses in paragraphs, chapters, sections of a book, and even whole books of the Bible.¹²

He gives a more developed and detailed methodology for principlization in *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, which will be briefly summarized here in the steps the expositor is to take when exegeting a passage of Scripture:

First, the expositor must identify the *subject of the preaching text*. This is broken down into steps, warnings, and helpful clues in the text: (1) Determine what the purpose of that particular biblical book is about as a whole, taking care to identify what kind of book it is and what the subject matter is.

¹⁰Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 149.

¹¹Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

¹²Ibid.

(2) Study the major sections of the book to understand the flow of thought and argumentation. Constantly go back to the purpose of the entire book to understand the relation of the parts to the whole. “By analyzing the relationships that exist at this level, the interpreter may find solutions to some of his problems.”

(3) Do not impose favorite personal questions or cultural issues on the text. Remain faithful in ascertaining the subject of the author in writing the text.

(4) To find the subject of a particular passage of Scripture, look for the following three features: a) the theme sentence or topic proposition of each of the paragraphs; b) repeated terms which are defined, or stressed, or give the text an unusual flavor;¹³ and c) the special part that these paragraphs play in the overall theme or argument of the whole book and the section in which they are found.¹⁴

Taking the time and effort to be faithful in discovering the author’s subject in the text enables the preacher to “speak with more confidence that the word we share for moderns has authority which is not our own, but is borrowed from the text.”¹⁵ Here Kaiser shows the inextricable connection between the textual fidelity of the expositor and his authority in preaching.

(5) The preacher must then identify the emphasis of a passage by locating important words and key terms. Kaiser thus exhorts the expositor to look for “the text’s own pattern of emphasis as it is often indicated by some stylistic, grammatical,

¹³Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 155.

or rhetorical device that supplies the authoritative basis for principizing the text.”¹⁶

He then remarks that there are times when such indicators are not necessarily present, and when that is the case, the preacher must “rely on other factors to guide him in the principizing or application stage.”¹⁷

The key to discerning the emphasis of any biblical passage is to identify the theological purpose of the text in the plan of God. Kaiser calls this process “the *syntactical-theological* method of exegesis.” In this process, the preacher analyzes the “emerging theology” in the text, that is, the theological emphasis of the passage in the narrative of the Word of God as a whole *up to that point*. Kaiser warns that this will not be possible if the preacher uses later theology to try to unpack the passage (e.g., using Revelation as a means of locating the theological emphasis in Genesis). Using only antecedent theology to understand what is taught in the passage reveals what God meant at that point in time in the original author’s text. Using later theology circumvents the author’s original meaning and imposes on every passage a meaning about the second coming of Christ. He writes:

If this was the theology which was central to the interest of the audience in the writer’s day, then could it not also still function for us in the same way? If this informing theology was what made the text timeless and full of abiding values for the people in that day (and we believe that it was), then could not this same diachronic accumulation of theology provide the same heart of the

¹⁶ Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156.

¹⁷ Ibid. It is important to note here that Kaiser does not offer examples of passages that do not offer such indicators of authorial emphasis. Nor does he present any suggestions to deal with such passages.

message for all peoples in all times? Yes, for even in its historical peculiarity, it also carried in its very bosom an enduring plan of the everlasting God.¹⁸

For Kaiser, identifying the theological doctrines the original author was conveying is the “key to all the emphases, applications, appeals, and offers of hope or warnings of judgment which must be made if the text is to mean anything to our day and age.”¹⁹

(6) Organize the Main Points of the Sermon. After identifying the subject and emphasis of the preaching passage, Kaiser says the preacher must write out the “important sentences in each targeted text.”²⁰ These are the sentences from which the main points of the sermon are to be built.

To formulate the main points of the sermon from the author’s purpose sentences (statements of emphasis), the preacher is to remove all “dated statements ... all proper names, places, incidents, and descriptions.”²¹ He says failure to remove dated statements from the main points of the sermon is the “main pitfall to avoid in

¹⁸Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 157. Kaiser makes the leap here that he has identified previously as the problem—the move from exegesis to application. He does not explain further here how to formulate an application or challenge other than to say it comes from the subject and emphasis of the author. To be sure, application must come from the original author’s intention, but there is more to be said about that move from authorial intent to sermon application.

²¹Ibid., 156. In *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, he writes of the same step in these words, “First, avoid all use of proper names in the outline except for any of God’s names. This means that there must be no references to any of the heroes of the Bible and no references to the cities, nations, territories, or the like in the outline of the sermon. All of that immediately dates the outline and pulls it away from being a contemporary word to people of today.” Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57.

formulating these main points.”²² These proposition statements “must be so worded as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text.”²³

(7) Give a Strong Conclusion. To develop a strong conclusion, Kaiser suggests asking, “where the author thought that God was leading the original audience who first heard this message. Usually that is all that we need to observe and the pattern for our own conclusion will be set.”²⁴ From this point, Kaiser believes the homiletics department should take over in sermon crafting.²⁵

Kaiser believes lack of theological exegesis is a main problem for many preachers: “The missing ingredient in most sermon preparation is theological exegesis....The Achilles’ heel for many among the trained clergy is the failure to bring the Biblical text from its B.C. or first-century A.D. context and to relate it directly and legitimately to the present day.”²⁶ He gives five steps to follow after

²²Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157. Also, see Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58.

²³ Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 158.

²⁴Ibid., 163.

²⁵He writes, “We believe that the departments of homiletics in the theological seminary should now take over and carry the student the rest of the way.” Taking these six steps is what Kaiser refers to as “principlizing a Biblical text for public proclamation of the Word.” Ibid.

²⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 131. It is noteworthy that Kaiser makes a subtle leap here from exegeting the text to arrive at an original meaning before moving to application to the modern audience. His assumption, it seems, is that theological exegesis is the bridge, but his explanation of theological exegesis in this work takes the exegete only to the point of the timeless theological principle. He does not take it a step further and show that the theological principle must then be

coming to an understanding of the original meaning of a biblical text in order to translate that meaning into timeless theological truth. Kaiser puts forward the following steps to be taken after locating the time-bound meaning of the text:

1. Remove all proper nouns except God.
2. Remove past-tense verbs.
3. Remove third person pronouns.
4. Use present-tense verbs.
5. Use first-person plural pronouns.²⁷

In his most recent contribution to the discussion on principlization, Kaiser offers suggestions on how to address the modern hearer with principlized statements of theological truth derived from the text of Scripture. The main issue here is understanding whether the situation being addressed in the passage of Scripture is a cultural expression of a timeless truth that needs to be re-contextualized for the modern audience, or if the truth is still understandable in its original cultural context.

1) In some cases in interpreting the Bible, we will keep the principle affirmed in the theology taught, along with the cultural-historical expression of that principle where the cultural expression remains similar to its meaning in our times as well. [responsibility between husband and wife]

2) On other occasions, we will keep the theology of the passage (i.e., one that is now embodied in a principle), but replace the behavioral expression from our contemporary world. ... Principles, then, must be given priority over accompanying cultural elements, especially when directed to the times and

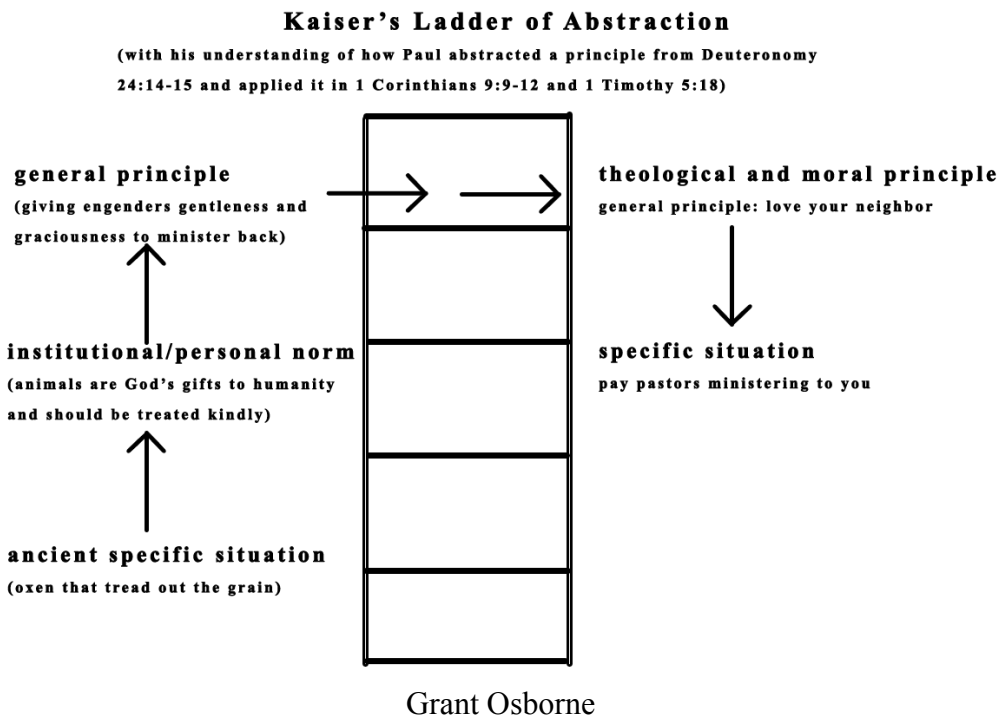
coupled with the practical application. That is the task of the methodology of principlization, which is being presented in this dissertation.

²⁷ Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58.

settings in which that text was written—times now different and separate from the contemporary manner of expressing that same principle.²⁸

Kaiser also provides what he terms “The Ladder of Abstraction.”²⁹ This model depicts the move from the specific application of a principled truth in Scripture to a general restatement of that same theological principle in an undated/timeless format. The principle can then be used to address the modern situation. The following is a visual rendering of how he describes “The Ladder of Abstraction” in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*:

FIGURE 1: KAISER’S LADDER OF ABSTRACTION



²⁸Kaiser, “A Principled Model,” in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 21.

²⁹Ibid., 25. This model was first suggested by Kaiser in *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament*. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 164-166.

Grant Osborne writes on the contextualization of a biblical principle for application in his major work, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*: “The major difficulty in contextualizing Scripture is deciding exactly what are the cultural or time-bound elements in a passage and what are the supracultural or eternal principles.”³⁰ He presents three basic steps to determine whether the principles in the passage are cultural or eternal:

1. “Note the extent to which supracultural indicators are found in the passage.”³¹ Simply put, does the text have indicators that the commands or principles therein are based in timeless grounds such as the Creation order, or the character of God? If so, it may be very well be a normative command stated explicitly in the text. If the command is wrapped in cultural context, such as meat offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8-10), then other aspects must be considered, which are described in the next two steps.
2. “Second, we must determine the degree to which the commands are tied to cultural practices current in the first century but not present today.” In other words, how closely is the command tied to cultural matters that were unique to the first century (e.g., Corinthian head coverings, 1 Cor 11:2-16)?³²
3. “Third, we must note the distance between the supracultural and cultural indicators. For instance, the Old Testament passages on creation and the Fall that Paul used relate to the wife’s submission and are applied to the issues of the veil and speaking/teaching. This may favor the view that these commands are normative at the deeper level (submission), but cultural at the surface level (wearing the veil and teaching). In other words, distance may indicate that Paul himself was *contextualizing a normative principle* to address a current cultural problem. On the other hand the issue of authority in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 may indicate that the prohibition against teaching is normative. The interpreter must ask whether the distance between the supracultural and cultural indicators is sufficient to justify the decision that the surface command applies to the first-century alone and only the

³⁰Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 420.

³¹Ibid., 422-423.

³²Ibid., 423.

underlying principle (in this case submission) is supracultural. If the distance is sufficient we would apply the surface command only in modern cultures that parallel the first-century situation. For example, women missionaries in Islamic cultures might (I would say *should*) choose to go about with their heads covered.”³³

Following these three points, Osborne then suggests five guidelines or criteria to determine supracultural content (timeless truth) in order to ultimately make practical application:

1. Try to determine the extent to which the underlying theological principle dominates the surface application. When we have ascertained the principle on which the command is based, we can delineate the extent to which they overlap. ... By separating the cultural practice of the command from the principle, we can reapply it today, greeting one another with Christian love and commitment, but not necessarily with a “holy kiss.”³⁴
2. See if the writer depends on traditional teaching or if he instead applies a temporary solution to a specific cultural problem. These, of course, are not mutually exclusive alternatives. However, it is helpful to recognize when the author borrows from earlier teaching, which shows that the current situation does not entirely control the response. Paul’s use of traditional teaching and Old Testament proof texts must caution us before we too easily assume that the passages regarding women in the church no longer apply to our day.
3. When the teaching transcends the cultural biases of the author or readers, it is more likely to be normative. This is true regarding Galatians 3:28 and the issue of slavery, as well as passages related to the universal mission. Clearly, these are not tied to any specific cultural situation and are therefore programmatic theological statements.
4. If the command is wholly tied to a cultural situation, it is not timeless in itself.³⁵

³³Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

³⁴Ibid., 424.

³⁵Ibid., 425.

5. Commands that are by nature moral or theological will be closely tied to the divine will. Commands dealing generally with issues such as adultery or prayer, by nature transcend any particular cultural setting. Here I would note that the later prohibition against polygamy was not merely due to cultural change, but was rooted in the progressive revelation of God's will. In the same way, we must see the prohibition of homosexuality as normative, tied as it is to divinely established moral laws.³⁶

Ben Awbrey

Ben Awbrey views principlization as a necessary corollary to the fact that the Bible is truth. He writes:

The Bible is substantial truth. Expository preaching, if it is indeed preaching that expounds a scriptural passage, should not fail to reflect this fact. Therefore, the main points of the sermon should be statements of truth, timeless truths, which are far more than organizational memory pegs offered to the hearers to help them hang thoughts germane to the passage. No passage of the Bible is atheological—without theology. The main points of an exposition of a biblical passage must reflect the theology of the text. The operative word here is *reflect*.³⁷

Awbrey argues that explaining the meaning of a passage is accomplished through principlized statements of theological truth: “[T]he declared theological framework of the passage will be the statements of theological principle—the appropriate content which must constitute the structure of an expository sermon.”³⁸ For Awbrey, then, essential to an expository sermon is the declaration of principlized truth, which gets at the essence of the passage (authorial intent), and thus supplies

³⁶Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-426.

³⁷Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 129.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 131.

clarity, organization, and authority to the sermon, because its controlling principle is the text of Scripture.³⁹

The following are five requirements Awbrey presents for statements of theological principle. First, “The statements will be primarily declarative or imperative in nature, although they will occasionally be interrogative.” Second, the principled statements must be made using complete sentences. Third, they “must be cast in the present tense but occasionally the future tense may be required by the passage. Except for the instance in which an act or statement of the Godhead becomes a part of the statement of theological principle, the past tense dooms a preacher to affect nothing more than a lecture.” Using the present tense will rightly

³⁹Kevin Vanhoozer argues that principization has only a modest place in the purpose of Scripture. He argues that the purpose of Scripture is instead to see the drama of the actions of God and godly people. In that way, a person is to develop the mind of Christ. He writes, “Again, I do see a modest role for something like principizing, but the primary thing is to form and transform biblical interpreters through their apprenticeship to the particular habits of prophetic and apostolic judgment intrinsic to and embodied in the biblical texts.” Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.” in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 62. Vanhoozer’s hermeneutic is uniquely opaque because he shrouds his entire discussion in theatrical language. Essentially, he is concerned with seeing the big picture of passages of Scripture and the big picture of God’s work. It is unclear how it could be possible for anyone to be formed or transformed by “habits of prophetic and apostolic judgment intrinsic to and embodied in the biblical text” if they are not supposed to get to the point and divine a statement of theological truth. The descriptions an interpreter would use in explaining a biblical passage are principled statements of theological truth. To be very basic, the interpreter would partially explain Genesis 38 by saying, “We see here that *adultery is bad*.” “Adultery is bad” is a statement of theological truth. Doing this does not hold a “modest role,” but rather a basic and primary role. For more on theodrama, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

convey “that what is true now was equally true then.”⁴⁰ Fourth, regarding personal pronouns used in principlized statements of theological truth, “one” is acceptable, but “the use of the first person singular ‘you’ or the use of the first person plural ‘we’ may be better terms to bring the truth to the hearers.” He continues that “usages of God’s names are always appropriate,” but “other proper names of the Bible are not to be used since they create distance in time between the text and its hearers.”⁴¹ Fifth, Awbrey contends that principlized statements of theological truth must be applicational in that they “must make reference to the thinking, attitudes, motivations, which precede and accompany the action the text requires.”⁴² The applicational form of principlized statements of theological truth are referred to as “the immediacy of principlization.”⁴³

Regarding the finished product of a principlized statement of theological truth, Awbrey points out two erroneous principlization processes that can result in five final product errors.”⁴⁴ The goal in principlization is to achieve an accurate

⁴⁰Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

⁴¹Ibid., 137.

⁴²Ibid., 136.

⁴³Ibid., 138.

⁴⁴Ibid., 152.

statement, which captures both the essence and the extent of the author's text.⁴⁵ The two erroneous principalization processes are as follows:

1. Sub-principalization of Scripture is a principalized statement that communicates, "less than what the text teaches—less than what the text teaches in essence, less than what the text teaches in extent, or both" and that "can take place because the terminology used is either too specific or too general."⁴⁶
2. Supra-principalization of Scripture is a principalized statement that communicates "theological principles that are more than what the text teaches—more than what the text teaches in essence or more than what the text teaches in extent" which occurs, "because the terminology used is too general."⁴⁷

The five final product errors Awbrey outlines are as follows:

1. The *hyper-principalized* statement is an error of supra-principalization, which causes the statement to communicate more in essence and extent than the author intended.
2. The *supra-principalized* statement is caused by language being too general, resulting in the communication of more than the text was communicating in the first instance.
3. The *meta-principalized* statement is the result of failure to express the essence of the text, while at the same time overstating the extent.
4. The *sub-principalized* statement is caused by using language that is too specific, resulting in the communication of less than what the text says.

⁴⁵Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance* 152-153. It appears that what Awbrey means by "essence" is the essential meaning or truth of the statement, and the "extent" refers to whatever modifying context or clauses limit the meaning of the text.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 154.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 156.

5. The *under-principlized* statement is caused by a total sub-principlization process, resulting in communicating less than what the text means in both essence and extent.⁴⁸

Awbrey's point in these examples is to show that a principlized statement will not express the essence or extent of a passage of Scripture if it is too general or too specific.⁴⁹ He does note that while principlizing too generally or too specifically are both undesirable and to be avoided, speaking too generally is more damaging.

Using terminology that is too general is more egregious than using terminology that is too specific. To say less than what the text means is undesirable since we fail to communicate the fullness of the text. However, to ascribe a meaning that is more than what the text means robs the text of its meaning since it is given a meaning that it does not have. In other words, a partially correct understanding of a text must compare favorably to a complete misunderstanding of the text.⁵⁰

All of these errors are characterized by imprecise language in the principlized statement. This could be because the expositor is fundamentally incorrect in his interpretation of the text, insufficiently synthesizing the details of the passage, or just plain unwilling to do the work required to be as precise as possible, in the power of the Spirit, to clearly restate the essence and extent of the text's meaning.⁵¹

⁴⁸Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 164-167.

⁴⁹Ibid., 157.

⁵⁰Ibid., 167.

⁵¹It is noteworthy that principlization for the purpose of preaching is not the dictation of a systematic theology. The purpose of principlization is to communicate the emerging theology of the text at hand. A systematic theology is built by organizing together all of the principlized statements of theology relevant to the particular theology (e.g., soteriology). If the emerging theology of the passage is not captured in the principlized statements, then the passage has not been principlized correctly. It is an abuse of the text to communicate principlized statements that are

Daniel Doriani

Much of Daniel Doriani's contribution to the methodology of principlization comes from his book, *Putting the Truth to Work*. Here he helpfully points out seven different ways in which the biblical text generates timeless truths or principles, including rules, ideals, doctrines, redemptive acts in narrative, exemplary acts in narrative, biblical images or symbols, and songs or prayers.⁵² His list is not exhaustive, but it demonstrates that there are many different ways in which Scripture houses principles for application.

Doriani contributes to the discussion of principlization in that he deals with how to accurately derive application from various genres represented in Scripture. While he may refer to this as pursuing "application," his methodology is very similar to Kaiser's methodology of principlization, and so it will be considered here under the same name.

Regarding biblical narratives, he offers five guidelines to remember when moving from exegesis to application. These guidelines are here distilled into nine questions the expositor should ask when dealing with biblical narratives:

1. What does this narrative say about the story of God's work of redemption?

informed by later theology rather than solely from the emerging theology of the text. If later theology or antecedent theology is the emphasis, then the text is not preached, and the significance of *that particular text* will not be accurately understood or communicated. For full discussion on this, see Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 133-161, and Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 170-181.

⁵²Daniel Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 82-92.

2. Since God acts according to His unchanging nature, and since past actions indicate what He might do in parallel circumstances today, what are the ways in which God responded to the event(s) in question?
3. Since we are created in God's image, how might His image-bearers respond in like fashion?
4. What are proper/improper responses to God as demonstrated by the characters in this narrative?
5. Knowing this is not an isolated story, how does this narrative fall within God's plan of redemption?
6. Does the narrative indicate that imitation of a protagonist is appropriate?
7. Do any of the characters' actions correlate with theological principles in Scripture?
8. How are the language, social structure, and customs of the original setting different from those of the contemporary audience?
9. Are the character's actions unique to his office and therefore inimitable?⁵³

Concerning explicit biblical rules and principles, Doriani insists the expositor remember the difference between a rule and a principle. A rule is a narrowly defined mandate, while a principle is a broad statement of truth. Rules must be unraveled through careful exegesis, while principles must be meditated upon to consider how they might be applied in various situations. In both cases, hermeneutical integrity is paramount, but principles essentially are what they are. Rules are often couched in specific examples that must be unwound in order to find congruency and applicability in the contemporary setting. For close examination of rules, Doriani provides four steps in the form of questions:

1. What was the original meaning in the original setting?

⁵³Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 211-212.

2. How much specificity and transferability is present within this command? If not directly transferable, is there a principle behind the command?
3. How does this command answer the four questions the listener has?
4. How does the command reflect the Father's character, the Son's work, or the Spirit's ministry? If the law exposes sin, lead people to repent and seek mercy in Jesus.⁵⁴

He further refines the process by advising the preacher to determine if the law applies "(1) identically, (2) analogously, and (3) typologically."⁵⁵ These rules in Scripture are, according to Doriani:

... inspired examples of the way to embody broad principles. *Rules incarnate, illustrate, and clarify principles.* The legal sections of the Mosaic code seem comprehensive at first, but close inspection reveals them to be case laws that illustrate general principles. These rules are culture-specific, making them hard to translate from one culture to another. Yet they supply the particularity, the detailed embodiment of biblical rules, that we need.⁵⁶

Doriani then provides seven guiding questions the expositor needs to answer in determining the applicability of rules and principles in Scripture:

1. Does the book itself limit the application of the teaching?
2. Does later revelation limit the scope of the teaching?
3. Does the passage present a broad moral principle or a specific manifestation of one?
4. Do cultural conditions make it appropriate to apply teaching in new ways for new cultures?

⁵⁴Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 241.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 246.

5. If a cultural form in the text still exists today, does it have the same significance it once did?
6. Is a law rooted in something permanent, such as the creation order, the character of God, the Decalogue, or the plan of redemption? Or is it grounded in something temporary, such as the permission Moses gave Israel to divorce due to hardness of heart?
7. Is the command contrary to the standards of the day, part of a biblical protest against ungodly standards? If so, it is probably binding.⁵⁷

In a recent *Viewpoint* book, Doriani does not oppose Kaiser's principlizing method, but puts an emphasis on the redemptive-historical approach.⁵⁸ In his chapter in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, Doriani's emphasis on the redemptive-historical approach is to the effect that the practice of abstracting principles from any given text must not be at the cost of "push[ing] this core truth into the background,"⁵⁹ which is the truth of how that passage contributes to God's plan of redemption, finding its climax in the Incarnation, substitutionary atonement, and resurrection of the Son of God, Christ Jesus.

Doriani is critical of Kaiser's approach, not only because he thinks it pushes the redemptive-historical emphasis wrongly to the background, but also because he contends that principlization ignores the various forms of revelation in the search for propositional truth. He writes:

⁵⁷Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 249-250.

⁵⁸Daniel M. Doriani, "A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.," in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 52-53.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 53.

Second, and more seriously, principlizing's insistence on timeless, propositional truth privileges one form of divine communication above others. While we must never deny or even minimize the importance of propositional truth, we must remember that revelation comes in many forms. Alongside propositions, the Bible contains commands, questions, prayers, promises and curses, riddles, vows, parables, and more.⁶⁰

He then provides an example he feels demonstrates the abuse of principlization. The text he uses is Mark 8:14-27, where Jesus rebukes His disciples for their lack of understanding when He tells them to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod” (8:15). Doriani observes that, “Instead of presenting a proposition: ‘I can provide all necessary bread,’ or a command: ‘You must trust me to provide,’ Jesus upbraids them with a string of *eight* rhetorical questions.”⁶¹ Doriani is correct in his observation that Jesus responds with rhetorical questions instead of a command or a proposition, but it is a false dichotomy to conclude that the rhetorical form of Jesus's response negates the propositional truth behind it. In fact, that is precisely the propositional truth Jesus leads the disciples to affirm, and of which Doriani also observes, “Jesus expects them to know the answers! How devastating that they do not; how imperative that they search the matter out.”⁶² Perhaps Doriani misses the point of the pericope, which one could argue is Mark 8:1-30. The passage begins with the Feeding of the Four Thousand from just a few small fish and seven loaves (8:1-10). Then, the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees is in view because they are seeking a sign from Him when, ironically,

⁶⁰Doriani, “A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.,” 54.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 54.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 55.

He has just fed a multitude miraculously (8:11-13). The spiritual blindness of the disciples is in view when they cannot see how this miracle proves Jesus as the Christ. Jesus warns them of the leaven of unbelief spread by the Pharisees and Herod (8:14-21). Spiritual blindness is still an issue when Jesus demonstrates His Messianic power and authority to heal the handicap of physical blindness, as He restores the blind man in Bethsaida (8:22-26). Ultimately, the capstone of the entire passage is the demonstration God's sovereign power and authority to open the eyes of the spiritually blind, as He graciously reveals to Peter that Jesus is the Christ of God (8:27-30). This confession comes just a few paragraphs after the disciples, including Peter, are rebuked for their spiritual blindness. Perhaps the principled truth behind the pericope could be stated in this way: "Spiritual blindness is demonstrated by the inability to see the work of God and believe, but God in sovereign grace opens the eyes of the spiritually blind to see and believe in the Lord Jesus."

Dorani rightly emphasizes that the pursuit of principization must not overshadow or diminish in any way the "christocentricity of Scripture and the Bible's character as the narrative of God's redemptive acts."⁶³ However, it would be a false conclusion to posit that principization and a Christocentric hermeneutic are at odds. In the pursuit of preaching Christ from all of Scripture, the expositor must get to Jesus *through the text*, not by abandoning the text. To understand a passage and properly convey the understanding, the expositor must distill principled statements of theological truth. This writer contends that principization does in fact provide the

⁶³Dorani, "A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.," 56.

path to Jesus in any given passage. For instance, in Leviticus 7:17-18, Moses writes: “What remains of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned up with fire. If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten on the third day, he who offers it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be credited to him. It is tainted, and he who eats of it shall bear his iniquity.”

To make the interpretive move straight to Jesus in this passage is to miss the point of the passage and the truth it conveys about Jesus as well. To say, “This law has no bearing on the Christian because Jesus is our sacrifice and He fulfilled the Law” is to miss the point entirely, and to miss the Christological significance as well. The key to this passage, just as it is with all the rest, is to see the principle at work. The Law of God states that a sacrifice not consumed in three days is to be burned, which begs the question, “Why is it to be burned?” That question is answered in v.18 where the sacrifice is declared “tainted” [פְּגוּלָה—a “foul thing”] on the third day. Quite plainly, the food of the sacrifice has *spoiled* and the corruption of rot has entered it. Before the rot occurs, the holy sacrifice is to be destroyed, which begs the question, “Why is a holy sacrifice to be destroyed before it rots?” The answer is apparent and clear, which can now be packaged in a statement of theological truth: God does not allow His holy sacrifice to see decay. That is the point that is being taught in Leviticus 7:17-18. Now, seeing the Christological significance is clear and powerful. God raises Jesus up from the dead, His Holy sacrifice for sins, because God decrees, “You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let Your Holy One see corruption,” which is first declared by David then preached by the Apostles as the explanation for

why God raises Jesus from the dead.⁶⁴ Here it is shown that principlization and the “christocentricity of Scripture and the Bible’s character as the narrative of God’s redemptive acts”⁶⁵ are all achieved and rather than being in competition for priority, are seen to be working in concert.

Mark L. Strauss

Mark Strauss offers up a traditionally agreed-upon methodology for arriving at contextualized application of biblical truth via principlization: Establish, “the meaning of the text in its original historical and literary context”; identify, “the divine ethic, ethical ideal, or mind of Christ behind the specific teaching or commands of Scripture (often the term ‘principles’ is used here)”; and determine, “ways in which this ethical ideal can be lived out in contemporary contexts.”⁶⁶

Strauss summarizes his criteria for identifying principles in Scripture in the following eight categories:

1. Criterion of Purpose: One of the most widely acknowledged criteria is the identification of the purpose or intention behind the specific commands of Scripture. ...The challenge, in cases like this, is exegeting the text accurately to discern the cultural significance and purpose behind the command. Exegetical uncertainty results in applicational ambiguity.

⁶⁴See Acts 2:37, 13:35.

⁶⁵Dorani, “A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.,” 56.

⁶⁶Mark L. Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology: A Reflection by Mark L. Strauss,” in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 293.

2. Criterion of Cultural Correspondence (Coherence; Analogy): The closer the cultural or historical context to our own, the more likely the command (directly) reflects a universal value.
3. Criterion of Canonical Consistency: This criterion asserts that ethical imperatives that remain unchanged throughout the Bible—in diverse cultural, social, and historical situations—are more likely to reflect God’s will for today than those that differ in times and places.
4. Criterion of Countercultural Witness: This criterion claims that “command [which] run counter to contemporary cultural standards and so may be viewed as divine ‘correctives’ to the failures of human culture.”
5. Criterion of Cultural Limitations: Caution must be exercised when an author is operating within strong cultural or societal constraints. ... Just as countercultural statements in Scripture are likely to transcend specific situations, so imperatives that appear to be concessions to culture are *less likely* to have universal application.⁶⁷
6. Criterion of Creation Principle: The rationale here is that all of God’s created order prior to the fall was “very good” (Gen. 1:31), so patterns established in Eden transcend cultural norms.
7. Criterion of the Character of God: Fundamental attributes of God, such as love and justice, provide adjudication in disputed areas or when cultural background is obscure.
8. Criterion of Redemptive Priority: Commands directly related to God’s historical-redemptive purpose take priority over (lesser) issues of church order and function.⁶⁸

⁶⁷His example here refers to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. In the Bible commands given regarding slavery assume that slavery is part of the culture. “Paul’s failure to call for the full emancipation of slaves must be judged within a cultural context where to do so would have resulted in immediate arrest and execution. While Paul repeatedly hints at the discrepancy between the redemption provided by Christ and the institution of slavery (1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 3:28, Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:24; Philem. 16-17), he is unwilling or unable to openly oppose it. Just as countercultural statements in Scripture are likely to transcend specific situations, so imperatives that appear to be concessions to culture are *less likely* to have universal application.”

⁶⁸Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 294-298.

Haddon Robinson

Haddon Robinson identifies three levels, or three worlds, that expositors must be involved in: “To preach effectively, therefore, expositors must be involved in three different worlds: the world of the Bible, the modern world, and the particular world in which we are called to preach.”⁶⁹ Robinson agrees with the majority of orthodox expositors that a passage of Scripture had a specific purpose for which it was written originally, and then also a timeless theological significance, and ultimately that theological significance is brought upon the contemporary audience through application. He describes this as “an idea to be explained ... a proposition to be proven ... a principle to be applied.”⁷⁰

In a 1997 interview with Ed Rowell of *Leadership Journal*, Robinson gave a detailed description of his method of abstracting principlized truth for the purpose of preaching. In the article, “The Heresy of Application,” Robinson describes what he refers to as “The Ladder of Abstraction.” He writes, “I picture a ‘ladder of abstraction’ that comes up from the biblical world and crosses over and down to the modern setting. I have to be conscious how I cross this ‘abstraction ladder.’ I want to make sure the biblical situation and the current situation are analogous at the points I am making them connect.”⁷¹ This step he mentions is by no means the first step of

⁶⁹Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: the Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 73.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 118-124.

⁷¹Ed Rowell, “The Heresy of Application: An Interview with Haddon

the sermonizing process, but it is rather in reference to the process of applying the principle that is abstracted. The step, then, is this: In order to apply the abstracted principle; find a contemporary situation that is analogous to the situation the biblical writer is addressing.

Referring to the Mosaic prohibition against boiling a young goat in its mother's milk (Ex 23:19), Robinson says the principle for application is not directly transferrable. Rather, there is a principle within that command that becomes apparent when it is abstracted through exegesis. The specific prohibition is pointing to a broader principle against idolatrous worship practices. To distill the principle for application, Robinson says, "You must climb the ladder of abstraction a couple of levels until you reach the principle: You should not associate yourself with idolatrous worship, even in the ways that do not seem to have direct association with physically going to the idol."⁷² To generalize this step for the purpose of this work, it can be stated as follows: Identify the general (timeless) principle by understanding and peeling away the layers of specificity in the passage.

Robinson then outlines the steps needed to climb his Ladder of Abstraction: "First, I abstract up to God. Every passage has a vision of God, such as God as Creator or Sustainer. Second, I ask, What is the depravity factor? What in humanity rebels against that vision of God?"⁷³

Robinson," *Leadership Journal* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 20-27.

⁷²Rowell, "The Heresy of Application," 20-27.

⁷³Ibid.

Robinson gives a helpful description of evaluating the implications of a principle in Scripture. There are five levels of implications that he describes using the command “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex 20:14):

1. A *necessary* implication of “You shall not commit adultery” is you cannot have a sexual relationship with a person who is not your spouse.
2. A *probable* implication is you ought to be very careful of strong bonding friendships with a person who is not your spouse.
3. A *possible* implication is you ought not travel regularly to conventions or other places with a person who is not your spouse.
4. An *improbable* conclusion is you should not at any time have lunch with someone who is not your spouse.
5. An *impossible* implication is you ought not have dinner with another couple because you are at the same table with a person who is not your spouse.⁷⁴

Michael Fabarez

Michael Fabarez proposes a series of steps that must be taken after the meaning of the text has been determined. That is, after the exegesis is complete, he moves on to look for the “intended impact on the original audience,”⁷⁵ or the authorial intent. For Fabarez, understanding the original intended application will give way to the principle that is timeless and applicable in the contemporary setting. To understand the original intended application he outlines four steps:

1. “Put Yourself in Their Sandals” by asking, “What did the psalmist or prophet or apostle have in mind?” or “What did the Holy Spirit intend to prompt in

⁷⁴Rowell, “The Heresy of Application,” 20-27.

⁷⁵Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 40.

the people who initially heard this?” or “What action did He expect the people to perform as a result of this teaching?”

2. “Camp on the Imperatives,” which means looking for the imperative verbs in the text. When these are found, “the application to the original audience is usually obvious.”
3. “Decide if a narrative passage was given to serve as a template for them to follow.”
4. “Use and compare other clear imperatives to keep your determinations on track.”⁷⁶

Next, after “having determined how the passage at hand was to be applied by the ancients, we are poised to think about the generation to which we are called to preach.”⁷⁷ Fabarez gives four steps for arriving at application, but for this discussion on principization, the first two steps are pertinent. Both steps are delineated by multiple questions to be asked of the text. These questions serve to help the expositor peel away cultural or covenantal elements that are clothing the timeless principle:

Step 1: “Note the factors to limit the transfer of application” by asking:

First Questions: “Does the immediate context limit the target of my application?” or “Is there anything in the context of the passage that might show why this application is limited to a particular target audience?” He notes, “The *level of abstraction* for each text’s application will be determined by the contextual clues that limit the application to a specific target audience.”⁷⁸

Second Questions: “Does any other part of the Bible limit the target of the application? It may be that the immediate context does not limit the

⁷⁶Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 40-42.

⁷⁷Ibid., 43.

⁷⁸Ibid., 44.

application of a passage, but a wider consideration of the whole of Scripture does.”⁷⁹

Third Questions: “Does a cultural condition limit the target of the application?” By way of example, Fabarez points to Paul’s command to Timothy to take wine for his stomach (1 Tm 5:23) and says that the cultural condition of medicine has changed to the point that the use of modern medicine would be the appropriate application today and not wine.⁸⁰

Fourth Question: “Does a unique historical condition limit the target of the application?” This is akin to the second question in that “the rest of Scripture will help us determine if the passage at hand offers a historical or theological reason why the specific application was presented to the original recipients.” As an example, Fabarez points to Jesus’ command to the rich ruler to sell all that he has and follow Him (Lk 18:22). Here, according to Fabarez, the principle to be applied is limited by the unique situation that the rich man is in, and that Jesus’ command is not intended for direct transfer, such that all believers liquidate their assets. Rather, “Jesus demanded a break from the hold that money had on the rich man, hence this distinctive command.”⁸¹

Step 2: “Add your knowledge of your audience to the application” by asking:

- 1) “What specifically does your audience have in common with the original audience?”
- 2) “In what specific areas does your audience lack continuity with the original audience?”
- 3) “How is my audience currently practicing the application?”
- 4) “How is my audience currently neglecting or abusing the application?”⁸²

Daniel Overdorf

⁷⁹Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

⁸⁰Ibid., 45.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., 48-50.

Daniel Overdorf makes a significant contribution to a more complete methodology of principlization, particularly in the area of ascertaining principles from narrative portions of Scripture, and also in identifying dangers to avoid in the process of principlization. He suggests asking the following questions of the text in order to identify the implications of narrative portions of Scripture:

1. Why do we need to know about this incident?
2. How does this story translate to life and faith today?
3. What does the text promise that applies universally, to both Abraham and us?
4. What encouragements apply universally?
5. If a listener took this text seriously, how might it make a difference in his or her decisions, relationships, or service to the kingdom?⁸³

To fill out the remainder of his principlization methodology, Overdorf provides a ten-step process of questions that move the expositor from hermeneutics to principlization and then application:

1. *Biblical teaching*: What did God originally teach through this text?
2. *Original purpose*: How did God intend this text to affect its original readers?
3. *Comparison of audiences*: How do my listeners compare with the original readers?
4. *Listener need*: What listener need does this text address?
5. *Sermon purpose*: What should my listeners think, feel, or do differently after having heard a sermon from this text?
6. *Sermon application*: If the sermon accomplished its purpose in specific listeners dealing with specific life situations, how might it look?

⁸³Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 59.

7. *Safeguard*: Does this application exalt God?
8. *Safeguard*: Is this application consistent with the text's teaching and purpose?
9. *Safeguard*: Will this application motivate and equip listeners to respond to the text?
10. *Safeguard*: Does this application give promises or expectations only where the text does?⁸⁴

Part of Overdorf's methodology of deriving biblically-accurate application is to point out wrong methods of deriving timeless truth and identify corrective measures to take in response. He identifies the wrong methods of spiritualizing, moralizing, patternizing, trivializing, normalizing, proof-texting, and promising the unpromised. He defines spiritualizing as "turning the physical realities of a biblical text into unwarranted spiritual analogies and applications."⁸⁵ This practice sees every passage as an example to follow, as though that were the intention of the author. When this method is applied to characters such as Jezebel and Lucifer, the absurdity is obvious. The following are the faulty methods of principlizing, as described by Overdorf.

Moralizing is the practice of "drawing moral exhortations from a text that go beyond the text's intention.... With moralistic application, every text becomes an

⁸⁴Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143. Overdorf goes into a detailed discussion of the reasoning behind each of these questions, which is highly profitable to read. See pp.101-158. He also provides a sermon application worksheet, which is a practical demonstration of his methodology worked out on four separate preaching pericopes.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 74.

imperative; or, more often, every text becomes a list of imperatives.”⁸⁶ “Moralizing often treats possible implications (good advice) as necessary implications (thus saith the Lord).”⁸⁷ The guarding question to be answered is, “Did the original author intend this text to imply these particular rules or instructions?”⁸⁸

Patternizing, “turns biblical descriptions of people or events into universally normative prescriptions for behavior. It turns descripts into prescriptions, examples into mandates, and pictures into blueprints.” Surely, Abraham and Sarah were not intended examples of the merits of waiting until later in life to raise children. “Simply because a biblical narrative or epistle mentions something that happened or something that should happen in a particular circumstance does not necessarily imply that God intends the church of all times to emulate that practice.”⁸⁹ Overdorf points out that *patternizing* ignores authorial intent, historical and cultural circumstances, and forcefully imposes an inconsistent hermeneutic that arbitrarily chooses which examples to follow and which to avoid.⁹⁰ He writes, “patterns put flesh on principles, but they are not principles by themselves.”⁹¹ He also adds, “When we preach a

⁸⁶Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 77.

⁸⁷Ibid., 78.

⁸⁸Ibid., 77.

⁸⁹Ibid., 80.

⁹⁰Ibid., 82-85.

⁹¹Ibid., 85.

descriptive text, we avoid patternizing by refraining from turning the example into a mandate and instead seeking the principle behind the pattern.”⁹²

Trivializing, “involves offering applications that diminish the gravity and complexity of the Gospel. Scripture contains enormous truths with mammoth implications; when preachers reduce these to clichés and trite suggestions, they cheapen the mystery and power of what God accomplished through Jesus Christ.”⁹³

Normalizing, “is implying that a biblical passage will apply in the same manner to every person, despite differing circumstances. Such an approach ignores the complexities of life and faith. It assumes that Christians lead identical lives, face identical problems, and therefore need identical solutions.”⁹⁴

Proof-texting, “begins with an application and then uses various verses removed from their biblical contexts to support that application.”⁹⁵ *Promising the Unpromised*, “is guaranteeing listeners certain outcomes that biblical teaching does not truly assure.”⁹⁶

⁹²Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 87.

⁹³Ibid., 88

⁹⁴Ibid., 92.

⁹⁵Ibid., 95.

⁹⁶Ibid., 97.

Jay Adams

In his work, *Truth Applied*, Jay Adams contends that Scripture is not a list of abstracted principles, but is instead truth that is already applied. The job of the expositor is to discover or abstract the principles that are operating in the biblical situation.⁹⁷ Adams, like others, points to Paul's use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9 as a biblical example of principlization. He writes:

Paul's method is to abstract a principle from a biblical passage and then apply it to a similar situation in his time. In doing so, he must do two things:

1. He must abstract the principle.
2. He must abstract the elements in the contemporary situation that approximate those in the biblical account.

When the elements in both the biblical and the contemporary situations match, the abstracted principle may be reapplied. In this way, the preacher can easily move from the one to the other. ... The regulation concerning oxen was used to *exhibit* the principle; not to *limit* it.⁹⁸

He goes on to state:

The strong language Paul used in rejecting any narrow application of the principle to oxen alone shows that he considered it not only wrong to do so but eminently foolish. It was wrong to do so, not only in New Testament times, but from the first. Moses never intended any such thing. From the days of Moses on, the principle held, and *it should have been understood and applied as broadly as necessary*. Paul did not misuse the Mosaic passage; he rightly applied it.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Jay E. Adams, *Truth Applied: Application in Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wakeman Trust, 1990), 48.

⁹⁸Adams, *Truth Applied*, 47-48.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 48-49.

To provide guidelines for deriving these general principles for broad application, Adams poses a series of questions that serve as a grid or filter through which a text can be examined to discern the principle(s) at hand:

1. What is the *telos* of the preaching portion? Is that also the *telos* of your sermon?
2. What sort of situation does the *telos* occur? What was going on? To what is it addressed?
3. In the passage, who is doing what about the situation:
 - a) to understand it?
 - b) to change it?
 - c) to complicate it
4. How does God view the situation? Is He:
 - a) pleased with it?
 - b) displeased with it?
5. What response does He require?¹⁰⁰

In answering these questions, Adams says, “you will be able to abstract both the principle that is applied and the elements in the situation to which God applied it. With both in hand, you will be able to apply the passage to life today in a way that approximates it in its essential particulars.”¹⁰¹

Jack Kuhatschek

Jack Kuhatschek, commenting like the others on 1 Corinthians 9, points out that Paul moves to practical application by way of analogy.¹⁰² In 1 Corinthians 9:7-10, Paul points to five life situations that illustrate a timeless truth concerning

¹⁰⁰Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 54-55.

¹⁰²Jack Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 32.

compensation: a soldier, the cultivator of a vineyard, a shepherd, a plowman, and a thresher. “Paul realized that the command about the ox was merely one specific application of a *broader principle*, namely that animals and people have a right to be paid for their work.”¹⁰³ Kuhatschek provides a methodology for abstracting timeless truth, coupled with the final step of application:

1. First, we must understand the *original situation* described in the passage and how God’s Word applied to that situation (the ox’s right to eat).
2. Second, we must determine whether God’s Word in that situation reflects a specific application of a *broader principle* (a worker’s right to be paid).
3. Finally, we are ready to apply that general principle to *situations we face* (a minister’s right to be paid for their work).¹⁰⁴

Kuhatschek then provides a pyramid illustration to demonstrate a more complete explanation of his methodology.:

The commands near the base sometimes seem pointless or obscure until we move up to higher levels on the pyramid to discover the principles or reasons for the commands. Conversely, the principles near the top of the pyramid often seem vague and abstract until they are fleshed out by the more concrete principles near the base.¹⁰⁵

As he walks through his explanation of Galatians 5:2-3, he uses three questions as a method for deriving principles: 1) Does the author state a general principle? 2) Why was this specific command or instruction given? 3) Does the broader context reveal a

¹⁰³Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 33-36. He applies this same methodology to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, where God permits Paul’s suffering situation to persist for humility and to experience the sufficiency of grace. Here, Paul again uses the same method of application by way of analogy in v.10.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 53-54.

general principle?¹⁰⁶ Within the last question is the reality that in the broader context of a passage there may very well be more concrete examples of the general principle, which will serve to properly define the principle.¹⁰⁷

Regarding Old Covenant Law, he suggests a three-question grid for deriving principlized truth for application: 1) Is the command restated in the New Testament? 2) Is the command revoked in the New Testament? 3) What is the principle behind the Old Testament command?¹⁰⁸

John Stott

In *Between Two Worlds*, John Stott recognizes the necessity for making relevant application of timeless truth in preaching: “Preaching is not exposition only but communication, not just the exegesis of a text but the conveying of a God-given message to a living people who need to hear it.”¹⁰⁹ His premise that preaching bridges the gap between the biblical world and the contemporary hearer is neatly summarized when he writes, “A true sermon bridges the gulf between the biblical and the modern worlds, and must be equally earthed in both.”¹¹⁰ And then, “Our task is to enable God’s revealed truth to flow out of the Scriptures into the lives of the

¹⁰⁶Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 95-96.

¹⁰⁹John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 137.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 10.

men and women today.”¹¹¹ This is certainly the task of the preacher, to bring the truth of God to the people of God for the purpose of transformation. However, Stott identifies an issue:

I realize that there are perils in the clamant demand for relevance. If we become exclusively preoccupied with answering the questions people are asking, we may overlook the fact that they often ask the wrong questions and need to be helped to ask the right ones. If we acquiesce uncritically in the world’s own self-understanding, we may find ourselves the servants rather of fashion than of God. So, in order to avoid the snare of being a ‘populist’ or a modern false prophet, the type of bridge to be built must be determined more by the biblical revelation than by the *zeitgeist* or spirit of the age.¹¹²

Stott’s main argument is that it is the duty of the preacher to address the contemporary world with biblical truth; this is the bridge building he must accomplish. Stott has much to say against preachers who do not build bridges in their preaching, but instead remain preoccupied with one of two worlds: heaven or earth. He identifies the task rightly, saying that preachers must “resolve instead in equal measure to be faithful to Scripture and pertinent today.”¹¹³ In a section about addressing politics from the pulpit, Stott remarks that it is the unquestionable responsibility of the preacher to proclaim biblical *principles* to his hearers:

I am not suggesting that the pulpit is the place in which precise political programmes are framed or from which they are commended. Rather that it is the preacher’s responsibility to open up the biblical principles which relate to

¹¹¹Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 138. The language “enable God’s truth to flow” could be improved upon, as it appears to imply that God’s Word needs help. It is unlikely that Stott was intending to convey such, but any statement about God’s Word must be precise.

¹¹²Ibid., 139.

¹¹³Ibid., 144.

the problems of contemporary society, in such a way as to help everybody to develop a Christian judgment about them, and to inspire and encourage the opinion-formers and policy-makers in the congregation, who occupy influential positions in public life, to apply these biblical principles to their professional life.¹¹⁴

How then does Stott suggest that such a bridge be built or such principles be ascertained? In *Between Two Worlds* he identifies the problem and necessity of bridge building, but beyond that no formal methodology is provided. The following example seems to suggest that Stott is bridge building intuitively. That is, he is examining any given passage of Scripture and instinctively drawing out principles (based on gifting and guidance of the Holy Spirit and also his exegetical experience). He does not refer to principlization per se, but he does in essence refer to moral principles taught in the Old and New Testaments. Though he does not use the terminology, he also appears to refer to what Kaiser calls “*particularismus*.”¹¹⁵

Individual personal morality was taught in the Old Testament by prophets, priests, scribes and wise men, who sought to draw out the implications of the Ten Commandments. John the Baptist was the last representative of this honourable tradition, before Christ came. He not only exhorted the people to “bear fruits that befit repentance”, but spelled out what this would mean to different people, instructing the tax-gatherers to collect no more than was appointed them, and the soldiers to rob nobody, accuse nobody falsely, and be content with their wages. (Luke 3:8-14) Similar teaching in personal ethics is given in the New Testament letters, sometimes in general commendation of Christian virtues (“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” Gal. 5:22, 23),

¹¹⁴Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 167.

¹¹⁵Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 20-21. A particularism is a specific application or example of a timeless truth in Scripture.

and sometimes in a particular requirement like the control of that unruly organ and “restless evil”, the tongue. (Js 3:1-12)¹¹⁶

From Stott’s comments here one might distill a few questions that could contribute to a complete methodology of deriving principled truth from Scripture:

1. In this passage, is the author drawing out implications of the Ten Commandments?
2. Is the author giving specific application of general principle?
3. Is the author giving a particular requirement?¹¹⁷

In Chapter 6 of *Between Two Worlds*, he addresses the process of study, and while he affirms that the preacher should find out what a text means before he can know the significance of the passage for the contemporary audience, he does not give a methodology for that bridge. He contends that the preacher must ask two questions: First, “What *did* it mean when first spoken or written?” and second, “*What does it say?* That is, what is its contemporary message?”¹¹⁸ These questions reveal assumptions that he is expecting the student to make, but assumptions are notoriously dangerous. He appears to write implicitly of abstract principles derived from exegesis of the text when he states, “We human beings find it very difficult to

¹¹⁶Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156. There is a similar section where Stott makes the argument that William Wilberforce and others who were leading the way in the abolition of human slavery made biblical arguments from principles deduced from Scripture. Then, he said, “they were rightly encouraged from Christian pulpits to translate these biblical principles into practice” (165).

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 156.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 221.

handle abstract concepts.”¹¹⁹ He mentions the abstraction of a theological principle here, but not explicitly as a necessary step. Next, he seems to suggest that illustrations are the mode in which abstract timeless principles are transformed to timely application, when he states, “Illustrations transform the abstract into the concrete, the ancient into the modern, the unfamiliar into the familiar, the general into the particular, the vague into the precise, the unreal into the real, and the invisible into the visible.”¹²⁰ His assumed practice can be distilled into the following steps:

1. Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, grammatical hermeneutic;¹²¹
2. Isolate the abstract theological principle(s);¹²²
3. Transform the abstract principles into concrete application through illustration.¹²³

¹¹⁹Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 238.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 239.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 221.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 224-227. Stott contends for a single dominant thought or thrust from every passage of Scripture, which is the authorial intent of the text. The thrust of the text must be the thrust of the sermon.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 238-240.

Mike Abendroth

Mike Abendroth instructs pastors that their “Disciples must be coached in how to “bridge” the Bible passage to modern listeners by “principlization.”¹²⁴ He writes, “True Bible teaching recognizes the differences in audience, that is, those in the Bible and those today. One can most effectively manage the difference by trying to extract principles from the ancient text and then proclaiming those to the modern-day audience. This approach retains the original meaning and setting while still exhorting the contemporary congregation with the authorial intention of the passage.”¹²⁵ The principles for accomplishing this are laid out by Abendroth in this way:

1. Recognize the difference in the original audience and the modern hearer;
2. Retain the authorial intent of the Text;
3. Ask questions about setting, occasion, purpose, original audience, and cultural ramifications that could limit modern-day application.¹²⁶

Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays

Duvall and Hays recognize a point Kaiser has already established in this present discussion:

Many texts in the Bible are specific, concrete, revelatory expressions of broader, universal realities or theological principles. While the specifics of a

¹²⁴Mike Abendroth, *Jesus Christ, the Prince of Preachers: Learning from the Teaching Ministry of Jesus* (Leominster, UK: Day One Christian Ministries, 2008), 118.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 118.

particular passage may only apply to the particular situation of the biblical audience, the theological principles revealed in the text are applicable to all of God's people at all times. The theological principle, therefore, has meaning and application both to the ancient biblical audience and to Christians today.¹²⁷

To discern and formulate principled statements of theological truth, Duvall and Hays present a five-step process to move the reader from reading to applying. They package their steps for principization within a metaphor of bridge-building as follows:

Step 1: Grasping the Text in Their Town

This is the step that asks the question: "What did the text mean to the biblical audience?" To answer the question, the reader is told to: 1) Read carefully; analyze the grammar and all significant words, as well as the historical and literary context. 2) Then "synthesize the meaning of the passage for the biblical audience into one or two sentences" using *past-tense verbs* and very specific language without any generalities.¹²⁸

Step 2: Measuring the Width of the River to Cross

This step seeks to answer the question, "What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?" There are differences to be observed regarding "culture, language, situation, time, and often covenant." The authors recognize that there is

¹²⁷J. Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word, Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 41-42.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 42.

rarely ever a one-for-one transfer because of these differences. “These differences form a river that hinders us from moving straight from meaning in their context to meaning in ours. The width of the river, however, varies from passage to passage. Sometimes it is extremely wide, requiring a long, substantial bridge for crossing.” The reader must thus identify how “significant” the differences are as “we are not entering or conquering the Promised Land. We are not the new leaders of the nation of Israel. We are not under the Old Covenant.”¹²⁹

Step 3: Crossing the Principizing Bridge

This is the step that seeks the principled statement of theological truth, thus answering the question, “What is the theological principle in this text?”¹³⁰ They

¹²⁹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42-43.

¹³⁰It appears that Duvall and Hays are in agreement with Haddon Robinson that there is a singular point or purpose to any given text of Scripture. Robinson agrees with the majority of orthodox expositors that a passage of Scripture had a specific purpose for which it was written originally, and then also a timeless theological significance, and ultimately that theological significance is brought upon the contemporary audience through application. He describes this as “an idea to be explained ... a proposition to be proven ... a principle to be applied.” Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 73. While it is true that there is a *single main purpose* for any given passage, that is not to say that there is solely one principled statement of theological truth to be discovered. In every text there are multiple *things* that are said in order to establish the main purpose. These *things* are the main points of theological truth that the author is making on his way to accomplishing his main purpose. This is the truth that makes textually congruent sermon structure a possibly and necessity. “The most clear, plain, accurate, and relevant explanation of a passage is spearheaded by a sermon structure which depicts the essence of biblical text through a series of statements which are the timeless truths of the passage, or statements of theological principle. It is essential in expository preaching that the meaning of the passage is passed on to the hearers. This dissemination will occur through explanation of the passage generally and through declaration of the theological framework of the passage specifically. The declared theological

rightly observe that, “This is perhaps the most challenging step.”¹³¹ This is the summary statement they provide for their methodology:

1. The principle should be reflected in the text.
2. The principle should be timeless and not tied to a specific situation.
3. The principle should not be culturally bound.
4. The principle should correspond to the teaching of the rest of Scripture.
5. The principle should be relevant to both the biblical and the contemporary audience.
6. Write out the theological principle (or principle) in one or two sentences. Use present-tense verbs.¹³²

They are careful to comment that, “this theological principle is part of the *meaning*. Your task is not to create the meaning but to discover the meaning intended by the author. As God gives specific expressions to specific biblical audiences, he is also giving universal theological teachings for all of his people through these same texts.”¹³³

framework of the passage will be statements of theological principle—the appropriate content which must constitute the structure of an expository sermon.” Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 131.

¹³¹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 43-44.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 45.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 44.

Step 4: Consult the Biblical Map

In this step, the answer to the following question is sought: “How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?” This is a step of verification as well as systematic understanding. The point then, is to see if the principle is verified by other biblical passages and then to see how the principle works within the theology of the Bible as a whole. The authors characterize this move as entering “the parts-whole spiral.”¹³⁴ Duvall and Hays suggest the following questions and comment for validating a principle:

1. Is your principle consistent with the rest of Scripture?
2. Do other portions of Scripture add insight or qualification to the principle?
3. If your principle is valid, it ought to “fit” or “correlate” with the rest of the Bible.¹³⁵

Step 5: Grasping the Text in Our Town

This step seeks to answer the question, “How should individual Christians today live out the theological principles?” Here the authors assert that, “While for each passage there will usually be only a few (and often only one) theological principles relevant for all Christians today, there will be numerous applicational possibilities.”¹³⁶ They offer three sub-steps for completing Step 5:

¹³⁴Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45. It appears this comment may have been informed by Osborne’s *Hermeneutical Spiral*, but there is no footnote confirming who influenced their understanding at this point.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 45.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, 46.

1. “Observe how the principles in the text address the original situation.”¹³⁷
2. “Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context. ... When we speak of a *parallel* situation, we mean a situation that contains *all* of the key elements you identified in the previous step. In other words, the parallel situation must include the central teaching of the biblical text and not just a portion of it.”¹³⁸
3. “Make your applications specific.”¹³⁹

William Klein, Craig Blomberg and Robert Hubbard Jr.

Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard joined together to write *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, a substantial work on hermeneutics. Among the many topics germane to biblical exegesis, they briefly address the mode in which an expositor makes the move from hermeneutics to legitimate and authoritative application. They acknowledge a consensus among evangelical scholars that principlization is the legitimate method here.¹⁴⁰ Their research into the matter is summarized in four steps that are then broken down and explained as follows:

1. Determine the original application(s) intended by the passage.
2. Evaluate the level of specificity of those applications to their original historical situations. If the original specific applications are transferrable across time and space to other audiences, apply them in culturally appropriate ways.

¹³⁷Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 239.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 240.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, 239-241.

¹⁴⁰William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Revised and Updated Edition (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2004), 483.

3. If the original applications are not transferrable, identify one or more broader cross-cultural principles that the specific elements of the text reflect.
4. Find appropriate applications for today that implement those principles.¹⁴¹

Ramesh Richard

Ramesh Richard wrote a series of articles for *Bibliotheca Sacra* under the title “Application Theory in Relation to the New Testament.” In Part 2, he defines what he believes to be three levels of meaning in Scripture that the expositor is searching for: statements, implications, and extrapolations. A *statement* is the basic meaning of the text “without logical or theological inference. It is a descriptive basis without which sense would be nonsense.”¹⁴² An *implication* is meaning derived from the statement of the author, but is “more than he was consciously aware of,” although it absolutely cannot “imply something contrary to his statement.”¹⁴³ The third level of meaning, according to Richard is *extrapolation*, which is more closely tied to application than interpretation. An *extrapolation* answers the question, “On the *basis* of what is written, what would the *author* have said if revelation were being given now in the 20th century?”¹⁴⁴ His summary questions are perhaps more helpful in illuminating his point:

¹⁴¹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 483.

¹⁴²Ramesh Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 2: Levels of Biblical Meaning,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 570 (June 1986), 126.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*,” 126-127.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 128-130. By way of example, Richard writes, “The use of Luke 1:44 as a verse against abortion is case in point. The statement, “the baby leaped in my

1. “*Statement* is the closest to answering a redundant but necessary question, ‘Is this what the author stated in this verse?’”
2. “*Implication* answer, ‘Is this what the divine and human authors meant by this verse?’ and ‘Would the biblical author agree that the exegesis aligns with the overall thrust of his thoughts?’”
3. “*Extrapolation* answers, ‘Would the authors agree that the exegesis is a possible conclusion from their affirmation?’ and ‘Would the biblical writers agree that the exegesis is appropriate to the whole message of Scripture?’”¹⁴⁵

In Part 3, he gives a summary statement and diagram to illustrate his viewpoint on principlization, though he calls it by a different name, i.e., “extrapolation.”¹⁴⁶ His first step is identifying the “*authorial application-expectation*” which is the answer to the question, “How did the authors expect their immediate readers to employ their writings?”¹⁴⁷ Second, examine the *authorial application-expectation* in light of “the ecclesiological factor,” which is whether or not the application is still valid in terms of God’s covenant expectations on the Church.¹⁴⁸ Third, examine and determine the “audience-traits,” which are those traits or behaviors expected of the New Testament and extended to the modern

womb for joy” has as its *implication* the messianic divine character of Christ. An *extrapolation* is that babies in wombs have already started living before birth.”

¹⁴⁵Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 2, 131. He even states, “In answering these questions biblical meaning is determined and biblical relevance is secured for all matters of faith and practice for all time and for all situations.”

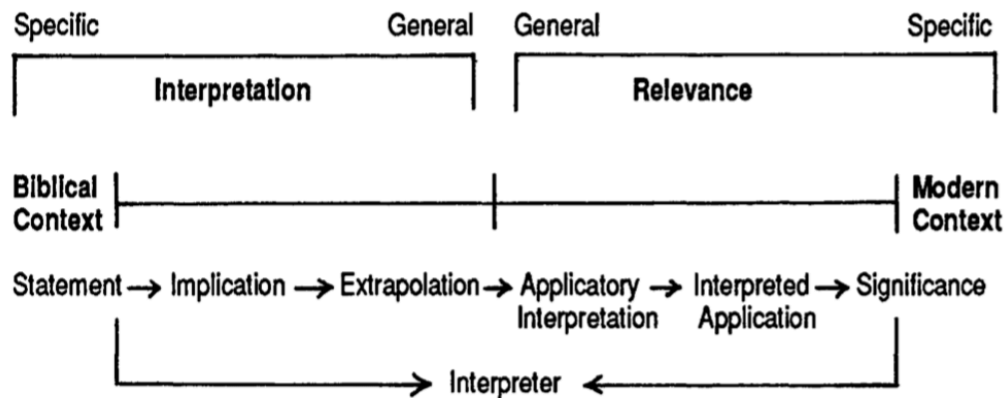
¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁴⁷Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 207.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 208-209.

audience.¹⁴⁹ Richard's illustration of moving from a specific biblical (historical) application of a principle to a general statement of the principle, which can then be translated into a specific contemporary application follows:

FIGURE 2: RICHARD'S MODEL OF EXTRAPOLATION¹⁵⁰



In order to generalize specific commands in Scripture, and in a similar fashion as Kaiser's discussion on *particularismus*, Richard outlines eight steps as follows:

1. "Determine the level of abstraction of any moral form in Scripture. The more abstract the command, the less applicatory interpretation is needed." This essentially means that if the command does not address a specific situation, then it is likely that the principle is already in a general, timeless format.
2. "Be sensitive to historically and culturally unique situation in Bible commands." Here, Richard gives as example Paul's commands on eating meat sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8). This command is given in a culturally unique situation and must be understood and communicated in context.

¹⁴⁹Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 208-209.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 211.

3. “Discern which moral discursive forms speak to ethical action and attitudes and which do not.”
4. “In determining extrapolations ask, Are there “principles stated explicitly elsewhere in Scripture that are here applied specifically?” This is the search for texts that corroborate an extrapolated principle.
5. “Seek for God’s purposes and eternal will in Scripture. ... In determining the meaning of a passage, the interpreter also seeks to ascertain God’s will for His present people.”
6. “Determine the relationship between the ethical command and the problem that gave rise to it.”
7. “Look for linguistic indicators that may be clues to deciding the issue.”
8. “Try to achieve as much proximity as possible to the original meaning.” This step is actually referring to the process of translating a principle into an application point.¹⁵¹

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, the biblical warrant was given for developing a methodology for deriving principled truth from Scripture that is hermeneutically accurate and more beneficial for the purpose of preaching. In Chapter 2, the literature germane to formulating a more complete methodology of principization was reviewed. In Chapter 3, the contributions surveyed in Chapter 2 are analyzed interactively in order to draw out their beneficial elements. In Chapter 4, those contributions are synthesized, along with my own contributions, in order to further develop a complete and viable methodology for deriving principled truth from Scripture for the

¹⁵¹Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212-214.

purpose of preaching. In Chapter 5, this principlization methodology is applied to a selected passage from each genre represented in Scripture.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS

Evaluation of Relevant Literature

In this chapter, the contributions presented in the previous chapter are analyzed interactively in order to yield their benefits. One of the main tasks is to point out where in the order of the methodology the beneficial contributions fit. These beneficial elements are summarized and ordered as conclusions to each subsection. Where possible, the brief explanation of the original author will be reiterated so as to preserve clarity. None of the contributions serve as a complete methodology individually, but they do provide aspects which are then synthesized and supplemented in Chapter 4 to form the final product of this dissertation: a more complete methodology for deriving principled truth from Scripture for the purpose of preaching. In Chapter 5 the principization methodology is applied to a passage of Scripture from each representative genre for the purpose of addressing genre-specific issues.

There are two main categories into which the relevant contributions are placed: general guidelines for deriving principles and genre-specific guidelines for deriving principles. This categorization is necessary in order to synthesize the contributions into a more complete methodology of principization in Chapter 4. The synthesis of these contributions reveals gaps in the current research that are filled through the original contribution in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, yielding a more complete methodology of principization than is currently available. Essentially, those who have made relevant contributions have done so only in part. No single

contributor has put forward a schema that takes the preacher through a complete method of principlization. Each contributor has addressed an aspect of the methodology, and even in their partial contributions there are still gaps that must be filled. The following is an outline list of the categories populated by the relevant contributions:

1. General guidelines for deriving principles
 - a. Identify
 - i. Identify the Emphasis and Purpose of the Passage
 - ii. Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage
 - iii. Assess the Transferability of a Principle
 1. Determine the Difference Between Cultural and Supracultural Content
 2. Determine the Content the Limits the Transferability of a Principle
 - b. Format
 - i. Format the principlized statements of theological truth for the purpose of preaching
 - c. Evaluate
 - i. Evaluate the accuracy of a principlized statement of theological truth
 - ii. Analyze implications of principles
 - d. Verify
 - i. Verify the theological legitimacy of a principlized statement of theological truth
 - ii. Verifying the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle
 - iii. Reviewing the Errors to Avoid in Principlizing
2. Genre-specific guidelines for deriving principlized statements of theological truth for the purpose of preaching
 - a. Narrative
 - b. Law Code/rules/principles
 - c. Poetry
 - d. Wisdom
 - e. Epistle
 - f. Prophecy and Apocalyptic

Evaluating and Categorizing Relevant Contributions

Walter Kaiser

Walter Kaiser contributes to a more complete methodology of principlization under two main categories: general guidelines for deriving principles and formatting principlized statements. In order to locate principles within a passage of Scripture, Kaiser instructs the preacher to look for the explicit principles, purpose (controlling theses), and emphases of the passage. These are general guidelines for deriving principles:

Identify Explicit Principles within the Passage

1. “Does the author explicitly state a principle in the passage at hand?”
2. “If not, does the broader context reveal such a general principle?”
3. “And, does the specific situation of the text contain any reasons, explanations, or clues that suggest what motivated the writer to be so concrete, rather than abstract, in mentioning the specific illustrations that he chose?”¹

Identify the Purpose of the Passage

1. Is there a “controlling theses” in this passage of Scripture?²

¹Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 276.

²“The search for principles in the biblical text is usually not to be found in isolated words or phrases, and it certainly is not to be found in verses used as proof-texts. Such principles are instead set forth as the controlling theses in paragraphs,

2. What is the purpose of the particular biblical book as a whole?
3. How do the major sections of the book progress the argument of the author and his flow of thought in accomplishing his purpose? Safeguard against eisegesis by not imposing your personal favorite questions or cultural issues on the text in addressing them.³
4. To find the purpose of passage look for the following: “(1) theme sentences, (2) distinctive or unusual features of the passage, (3) pivotal statements that may act as a fulcrum for the passage, and (4) the opening words or headings that set the stage for all that the passage wishes to develop.”⁴

Identify the Emphasis of the Passage

1. Look for, “the text’s own pattern of emphasis as it is often indicated by some stylistic, grammatical, or rhetorical device that supplies the authoritative basis for principlizing the text.”⁵
2. Identify the theological purpose of the text in the plan of God. Kaiser calls this “the *syntactical-theological* method of exegesis.” In this process, the preacher analyzes the “emerging theology” in the text, that is, the theological emphasis of the passage in the narrative of God’s Word as a whole *up to that*

chapters, sections of a book, and even whole books of the Bible.” Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

³ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 153.

⁴Ibid., 155.

⁵Ibid., 156.

point. One should use only antecedent theology to understand what is being taught and how that reveals what God meant at that point in time in the original author's text.⁶

In a more recent contribution, Kaiser addresses the issue of the incongruity between biblical persons and situations of the modern day. The main issue here is understanding whether or not the situation being addressed in the passage of Scripture is a cultural expression of a timeless truth that needs to be re-contextualized to the modern audience, or if the context of the truth is still understandable in its original cultural context. Here he gives two suggestions for preparing the principle for application:

1) "In some cases in interpreting the Bible, we will keep the principle affirmed in the theology taught, along with the cultural-historical expression of that principle where the cultural expression remains similar to its meaning in our times as well." [responsibility between husband and wife]

2) "On other occasions, we will keep the theology of the passage (i.e., one that is now embodied in a principle), but replace the behavioral expression from our contemporary world....Principles, then, must be given priority over accompanying cultural elements, especially when directed to the times and settings in which that text was written—times now different and separate from the contemporary manner of expressing that same principle."⁷

⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

⁷Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "A Principlizing Model," in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 21.

Kaiser's "Ladder of Abstraction"⁸ model depicts the move from the specific application of a *principled* truth in Scripture to a general restatement of that same theological principle in an undated or timeless format. The principle can then be used to address the modern situation. Now the preacher must use the findings of his exegesis and format the principled statements as the main points of the sermon. Kaiser gives three steps for formulating this information into principled statements:

Firstly, after identifying the subject and emphasis of the preaching passage, the preacher must write out the "important sentences in each targeted text."⁹ These are the sentences from which the main points of the sermon are to be built.

Secondly, remove all "dated statements...all proper names, places, incidents, and descriptions."¹⁰ He says failure to remove dated statements from the main points of the sermon is the "main pitfall to avoid in formulating these main points."¹¹ In *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, he suggests five steps that follow an understanding of the original, time-bound meaning of a biblical text. In order to translate that meaning into timeless theological truth, Kaiser proposes: 1) Remove all

⁸Kaiser "A Principled Model," 25. This model was first suggested by Walter C. Kaiser in *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 164-166.

⁹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 156.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 157.

proper nouns except God; 2) remove the past-tense verbs; 3) remove third person pronouns; 4) use present-tense verbs; and 5) use first-person plural pronouns.¹²

Following these five steps will transition the time-bound meaning of the passage to a much more general statement. However, there is more to a complete method of principlization than simply generalizing the text. Generalizing does not take into account the problem of incongruity between the biblical persons and situations and those of the modern day. Elsewhere, Kaiser issues this disclaimer:

It is not always an easy matter to formulate these main points. Besides the few hints we have already given, there is the need for meditation and prayer. Beyond all the science of exegesis and hermeneutics there is another side which we may call the *art* of preparing a text for proclamation. Those who have few gifts in this creative and reflective area should follow the guidelines we have suggested above as a minimum.¹³

Kaiser is right in saying that these suggested steps are minimal. The burden of this dissertation is to examine all relevant and helpful contributions in order to develop a more complete method of principlization. Finally, these proposition statements “must be so worded as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text.”¹⁴

Grant Osborne

Grant Osborne’s contribution to principlization concerns determining the transferability of principles. To be more precise, this is the work of contextualizing the biblical principle. Whereas Kaiser offers insight into the location of biblical

¹²Walter C. Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 57-58.

¹³Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 159.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 158.

principles, Osborne shows how a preacher refines those principlized statements by determining which aspects are cultural expressions and which are timeless. This contribution is a subcategory of the general guidelines for deriving principles. Osborne writes, “The major difficulty in contextualizing Scripture is deciding exactly what are the cultural or time-bound elements in a passage and what are the supracultural or eternal principles.”¹⁵

Osborne’s insights for distinguishing between supracultural content (timeless truths) and cultural content (time-bound meaning) is highly profitable in relation to the contention that one of the chief tasks of principlization is to extract both implicit and explicit principles from any text of Scripture. Osborne would call an implicit principle “cultural,” because the principle is wrapped in cultural or situational context (*particularismus*). A principle that is explicit would be “supracultural” in his terminology. Reference to implicit principles as principles behind the text is basically synonymous with the cultural context or *particularismus* Kaiser has identified.¹⁶ Explicit principles would be principles in front of the text or those that are supracultural. The question is not whether or not there is timeless truth in the passage to be principlized, but rather whether or not the timeless truth is explicit or implicit. If one contends that the truth is implicit, then one must substantiate this claim with proof that the principle is wrapped in a specific cultural expression or

¹⁵Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 420.

¹⁶Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 20-21.

application, or that there is quite simply no principle in the passage (such as a narrative where an event may be reported but no doctrine/command/principle stated). On the other hand, if one were to contend that a principle is explicit and timeless in its stated form, it would be necessary to substantiate how this has been determined. Such validation would come in the form of proof texts that the teaching is normative or that it is based on timeless grounds, such as the character of God, moral law, or Creation mandate. Osborne makes a careful note that,

The process of deciding supracultural or cultural does not entail the former having greater “authority” than the latter. Rather, we seek to delineate *how* a passage applies to us in our context, whether at the level of the surface command (if it is supracultural) or at the deeper level of the underlying principle (if the surface command is cultural or meant for the first century but not applying literally today).¹⁷

The objective of principlization is to rightly interpret the inerrant Scripture and understand how any given passage is to be applied in a practical contemporary situation. To principlize is to understand first that there is a vast difference between the cultures in which Scripture was originally penned and modern cultures. Scripture was not written as a list of abstract laws already in timeless form and without a context. It is thus necessary to discern the authorial intent towards the original audience and discern how that intention finds expression in contemporary culture. Exegesis (historical-grammatical exegesis) discerns culture and language. Principlization discerns the timeless truth that is explicit or implied in the Text. Application demonstrates that truth in the modern context. Expository preaching

¹⁷Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 426.

explains all three, so that the hearer understands clearly and is rightly obligated to obey the authorial intent of the Scripture.

Osborne presents three basic steps to determine whether the principles in the passage are cultural or eternal: First, it is important to “[n]ote the extent to which supracultural indicators are found in the passage.”¹⁸ Does the text have indicators that the commands or principles therein are timeless (e.g., the creation order or the character of God)? If so, there may very well be a normative command stated explicitly in the text.

Second, he continues, “we must determine the degree to which the commands are tied to cultural practices current in the first century but not present today.” In other words, how closely is the command tied to cultural implications, which were unique to the first century (e.g., Corinthian head coverings, 1 Cor 11:2-16)?¹⁹

Third, “we must note the distance between the supracultural and cultural indicators. . . . The interpreter must ask whether the distance between the supracultural and cultural indicators is sufficient to justify the decision that the surface command applied to the first-century alone and only the underlying principle (in this case submission) is supracultural. If the distance is sufficient we would apply the surface command only in modern cultures that parallel the first-century

¹⁸ Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-423.

¹⁹ Ibid., 423.

situation.”²⁰ In other words, was the biblical writer stating a normative command, or was he contextualizing a normative command to address a problem in his culture?

Following these three steps, Osborne then offers five guidelines or criteria for determining supracultural content (timeless truth) in order to ultimately make practical application:

1. Try to determine the extent to which the underlying theological principle dominates the surface application. ...When we have ascertained the principle on which the command is based, we can delineate the extent to which they overlap. ...By separating the cultural practice of the command from the principle, we can reapply it today, greeting one another with Christian love and commitment, but not necessarily with a “holy kiss.”
2. See when the writer depends on traditional teaching or on the other hand applies a temporary application to a specific cultural problem. These, of course, are not mutually exclusive. However, it is helpful to recognize when the author borrows from earlier teaching, which shows that the current situation does not entirely control the response. Paul’s use of traditional teaching and Old Testament proof texts must caution us before we too easily assume that the passages regarding women in the church no longer apply to our day.
3. When the teaching transcends cultural biases of the author or readers, it is more likely to be normative. This is true regarding Galatians 3:28 and the issue of slavery, as well as passages related to the universal mission. Clearly, they are not tied to any specific cultural situation and therefore are programmatic theological statements.²¹
4. If the command is wholly tied to a cultural situation, it is not timeless in itself.²²
5. Commands that by nature are moral or theological will be closely tied to the divine will. Commands dealing generally with such issues as adultery or

²⁰Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

²¹Ibid., 424

²²Ibid., 425.

prayer by nature transcend any particular cultural setting. Here we would note that the later prohibition of polygamy was not merely due to cultural change but was rooted in the progressive revelation of God's will. In the same way, we must see the prohibition of homosexuality as normative, tied as it is to divinely established moral laws.²³

Osborne's contribution is especially helpful in discerning what in the biblical principles are timeless truths and what are cultural expressions of timeless truth. Identifying cultural expressions of timeless truth does not dismiss the cultural expression as less than truth, but it does identify the timeless truth that must be applied in the modern situation. Regarding the methodology of principlization, Osborne's contribution addresses both the location and refinement of biblical principles.

Ben Awbrey

Ben Awbrey's main contribution to a more complete methodology of principlization is in the formatting of principlized statements as well as a method for evaluating their validity and accuracy. In the process of evaluating the finished product, the preacher is consistently drawn back to the preaching text to check his exegetical work. Awbrey's steps come after the exegetical work has been done, resulting in declarative statements of the theology of the passage. Awbrey presents five requirements for formatting statements of theological principle:

1. They "will be primarily declarative or imperative in nature, although they will occasionally be interrogative."
2. The principlized statements must be complete sentences.

²³Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-426.

3. They “must be cast in the present tense but occasionally the future tense may be required by the passage. Except for the instance in which an act or statement of the Godhead becomes a part of the statement of theological principle, the past tense dooms a preacher to affect nothing more than a lecture.”
4. Regarding personal pronouns, “one” is acceptable, but “the use of the first person singular “you” of the use of the first person plural “we” may be better terms to bring the truth the hearers” and then “usages of God’s names are always appropriate” but “other proper names of the Bible are not to be used since they create distance in time between the text and its hearers.
5. Principled statements must be applicational in that they “must make reference to the thinking, attitudes, motivations, which precede and accompany the action the text requires.”²⁴

In order to evaluate the validity of a principled statement, Awbrey points out two erroneous processes that result in five classifications of “final product errors.”²⁵ The goal in principization is to achieve an *accurate statement*, which captures both the essence and the extent of the author’s text.²⁶ The two erroneous principization processes are:

1) Sub-principization of Scripture is a principled statement that communicates, “less than what the text teaches—less than what the text teaches in essence, less than what the text teaches in extent, or both” and “can take place because the terminology used is either too specific or too general.”²⁷

²⁴Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2011), 136-137.

²⁵Ibid., 152.

²⁶Ibid., 152-153. It appears that what Awbrey means by “essence” is the *essential meaning*, or the truth of the statement, and the “extent” refers to whatever modifying context or clauses limit the meaning of the text.

2) Supra-principlization of Scripture is a principlized statement that communicates “theological principles that are more than what the text teaches—more than what the text teaches in essence or more than what the text teaches in extent” which occurs, “because the terminology used is too general.”²⁸

The five final product errors Awbrey identifies show that errors can occur from a principlized statement being either too specific or too general.²⁹ Imprecise language in the principlized statement results in one of the following:

1. The *hyper-principlized* statement is an error of supra-principlization, which caused the statement to communicate more in essence and extent than what the author meant.
2. The *supra-principlized* statement is caused by language that is too general, resulting in the communication of more than the extent of what the text was communicating.
3. The *meta-principlized* statement is the result of failure to express the essence of the text while at the same time overstating the extent.
4. The *sub-principlized* statement is caused by using language that is too specific, resulting in the communication of less than what the text says.³⁰

²⁷Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 154.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 156.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 157.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 162-164.

5. The *under-principlized* statement is caused by a total sub-principlization process, resulting in communicating less than what the text means in both essence and extent.³¹

As seen above, Awbrey's main contribution to a more complete methodology of principlization is the proper formatting of principlized statements of theological truth as well as the evaluation of principlized statements of theological truth for accuracy. Both categories of Awbrey's contribution will form steps in the evaluation portion of the methodology.

Daniel Doriani

Daniel Doriani's contribution is to provide genre-specific guidelines for deriving principles. He identifies seven different ways the biblical text generates timeless truths or principles: rules, ideals, doctrines, redemptive acts in narrative, exemplary acts in narrative, biblical images or symbols, and songs or prayers.³²

Doriani's methodology is very similar to Kaiser's method of principlization. Kaiser provides steps for locating principles from Scripture, but he does not offer guidance on applying that process to the various genres represented in Scripture. Doriani does provide genre-specific instruction on narrative texts, however. His five guidelines for principlizing narratives can be distilled further into nine questions the expositor should ask:

³¹Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 167.

³²Daniel Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 82-92.

1. What does this narrative tell of the story of God's work of redemption?
2. Since God acts according to His unchanging nature, and past actions thus indicate what He might do in parallel circumstances today, how did God respond to the events?
3. Since we are created in His image, how might His image-bearers respond in like fashion?
4. What are the proper or improper responses to God demonstrated by the characters in this narrative?
5. Knowing this is not an isolated story, how does this narrative fall within God's plan of redemption?
6. Does the narrative suggest that imitation of a protagonist is appropriate?
7. Do any of the characters' actions correlate with theological principles in Scripture?
8. How are the language, social structure, and customs of the original setting different from those of the contemporary audience?
9. Were the character's actions unique to his office and therefore inimitable?³³

The second genre-specific guidelines provided by Doriani concern the law code, rules, and principles. Regarding explicit biblical rules and principles, Doriani insists the expositor must know the difference. The distinction he makes is no different from what Osborne noted in the section above regarding *supracultural* and *cultural* statements. For Doriani, a rule is a narrowly defined mandate (what Osborne calls a *cultural statement*), while a principle is a broad statement of truth (Osborne's *supracultural statement*). Rules, or cultural statements, must be unraveled through careful exegesis, while principles, or supracultural statements, must be meditated on to decide how they are to be applied in various situations. For evaluating *rules* or

³³Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 211-212.

cultural statements, Doriani asks four questions, with a fifth question that can be added from his discussion:

1. What was the original meaning in the original setting?
2. How much specificity and transferability is there in this command? If it is not directly transferable, is there a principle behind the command?
3. How does this command answer the listener's four questions?
4. "How does the command reflect the Father's character, the Son's work, or the Spirit's ministry? If the law exposes sin, lead people to repent and seek mercy in Jesus."³⁴
5. Does the law apply to the contemporary reader "(1) identically, (2) analogously, and (3) typologically."³⁵

Doriani proposes seven guiding questions the expositor needs to answer when determining the applicability of rules and principles in Scripture:

1. Does the book itself limit the application of the teaching?
2. Does later revelation limit the scope of the teaching?
3. Does the passage present a broad moral principle or a specific manifestation of one?
4. Do cultural conditions make it appropriate to apply teaching in new ways for new cultures?
5. If a cultural form in the text still exists today, does it have the same significance it once did?
6. Is a law rooted in something permanent, such as the creation order, the character of God, the Decalogue, or the plan of redemption? Or is it grounded in something temporary, such as the permission Moses gave Israel to divorce due to hardness of heart?

³⁴Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 241.

³⁵Ibid.

7. Is the command contrary to the standards of the day, or part of a biblical protest against ungodly standards? If so, it is probably binding.³⁶

As seen, Doriani's contribution to a more complete methodology of principlization is in the form of a series of questions. While Doriani addresses the genres of narrative and law code (rules and principles), he does not address the genres of poetry, wisdom, prophecy, Gospel, epistle, or apocalypse.

Mark L. Strauss

Mark Strauss' contribution is categorized under general guidelines for deriving principles from Scripture. He identifies some generally agreed upon steps for principlization, writing the preacher should 1) establish, "the meaning of the text in its original historical and literary context"; 2) identify, "the divine ethic, ethical ideal, or mind of Christ behind the specific teaching or commands of Scripture (often the term "principles" is used here)"; and 3) determine, "ways in which this ethical ideal can be lived out in contemporary contexts."³⁷

He summarizes his findings on identifying principles in Scripture in the following eight categories:

- 1) Criterion of Purpose. ... One of the most widely acknowledged criteria is the identification of the purpose or intention behind the specific commands of Scripture. ... The challenge, in cases like this, is exegeting the text accurately

³⁶Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 249-250.

³⁷Strauss, "Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology: A Reflection by Mark L. Strauss" in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 293.

to discern the cultural significance and purpose behind the command. Exegetical uncertainty results in applicational ambiguity.

2) Criterion of Cultural Correspondence (Coherence; Analogy). ... The closer the cultural or historical context to our own, the more likely the command (directly) reflects a universal value.

3) Criterion of Canonical Consistency. ... This criterion asserts that ethical imperatives that remain unchanged throughout the Bible—in diverse cultural, social, and historical situations—are more likely to reflect God’s will for today than those that differ in times and places.

4) Criterion of Countercultural Witness. ... This criterion claims that commands [that] run counter to contemporary cultural standards...may be viewed as divine “correctives” to the failures of human culture.

5) Criterion of Cultural Limitations. ... Caution must be exercised when an author is operating within strong cultural or societal constraints. ... Just as countercultural statements in Scripture are likely to transcend specific situations, so imperatives that appear to be concessions to culture are *less likely* to have universal application.

6) Criterion of Creation Principle. ... The rationale here is that all of God’s created order prior to the fall was “very good” (Gen. 1:31), so patterns established in Eden transcend cultural norms.

7) Criterion of the Character of God. ... Fundamental attributes of God, such as love and justice, provide adjudication in disputed areas or when cultural background is obscure.

8) Criterion of Redemptive Priority. ... Commands directly related to God’s historical-redemptive purpose take priority over (lesser) issues of church order and function.³⁸

³⁸Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 294-298.

Haddon Robinson

Haddon Robinson's main contributions to a more complete methodology of principlization are general guidelines for deriving principles, particular questions for deriving principles from narrative and poetry, and an analysis of the authority of the implications of biblical principles. Robinson believes every passage has a purpose and that purpose is the principle used for application. He suggests five general questions the preacher needs to ask of the text in order to identify the purpose of a passage. He also poses a second set of four questions which he says address application, but in actuality, the second set of questions further concern the location of the principles for application. The second set of four questions immediately follow the first:

- 1) Are there in the text any indications of purpose, editorial comments, or interpretive statements made about events?
- 2) Are there any theological judgments made in the text?
- 3) Is this story given as an example or warning? If so, in exactly what way? Is this incident a norm or an exception? What limitations should be placed on it?
- 4) What message was intended for those to whom the revelation was originally given and also for subsequent generations the writer knew would read it?
- 5) Why would the Holy Spirit have included this account in Scripture? If it were not in the Bible, would anything be lost?³⁹

The second set of four questions is as follows:

³⁹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 89-90.

- 1) What was the setting in which God's Word first came? What traits do modern men and women share in common with that original audience?
- 2) How can we identify with biblical men and women as they heard God's Word and responded—or failed to respond in their situation?
- 3) What further insights have we acquired about God's dealings with His people through additional revelation?
- 4) When I understand an eternal truth or guiding principle, what specific practical applications does this have for me and my congregation? What ideas, feelings, attitudes, or actions should it affect? Do I myself live in obedience to the truth? Do intend to? What obstacles keep my audience from responding as they should? What suggestions might help them respond as God wants them to respond?⁴⁰

Robinson gives two general guidelines for deriving principles in his Ladder of Abstraction: "First, I abstract up to God. Every passage has a vision of God, such as God as Creator or Sustainer." The purpose of this step is to determine what the author is saying about God. "Second, I ask, 'What is the depravity factor? What in humanity rebels against that vision of God?'"⁴¹ The purpose of this step is to understand what the author is saying about sinful humanity. Both of these questions, while useful for discerning the redemptive focus of a given passage, do not aid in dealing with passages that are not specifically addressing theology proper or depravity. Neither of these questions will serve to distill exhortations or encouragement for godly living. Granted, Robinson is responding to questions given during an interview; he is not writing a thesis or attempting to give a fully developed methodology of principlization. He is, however, describing principlization in general

⁴⁰Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93.

⁴¹Rowell, "The Heresy of Application: An Interview with Haddon Robinson," *Leadership Journal* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 20-27.

terms. In *Biblical Preaching*, his explanation of these two factors is the same.⁴² It appears that his method of abstraction is to ask what the passage says about God and how people are to respond, and also to ask what the passage teaches about sinful humanity and how people should change in order to respond properly to God. All of the questions Robinson poses are general in nature, but they do provide the preacher with direction on how to begin thinking of the timeless principles within a passage of Scripture.

There are also helpful questions raised by Robinson “to determine the exegetical idea and its development.”⁴³ Here the exegetical idea is *the purpose* of the passage—the principle(s) the author is communicating. In particular, Robinson provides genre-specific questions to be asked of narrative and poetry (including wisdom). These questions are profitable for a more complete method of principization, in that they orient the preacher to abstract the authorial reasoning and purpose that is evident in the text of Scripture. Regarding biblical narrative, he offers up these sample questions:

1. Who are the characters in the story and why did the author include them?
2. Do the characters contrast one another?
3. How do these characters develop as the story develops?
4. What does the setting contribute to the story?
5. What structure holds the story together and provides its unity?

⁴²Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 94-95.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 66.

6. How do the individual episodes fit into the total framework?
7. What conflicts develop and how are they resolved?
8. Why did the writer bother telling the story?
9. What ideas lie behind the story that may be implied but not stated?
10. Can those ideas be stated through a subject and complement?⁴⁴

Sample questions provided for analyzing biblical poetry include:

1. What meaning lies behind the images and figures of speech?
2. What feelings does the poet express by the choice of language?
3. What elements of form and structure does the poet use to discipline thought?
4. What would be lost if the same truth were presented in prose?⁴⁵

Robinson also provides helpful insight for evaluating the implications of principles in Scripture. Here, the five levels of implications are actually describing the differing levels of authority of particular application of principles. He describes these five levels of implication in relation to the commandment, “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex 20:14):

A *necessary* implication of “You shall not commit adultery” is you cannot have a sexual relationship with a person who is not your spouse.

A *probable* implication is you ought to be very careful of strong bonding friendships with a person who is not your spouse.

A *possible* implication is you ought not travel regularly to conventions or other places with a person who is not your spouse.

⁴⁴Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 68-69.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 69.

An *improbable* conclusion is you should not at any time have lunch with someone who is not your spouse.

An *impossible* implication is you ought not have dinner with another couple because you are the same table with a person who is not your spouse.⁴⁶

These levels of implication might be more accurately described as levels of authority of the implications for application. It would be wise for the preacher to sift his application of principled biblical truth through these levels of authority. It is essential to mention *necessary* applications, but it may also be beneficial to suggest the probable and possible applications so as to stir the hearer to interact further with the truth. Robinson says the preacher should present his content in the following way: “This is the principle, and the principle is clear. How this principle applies in our lives may differ with different people in different situations.”⁴⁷

Michael Fabarez

The contribution of Michael Fabarez to a more complete methodology of principization pertains to general guidelines for deriving principles and the subcategory of determining the transferability of principles. After exegesis is complete, he moves on to looking for the “intended impact on the original audience.” For Fabarez, understanding the original intended application will reveal the principle that is timeless and applicable in the contemporary setting. To understand the original intended purpose he proposes four steps:

⁴⁶Rowell, “The Heresy of Application,” 20-27.

⁴⁷Ibid.

1. “Put Yourself in Their Sandals” by asking, “What did the psalmist or prophet or apostle have in mind?” or “What did the Holy Spirit intend to prompt in the people who initially heard this?” or “What action did He expect the people to perform as a result of this teaching?”
2. “Camp on the Imperatives,” which means looking for the imperative verbs in the text. When this is found, “the application to the original audience is usually obvious.”
3. “Decide if a narrative passage was given to serve as a template for them to follow.”
4. “Use and compare other clear imperatives to keep your determinations on track.”⁴⁸

Fabarez traces four steps to reach application, but for this discussion on principization, the first two steps are pertinent for discerning that content of a principle that limits its transferability. The questions in these steps help the preacher discern between content that is bound contextually, biblically, culturally, or historically. In answering them, the preacher refines the principles in preparation for application. These questions supplement the point Osborne makes about discerning between cultural and supracultural content.

Step 1: Note the factors to limit the transfer of application

First Questions: “Does the immediate context limit the target of my application?” or “Is there anything in the context of the passage that might show why this application is limited to a particular target audience?” Fabarez notes, “The *level*

⁴⁸Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 40-42.

of abstraction for each text's application will be determined by the contextual clues that limit the application to a specific target audience."⁴⁹

Second Questions: "Does any other part of the Bible limit the target of the application? It may be that the immediate context does not limit the application of a passage, but a wider consideration of the whole of Scripture does."⁵⁰

Third Questions: "Does a cultural condition limit the target of the application?" By way of example, Fabarez points to Paul's command to Timothy to take wine for his stomach (1 Tm 5:23) and says that the cultural condition of medicine has changed to the point where the use of modern medicine would be the appropriate application today and not wine.⁵¹

Fourth Question: "Does a unique historical condition limit the target of the application?" This is akin to the second question in that "the rest of Scripture will help us determine if the passage at hand offers a historical or theological reason why the specific application was presented to the original recipients." As an example, Fabarez points to Jesus' command to the rich ruler to sell all that he has and follow Him (Luke 18:22). Here, according to Fabarez, the principle to be applied is limited by the unique situation that the rich man is in, and that Jesus' command is not intended for direct transference to the point where all believers liquidate their assets.

⁴⁹Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 45.

Rather, “Jesus demanded a break from the hold that money had on the rich man, hence this distinctive command.”⁵²

Step 2: Add your knowledge of your audience to the application

This is achieved by asking: 1) What specifically does the present audience have in common with the original audience? 2) In what specific areas does the audience lack continuity with the original audience? 3) How is the audience currently practicing the application? 4) How is the audience currently neglecting or abusing the application?⁵³

Daniel Overdorf

Daniel Overdorf makes a significant contribution in three areas: 1) general guidelines for deriving principles, 2) deriving principles from texts that are in the narrative genre, and 3) errors to avoid. The errors to avoid are a subcategory of general guidelines. The general guidelines Overdorf provides are in the form of questions the expositor must answer.

A substantial portion of Overdorf’s contribution to a more complete methodology of principlization could be classified under the category of general guidelines for deriving principles. His ten-step process guides the expositor from hermeneutics to principlization and then to application. For the purpose of a methodology of principlization, questions 1-3 are profitable for deriving principles;

⁵²Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 45.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 48-50.

questions 4-6 concern application, which is not the focus of this dissertation; while questions 7-10 fall under the category of evaluating the accuracy of principled statements.

1. *Biblical teaching*: What did God originally teach through this text?
2. *Original purpose*: How did God intend this text to affect its original readers?
3. *Comparison of audiences*: How do my listeners compare with the original readers?
4. *Listener need*: What listener need does this text address?
5. *Sermon purpose*: What should my listeners think, feel, or do differently after having heard a sermon from this text?
6. *Sermon application*: If the sermon accomplished its purpose in specific listeners dealing with specific life situations, how might it look?
7. *Safeguard*: Does this application exalt God?
8. *Safeguard*: Is this application consistent with the text's teaching and purpose?
9. *Safeguard*: Will this application motivate and equip listeners to respond to the text?
10. *Safeguard*: Does this application give promises or expectations only where the text does?⁵⁴

In order to derive principles from narrative portions of Scripture, Overdorf poses five questions for the preacher to ask during his study of the passage. It is obvious from the construction of the questions that general principles are sought:

1. Why do we need to know about this incident?

⁵⁴Daniel Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon: How to Balance Biblical Integrity and Cultural Relevance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 140-143.

2. How does this story translate to life and faith today?
3. What does the text promise that applies universally, to both Abraham and us?
4. What encouragements apply universally?
5. If a listener took this text seriously, how might it make a difference in his or her decisions, relationships, or service to the kingdom?⁵⁵

Overdorf is obviously seeking principles behind the text when asking these questions, but his questions are problematic in the sense that they are reader oriented. That is, his questions are not specifically designed to ascertain authorial intent. For instance, the first question should be restructured to ask, “For what reason(s) did the biblical author write this portion of Scripture for the original reader?” The second question should be restructured in this way, “How did the biblical author intend this passage of Scripture to apply to his original readers?” The third question is more specific than the previous two, because it seeks to answer what principles or promises were originally made in the passage that still apply universally. The fourth and fifth questions are akin to the third, only now they pertain to encouragement in the passage. The more complete methodology presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation poses questions to guide the preacher to look for principles, promises, encouragement, rebukes, and cautions.

Overdorf also contributes to a methodology of principlization by identifying errors with accompanying corrective measures. He identifies the erroneous methods of spiritualizing, moralizing, patternizing, trivializing, normalizing, proof-texting,

⁵⁵Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 59.

and promising the unpromised. The following are the erroneous methods of principlizing, as identified by Overdorf:

Spiritualizing is “turning the physical realities of a biblical text into unwarranted spiritual analogies and applications.”⁵⁶ The key here is unwarranted spiritual analogies. There must be contextual and biblical warrant to substantiate any principle.

Moralizing is the practice of “drawing moral exhortations from a text that go beyond the text’s intention. ... With moralistic application, every text becomes an imperative; or, more often, every text becomes a list of imperatives.”⁵⁷ In other words, “Moralizing often treats possible implications (good advice) as necessary implications (thus saith the Lord).”⁵⁸ The guarding question to be answered is, “Did the original author intend this text to imply these particular rules or instructions.”⁵⁹

Patternizing “turns biblical descriptions of people or events into universally normative prescriptions for behavior. It turns descripts into prescriptions, examples into mandates, and pictures into blueprints.”⁶⁰ *Patternizing* ignores authorial intent, historical and cultural circumstances, and it forcefully imposes an inconsistent hermeneutic that arbitrarily designates which examples to follow and which to

⁵⁶Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 74.

⁵⁷Ibid., 77.

⁵⁸Ibid., 78.

⁵⁹Ibid., 77.

⁶⁰Ibid. 80.

avoid.⁶¹ He writes, “patterns put flesh on principles, but they are not principles by themselves.”⁶² He also adds, “When we preach a descriptive text, we avoid patternizing by refraining from turning the example into a mandate and instead seeking the principle behind the pattern.”⁶³ A guarding question should be added here to prevent *patternizing*, such as, “Is there contextual or biblical proof that warrants seeing this as a biblically-intended example to be followed either negatively or positively?”

Trivializing, “involves offering applications that diminish the gravity and complexity of the Gospel. Scripture contains enormous truths with mammoth implications; when preachers reduce these to clichés and trite suggestions, they cheapen the mystery and power of what God accomplished through Jesus Christ.”⁶⁴ In other words, *trivializing* occurs when the preacher is unfaithful to the full meaning of a biblical principle in order to be clever or clichéd. The preacher must never sacrifice biblical fidelity for rhetorical expediency. A principle that has been manufactured through *trivializing* will fail in any number of the final product errors Awbrey discusses.⁶⁵

⁶¹Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 82-85.

⁶²Ibid., 85.

⁶³Ibid., 87.

⁶⁴Ibid., 88.

⁶⁵Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 157.

Normalizing, “is implying that a biblical passage will apply in the same manner to every person, despite differing circumstances. Such an approach ignores the complexities of life and faith. It assumes that Christians lead identical lives, face identical problems, and therefore need identical solutions.”⁶⁶ *Normalizing* does not take into account any discontinuity that may exist between the original recipients of the biblical passage and the modern reader.

Proof-texting, “begins with an application and then uses various verses removed from their biblical contexts to support that application.”⁶⁷ *Proof-texting* reverses the proper process of principlization. Biblically-faithful principles are derived from the text of Scripture and then corroborated by Scripture (analogy of faith). It is unfaithful and unauthorized to fabricate a principle and then import it to a passage that may or may not be teaching that principle. When a principle is imported to a passage of Scripture, the preacher has not only proof-texted and demonstrated unfaithfulness, but has also missed the point of the passage. He has taught what is not there and not taught what is there.

Promising the Unpromised, “is guaranteeing listeners certain outcomes that biblical teaching does not truly assure.”⁶⁸ A passage that is routinely, and incorrectly used to promise the unpromised is 2 Chronicles 7:14, where the Lord God made this famous promise to the people of Israel through their King, Solomon. Second

⁶⁶Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 92.

⁶⁷Ibid., 95.

⁶⁸Ibid., 97.

Chronicles 7:14 says, “If My people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” This was a promise made specifically to the Israelites, as they are the people who are called by the name of the Lord. However, many preachers, and politicians also for that matter, have inappropriately declared this promise over the United States of America. The Lord did not promise any country or people other than the Israelites that He would fulfill this promise. It is true that God responds to prayerfully repentant people with forgiveness and favor, but that does not mean 2 Chronicles 7:14 is universally applicable to all nations.

Jay Adams

Jay Adams contributes to a more complete methodology by providing general guidelines for deriving principles for application. Adams agrees with the authors previously discussed that the job of the expositor is to discover or abstract the principles that are operating in the biblical situation.⁶⁹ Like others, Adams points to Paul’s use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9 as a biblical example of principlization. He writes:

Paul’s method is to abstract a principle from a biblical passage and then apply it to a similar situation in his time. In doing so, he must do two things: 1. He must abstract the principle. 2. He must abstract the elements in the contemporary situation that approximate those in the biblical account. When the elements in both the biblical and the contemporary situations match, the

⁶⁹Jay E. Adams, *Truth Applied: Application in Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wakeman Trust, 1990), 48.

abstracted principle may be reapplied. In this way, the preacher can easily move from the one to the other. ... The regulation concerning oxen was used to *exhibit* the principle; not to *limit* it.⁷⁰

His contribution in the category of general guidelines for deriving principles is evident in his demonstration of the point that the biblical authors, especially Paul, intend the Bible reader to apply biblical principles as broadly as necessary. He writes:

The strong language Paul used in rejecting any narrow application of the principle to oxen alone shows that he considered it not only wrong to do so but eminently foolish. It was wrong to do so, not only in New Testament times, but from the first. Moses never intended any such thing. From the days of Moses on, the principle held, and *it should have been understood and applied as broadly as necessary*. Paul did not misuse the Mosaic passage; he rightly applied it.⁷¹

Adam's acknowledgement of what Paul does in his use of Deuteronomy 25:4 does not improve the methodology beyond the insights already demonstrated by Kaiser, Osborne and others, but it does substantiate the argument that Paul is indeed principlizing. Essentially, Adams has only pointed out three very general steps in principlization: 1) Abstract a general principle from the text. 2) Find a contemporary situation that is similar to the original and apply the principle in that situation. 3) Apply the principle as broadly as necessary.

Adams provides a series of questions that serve as a grid or filter through which a text can be examined in order to discern the principle(s) within. His questions are clear in design, as he is seeking the *telos*, or main objective of the

⁷⁰Adams, *Truth Applied*, 47-48.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 48-49.

biblical author in writing the passage. His questions touch on general guidelines for discerning principles and appear to be aimed at narrative portions of Scripture. He writes:

- 1) What is the *telos* of the preaching portion? Is that also the *telos* of your sermon?
- 2) What sort of situation does the *telos* occur? What was going on? To what is it addressed?
- 3) In the passage, who is doing what about the situation
 - a) to understand it?
 - b) to change it?
 - c) to complicate it?
- 4) How does God view the situation? Is He
 - a) pleased with it?
 - b) displeased with it?
- 5) What response does He require?⁷²

In answering these questions, you will be able to abstract both the principle that is applied and the elements in the situation to which God applied it. With both in hand, you will be able to apply the passage to life today in a way that approximates it in its essential particulars.⁷³

A striking similarity of nearly all the principization contributors is that they suggest that questions be asked of the text. That is, they recommend interrogating the text through a series of questions in order to discern what the main point(s) are which are to be principized. Perhaps they do this because they have already acknowledged the necessity of arriving at the authorial intent in the principles. With that understood, it makes sense to let the text speak for itself by asking a series of questions and allowing the text to populate the answers. This describes the essence of drawing out the meaning (exegesis) of the text.

⁷²Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54.

⁷³Ibid., 54-55.

Jack Kuhatschek

Jack Kuhatschek contributes to a more complete methodology of principlization by reaffirming general guidelines for deriving principles, as well as offering specific insights into deriving principles from the Law Code. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 9, like the others, he points out that Paul moves to practical application by way of analogy.⁷⁴ In 1 Corinthians 9:7-10 Paul points to five life situations that illustrate the timeless truth compensation: a soldier, the cultivator of a vineyard, a shepherd, a plowman, and a thresher. “Paul realized that the command about the ox was merely one specific application of a *broader principle*, namely that animals and people have a right to be paid for their work.”⁷⁵ Kuhatschek provides a three-step methodology for abstracting timeless truth, coupled with the final step of application:

First, we must understand the *original situation* described in the passage and how God’s Word applied to that situation (the ox’s right to eat).
Second, we must determine whether God’s Word in that situation reflects a specific application of a *broader principle* (a worker’s right to be paid).
Finally, we are ready to apply that general principle to *situations we face* (minister’s right to be paid for their work).⁷⁶

⁷⁴Jack Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 32.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁶*Ibid.* He applies this same methodology to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, where Paul’s suffering situation is permitted by God so that he is humbled and experiences the sufficiency of God’s grace. Here, Paul again uses the same method of application by way of analogy in v.10, pp.33-36.

Kuhatschek then provides a pyramid illustration to demonstrate a more complete explanation of his methodology. He writes:

The commands near the base sometimes seem pointless or obscure until we move up to higher levels on the pyramid to discover the principles or reasons for the commands. Conversely, the principles near the top of the pyramid often seem vague and abstract until they are fleshed out by the more concrete principles near the base.⁷⁷

The diagram and description given by Kuhatschek only identify the basic understanding already clarified and expanded upon by the contributors previously presented. His comments here are a basic description that there are timeless principles within a text that must be abstracted from the original situation, then reapplied in a modern analogous situation. While these comments do not add any new insight to a more complete methodology of principlization, they do substantiate what has already been stated.

He uses this methodology in his explanation of Galatians 5:2-3. Here he uses three questions as a method for deriving principles:

Question 1: Does the author state a general principle?

Question 2: Why was this specific command or instruction given?

Question 3: Does the broader context reveal a general principle?⁷⁸

The last question points to the reality that in the broader context of a passage there may very well be more concrete examples of the general principle that will serve to

⁷⁷ Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 53-54.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-61.

properly define the principle.⁷⁹ Again these comments only reveal Kuhatschek's agreement that there are principles within any passage of Scripture that must be identified. These principles may be found in an explicit statement by the author, in the purpose behind the author's command, or in the broader context of the passage.

Regarding Old Covenant Law, he suggests a three-question grid for deriving principled truth for application: Is the command restated in the New Testament? Is the command revoked in the New Testament? What is the principle behind the Old Testament command?⁸⁰

The first question is not ultimately determinative, but is helpful in deciding whether or not that law still applies. While a law may not be explicitly restated in the New Testament, that does not necessarily mean the law is not applicable under the New Covenant. The second question reveals the laws of sacrifice are fulfilled in Christ and the dietary restrictions are lifted in Mark 7:19 and Acts 10. However, there must also be another question amended here: "If the law is not restated nor revoked in the New Covenant, is it *assumed* to still be applicable?" The third question seeks to understand the mind of God in giving the command in the first place and in so doing deriving the timeless principle that reflects the character of the Lawgiver and which thus should be applied to the life of the believer.

⁷⁹Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 61.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 95-96.

John Stott

John Stott's contribution will be categorized here as general guidelines for deriving principles. It seems that in *Between Two Worlds*, Stott was instinctively drawing out principles (based on the gifting and guidance of the Holy Spirit and also his exegetical experience). While he does not refer to *principlization* per se, he does refer to moral principles taught in the Old and New Testaments. Though he does not use the terminology, he also appears to refer to what Kaiser calls

“*particularismus*.”⁸¹ The following excerpt from his writing yields at least three guiding questions for the preacher to ask in order to discern principles for preaching:

Individual personal morality was taught in the Old Testament by prophets, priests, scribes and wise men, who sought to draw out the implications of the Ten Commandments. John the Baptist was the last representative of this honourable tradition, before Christ came. He not only exhorted the people to “bear fruits that befit repentance”, but spelled out what this would mean to different people, instructing the tax-gatherers to collect no more than was appointed them, and the soldiers to rob nobody, accuse nobody falsely, and be content with their wages. (Luke 3:8-14) Similar teaching in personal ethics is given in the New Testament letters, sometimes in general commendation of Christian virtues (“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” Gal. 5:22, 23), and sometimes in a particular requirement like the control of that unruly organ and “restless evil”, the tongue. (Jas. 3:1-12)⁸²

One can distill from Stott's comments a few questions that would contribute to a complete methodology of deriving statements of principlized truth from Scripture:

1. In this passage, is the author drawing out implications of the Ten Commandments?

⁸¹Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 20-21. A particularism is a specific application or example of a timeless truth in Scripture.

⁸²John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 156.

2. Is the author giving specific application of general principle?
3. Is the author giving a particular requirement?

As presented in Chapter 2, Stott's contribution to a more complete methodology of principlization requires the discernment of assumptions Stott appears to believe the reader will make. In Chapter 6 of *Between Two Worlds*, he says that the preacher must ask two questions: First, "What *did* it mean when first spoken or written" and second, "*What does it say?* ... That is, what is its contemporary message?"⁸³ His assumption here is that the reader will understand that *what the text is saying in its contemporary message* is linked to *what it said when it was first spoken or written*. He also seems to suggest that illustrations are the mode in which abstract timeless principles are transformed to timely application when he states, "Illustrations transform the abstract into the concrete, the ancient into the modern, the unfamiliar into the familiar, the general into the particular, the vague into the precise, the unreal into the real, and the invisible into the visible."⁸⁴ His assumed practice can be distilled into the following steps:

1. Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, grammatical hermeneutic.⁸⁵
2. Isolate the abstract theological principle(s).⁸⁶

⁸³Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 221.

⁸⁴Ibid., 239.

⁸⁵Ibid., 221.

3. Transform the abstract principles into concrete application through illustration.⁸⁷

Mike Abendroth

Like others, Mike Abendroth expresses the need for principlization, but does not go beyond general guidelines for deriving principles. The following are three guidelines that give a general overview of principlization. His contribution is support of the practice of principlization and agreement with the general guidelines.

Abendroth puts forward these guiding principles:

1. Recognize the difference in the original audience and the modern hearer.
2. Retain the authorial intent of the Text.
3. Ask questions about setting, occasion, purpose, original audience, and cultural ramifications that could limit modern-day application.⁸⁸

These principles were derived from Abendroth's abbreviated instruction in the matter, and while he points out the need to ascertain accurate biblical application, he does not provide a detailed method for accomplishing that goal. To state simply that

⁸⁶Stott contends for a single dominant thought or thrust from every passage of Scripture, which is the authorial intent of the text. The thrust of the text must be the thrust of the sermon. *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

⁸⁷Ibid., 238-240.

⁸⁸Mike Abendroth, *Jesus Christ: the Prince of Preachers: Learning from the Teaching Ministry of Jesus* (Ryelands Road: Day One Christian Ministries, 2008), 118.

one must retain authorial intent, or to recognize the limits of application, does not tell the expositor how to do that, it just states the need to do it.

Stott Duvall and Daniel Hays

The contributions of Duvall and Hays are categorized as general guidelines for deriving principles and also for verifying the theological legitimacy of a principle. Duvall and Hays present a five-step process to move the reader from reading to applying. Their steps for principlization are packaged within a metaphor of bridge-building as follows:

“Step 1: Grasping the Text in Their Town.” This is the step that asks the question: “What did the text mean to the biblical audience?” To answer the question, the reader is told to: 1) Read carefully; analyze the grammar and all significant words, as well as the historical and literary context; 2) and then “synthesize the meaning of the passage for the biblical audience into one or two sentences” using past-tense verbs and very specific language without any generalities.⁸⁹ This is simply a recapitulation of the well-established steps of grammatical, historical, literary exegesis that have already been presented by previously discussed contributors. Authorial intent is then summarized in one or two sentences.

“Step 2: Measuring the Width of the River to Cross.” This step seeks to answer the question, “What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?” There are differences to be observed regarding “culture, language, situation,

⁸⁹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42.

time, and often covenant.” The reader must identify how “significant” the differences are as “we are not entering or conquering the Promised Land. We are not the new leaders of the nation of Israel. We are not under the Old Covenant.”⁹⁰ This step has already been described in much greater detail by Osborne in his discussion of the distinctions between cultural and supracultural content.

It is important to note in Step 2 of Duvall and Hays’ process that they believe this includes identifying “any similarities between the situation of the biblical audience and our situation.”⁹¹ This is a dangerous step to include at this point, because it uses modern experience to understand the biblical text. If the timeless principle in the text is what is sought, then there is no need at this point to read the modern situation back into the text in order to discern it. Such an action would only pollute the principle. Contextualization and application into the analogous modern situation takes place after the timeless principle has been exegeted from the text, verified by supporting texts, and properly formatted. The authors state that the goal here is “to identify a broader theological principle reflected in the text, but also one that relates to the similarities between us and the biblical audience. In essence, the theological principle is the same as the “theological message” or the “main theological point” of the passage.”⁹² Again, while they speak of identifying this broader theological truth, for some unsubstantiated reason, they say that this

⁹⁰Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42-43.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 44.

⁹²*Ibid.*

principle must relate to the biblical audience and the modern audience. They go too far at this point because they are not ready to identify similarities between the *then* and *now* until they identify what the author was saying *then* and distill from that the truth that is timeless. There is no need to read the modern reader into the text at this point.

“Step 3: Crossing the Principlizing Bridge.” This third step in Duvall and Hay’s process asks, “What is the theological principle in this text?” Their guidelines are helpful in evaluating whether a principle is actually timeless. The following are the summary statements they provide for their methodology:

1. The principle should be reflected in the text.
2. The principle should be timeless and not tied to a specific situation.
3. The principle should not be culturally bound.
4. The principle should correspond to the teaching of the rest of Scripture.
5. The principle should be relevant to both the biblical and the contemporary audience.
6. Write out the theological principle (or principle) in one or two sentences. Use present-tense verbs.⁹³

“Step 4: Consult the Biblical Map.” In this step, the answer to the following question is sought: “How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?” This is a step of both verification and systematic understanding. Step 4 in Duvall and Hay’s methodology contributes to the category of verifying the

⁹³Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45.

theological legitimacy of a principle. Any potential principle must be verified in light of other biblical passages to see how the principle works within the theology of the Bible as a whole. The authors characterize this move as entering “the parts-whole spiral.”⁹⁴ Duvall and Hays provide the following questions and comments:

1. Is your principle consistent with the rest of Scripture?
2. Do other portions of Scripture add insight or qualification to the principle?
3. If your principle is valid, it ought to “fit” or “correlate” with the rest of the Bible.⁹⁵

Duvall and Hays argue that Old Testament principles must be modified by New Testament theology when they write:

If you are studying an Old Testament passage, consulting the biblical map (Step 4) is especially important, for here you will run your theological principle through the grid of the New Testament, looking for what the New Testament adds to that principle or how the New Testament modifies it. Keep in mind that we read and interpret the Old Testament as Christians. That is, although we believe that the Old Testament is part of God’s inspired Word to us, we do not want to ignore the cross and thus interpret and apply this literature as if we were Old Testament Hebrews. We affirm that we are New Testament Christians, and we will interpret the Old Testament from that vantage point.⁹⁶

From a methodological standpoint they have made a “sub-principlization” process error.⁹⁷ If they arrive at a principle that only applies to ancient Israel, then they

⁹⁴Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45. It appears with this comment that they have been informed by Osborne’s *Hermeneutical Spiral*, but there is no footnote to show who has informed their understanding at this point.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 45.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 45-46.

⁹⁷Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 154.

haven't arrived at a *timeless truth*. They have only arrived at a principle that needs further principalization. If one takes Leviticus 1:3-9 as a text, for instance, what is being taught is the Mosaic Law concerning atonement made by way of an unblemished bull offered up as a burnt offering. Following Duvall and Hays' methodology would render a principized statement such as: "Jesus Christ is the atonement for your sins." This is a true statement, but in no way is that a truth derived from Leviticus 1:3-9. To make this the point of Leviticus 1:3-9 is to eisegete an intention that is foreign to Moses. The point of Leviticus 1:3-9 is this: "God demands a pure blood sacrifice as the atonement for sin." Certainly, the preacher will want to point to how Jesus ultimately came as the once-for-all sacrifice (Hebrews 10:1-18), but if the point of Leviticus 1:3-9 is not established by itself initially, then what is the point of Jesus's death? The demand for atonement must be established before the ultimate Christological fulfillment of that atonement can come. It is not respectful of the "emerging theology"⁹⁸ of the passage, but instead is moving straight to a systematic theology.⁹⁹ God's demand for blood sacrifice to atone for sins is not obsolete because of Jesus; it is *fulfilled* because of Jesus. The demand for atonement was no less in Leviticus 1:3-9 than it is in 2018.

"Step 5: Grasping the Text in Our Town." This step seeks to answer the question, "How should individual Christians today live out the theological

⁹⁸Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

⁹⁹For fuller discussion see Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 133-161 and Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 170-181.

principles?” Here the authors assert that, “While for each passage there will usually be only a few (and often only one) theological principles relevant for all Christians today, there will be numerous applicational possibilities.”¹⁰⁰ They offer up three sub-steps to complete Step 5:

1. Observe how the principles in the text address the original situation.
2. Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context. ... When we speak of a *parallel* situation, we mean a situation that contains *all* of the key elements you identified in the previous step. In other words, the parallel situation must include the central teaching of the biblical text and not just a portion of it.
3. Make your applications specific.¹⁰¹

Duvall and Hays state, “While for each passage there will usually be only a few (and often only one) theological principles relevant for all Christians today, there will be numerous applicational possibilities.”¹⁰² From their comments about using Christian doctrine to modify Old Testament principles, are they now implying that there are Old Testament principles that are not relevant for Christians today? It must be contended again that if they have arrived at an Old Testament principle that is not relevant for Christians today, then they have either misinterpreted the text or they have still not arrived at the principle. If they are saying, for instance, that God’s demand for a burnt offering of an unblemished bull for atonement is not applicable to Christians, then they are right, but they have not arrived at the principle. The bull sacrifice is the initial expression of the fulfillment of the timeless principle of atoning

¹⁰⁰Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 46.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 239-241.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 46.

sacrifice. The atoning sacrifice of Christ is the ultimate expression of the timeless principle of atoning sacrifice. The burden lies on Duvall and Hays to identify a single timeless truth in the Old Testament that is *not relevant* for Christians.

William Klein, Craig Blomberg, Robert Hubbard Jr.

Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard acknowledge there is a consensus among evangelical scholars that principlization is a legitimate method.¹⁰³ They summarize their research in a summary of four steps that are then broken down and explained:

1. Determine the original application(s) intended by the passage.
2. Evaluate the level of specificity of those applications to their original historical situations. If the original specific applications are transferable across time and space to other audiences, apply them in culturally appropriate ways.
3. If the original applications are not transferrable, identify one or more broader cross-cultural principles that the specific elements of the text reflect.
4. Find appropriate applications for today that implement those principles.¹⁰⁴

Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard's contribution is in the category of general guidelines for principlization. Their brief presentation on this subject does not advance the method of principlization beyond that of the more significant contributors.

¹⁰³William Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Revised and updated edition (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2004), 483.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

Ramesh Richard

Ramesh Richard's contribution is categorized as general guidelines for deriving principles. Here he contends that principles are either directly stated, implied, or extrapolated from the biblical text. He wrote a series of articles for *Bibliotheca Sacra* under the title "Application Theory in Relation to the New Testament." In Part 2, he defines what he believes to be three levels of meaning in Scripture that the expositor is searching for: statements, implications, and extrapolations. A *statement* is the basic meaning of the text "without logical or theological inference. It is a descriptive basis without which sense would be nonsense."¹⁰⁵ An *implication* is meaning derived from the author's statement, but is "more than he was consciously aware of," although it absolutely cannot "imply something contrary to his statement."¹⁰⁶ The third level of meaning, according to Richard is *extrapolation*, which is more closely tied to application than interpretation. An extrapolation answers the question, "On the basis of what is written, what would the author have said if revelation were being given now in the 20th century?"¹⁰⁷ His summary questions are perhaps more helpful in illuminating his point:

Statement is the closest to answering a redundant but necessary question, "Is this what the author stated in this verse?"

¹⁰⁵Ramesh Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 570 (June 1986): 126.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 126-127.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 128-129.

Implication answer, “Is this what the divine and human authors meant by this verse?” and “Would the biblical author agree that the exegesis aligns with the overall thrust of his thoughts?”

Extrapolation answers, “Would the authors agree that the exegesis is a possible conclusion from their affirmation?” and “Would the biblical writers agree that the exegesis is appropriate to the whole message of Scripture?”¹⁰⁸

There is danger in saying that an implication is something “more than he was consciously aware of.” It would be better to leave “implication” with its standard definition, “The conclusion that can be drawn from something although it is not explicitly stated.”¹⁰⁹

In Part 3, he gives a summary statement and diagram to illustrate his viewpoint on principlization, though he calls it “extrapolation.”¹¹⁰ He suggests the following steps for extrapolating principles:

First, ask the question, “How did the authors expect their immediate readers to employ their writings?”¹¹¹

Second, examine the *authorial application-expectation* in light of “the ecclesiological factor” which is whether or not the application is still valid in terms of God’s covenant expectations on the Church.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 2,” 131. He even states, “In answering these questions biblical meaning is determined and biblical relevance is secured for all matters of faith and practice for all time and for all situations.”

¹⁰⁹ *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*, s.v., “Implication,” <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/implication>. The implications of a text’s meaning are not unconscious meanings of the author, they are simply conclusions based on the propositional truth of the author’s writing. To say it is an unconscious meaning is to declare authorial intent to the implication, which is not true. It is more accurate to say, “This is a conclusion I am drawing from the meaning of this text.”

¹¹⁰ Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 211.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

Third, examine and determine the “audience-traits” which are those expected traits or behaviors that are expected of the New Testament and extended to the modern audience.¹¹³

Simply put, Richard communicates the same guidelines that have already been presented, albeit with exceptional erudition. The following are his three steps for laymen:

1. What was the authorial intent for the original audience?
2. Has the application of this original principle been fulfilled in the New Covenant or superseded by a new command?
3. What is the contemporary analogous situation to which this principle can now be applied?

To generalize specific commands in Scripture to timeless principles, which is similar to Kaiser’s discussion on *particularismus*, Richard suggests eight steps:

1. “Determine the level of abstraction of any moral form in Scripture. The more abstract the command, the less applicatory interpretation is needed.” This essentially means that if the command is not given to address a specific situation, then it is likely that the principle is already in general, timeless format.
2. “Be sensitive to historically and culturally unique situation in Bible commands.” Here, Richard gives as an example Paul’s commands on eating meat sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8). This command is given to a culturally unique situation and must be understood and communicated in context. This is again a restatement of comments previously discussed regarding the use of an historical, grammatical, and literary hermeneutic.

¹¹² Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 208-209.

¹¹³ Ibid, 207-209.

3. “Discern which moral discursive forms speak to ethical action and attitudes and which do not.” This point appears to address the motive that a command could be addressing. For example, *love your neighbor* is the attitude that governs the actions behind the imperatives in Leviticus 19:9-18, as previously discussed.
4. “In determining extrapolations ask, Are there “principles stated explicitly elsewhere in Scripture that are here applied specifically?” This is the search for texts that corroborate an extrapolated principle.¹¹⁴
5. “Seek for God’s purposes and eternal will in Scripture. ... In determining the meaning of a passage, the interpreter also seeks to ascertain God’s will for His present people.”
6. “Determine the relationship between the ethical command and the problem that gave rise to it.”¹¹⁵
7. “Look for linguistic indicators that may be clues to deciding the issue.” For support, Richard cites Grant Osborne’s article, “Hermeneutics and Women in the Church.”¹¹⁶ Osborne’s point here, which Richard is citing, is no different from that which has already been noted in the section on Osborne’s methodology for discerning principles in Scripture.
8. “[T]ry to achieve as much proximity as possible to the original meaning.” This step actually refers to the process of translating a principle into an application point.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

What has been presented above are contributions relevant to the development of a more complete methodology of principlization for preaching. Now that the

¹¹⁴This is no different from the step of verification that others have mentioned.

¹¹⁵This appears to be no different from Kaiser’s point about particularisms.

¹¹⁶Grant Osborne, “Hermeneutics and Women in the Church,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (December 1977), 240.

¹¹⁷Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212-214.

relevant contributions have been evaluated, the work remaining at this juncture is the synthesis of the contributions. The synthesis takes all of the partial contributions and joins them together into one methodology of principlization. This will not complete the objective, but it will reveal gaps in the methodology that must be filled in. What will be presented in Chapter 4 is the synthesis of the relevant contributions along with original contributions to fill in the gaps and develop a more complete methodology of principlization for the purpose of preaching. In Chapter 5, this methodology is applied to a passage of Scripture from each biblical genre. This will answer genre-specific questions that the preacher might have when principlizing the various parts of Scripture.

It has been demonstrated that relevant contributions made toward a more complete methodology of principlization have been partial up to the time of this dissertation. No single contributor has developed a complete methodology that includes all contingent parts. Because of their partial nature, there is need to synthesize the relevant contributions into one methodology. The synthesis that follows in Chapter 4 simultaneously reveals and fills the gaps in the principlization methodology.

CHAPTER 4: SYNTHESIS

Because no single contributor has provided a complete methodology of principlization, a significant original contribution of this dissertation is the analysis and synthesis of the relevant literature. One of the objectives of this analysis and synthesis is the identification of the gaps still to be addressed by personal contributions. This chapter thus represents an original contribution to the methodology of principlization in that it fills gaps that were either not filled or insufficiently addressed by the contributors discussed previously. With the labor of Chapter 4 completed, the resulting product, which is the overall objective of this dissertation, will be a more complete methodology of principlization for the purpose of preaching. What remains to be addressed in Chapter 5 is the application of this methodology to a passage of Scripture from each biblical genre as a means of answering any further genre-specific questions.

General guidelines and guiding questions for deriving principlized truth from Scripture are given below. These guidelines and questions are designed to aid the preacher in discerning timeless principles of truth from Scripture. Under the heading of “general guidelines” there are six main steps or parts to the work of principlization: Identify, Assess, Format, Evaluate, Verify, and Analyze.

Identify the Purpose and Emphasis of the Passage

The expositor must identify the purpose and emphasis of the author of a given passage of Scripture. The purpose is the main idea the author is communicating. The statements the author employs in the passage accomplish the purpose of the passage. The purpose of the author in writing that particular passage is always connected to his main purpose in writing the book in which it is found. The purpose of the author is also always connected to the entire biblical account. To identify the purpose of the passage of Scripture, follow the guidelines and answer the following questions:

Identify the purpose of the passage in relation to the Scripture preceding it:

1. Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, and grammatical hermeneutic.¹
2. What is the biblical narrative, the emerging theology, leading up to this passage?²
3. Where does this passage occur in the timeline of God's activity recorded in Scripture?

Identify the purpose of the passage of Scripture in relation to the book where it is found:

1. What is the purpose of this biblical book?³

¹John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 221. See also, Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 42. Also, Ramesh Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 571 (July 1986): 212-213.

²Walter Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 162.

2. What was the setting to which this passage of Scripture was originally addressed?⁴
3. What are the major sections of the book and how does the author progress the main argument of the book through his flow of thought?⁵
4. Where does this passage occur in terms of the flow of book?⁶
5. What is the purpose of this passage in the book and in the whole of Scripture?⁷
6. What response was the author expecting of his original audience?⁸
7. What was the Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account?

³Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

⁴Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 200191-93. See also, Jack Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible* ((Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 33.

⁵Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. Being cognizant of this will aid the preacher in avoiding the error of eisegeting his own personal favorite questions or cultural issues into the text.

⁶“The search for principles in the biblical text is usually not to be found in isolated words or phrases, and it certainly is not to be found in verses used as proof-texts. Such principles, rather, are set forth as the controlling theses in paragraphs, chapters, sections of a book, and even whole books of the Bible.” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 276.

⁷Jay E. Adams, *Truth Applied: Application in Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wakeman Trust, 1990), 54. See Also, Mark L. Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology: A Reflection by Mark L. Strauss,” in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 294-295.

⁸Michael Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 483. Also, Daniel Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon: How to Balance Biblical Integrity and Cultural Relevance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 140-143.

8. What would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture?⁹
9. What does this passage teach about God?¹⁰
10. What does this passage teach about the depravity of man?¹¹

Identify how the author has emphasized the purpose of the passage of Scripture:

1. Does the author use any of the following devices to direct the attention of the reader to his intended emphasis?
2. What are the stylistic elements?
 - a. Are there any grammatical keys?
 - b. What is the rhetorical structure?¹²
 - c. Is there are theme sentence?
 - d. Are there any distinctive or unusual features?
 - e. Are there any pivotal statements?¹³
 - f. Are there any theological judgments?¹⁴
 - g. What imperatives are in the text?¹⁵

⁹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 89-90.

¹⁰Ibid., 94-95. See also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

¹¹Ed Rowell, "The Heresy of Application," *Leadership Journal* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 20-27.

¹²Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. See also, Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 214.

¹³Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 483.

¹⁴Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Strauss, "Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 293.

3. How does God view this idea, event, or action? Is He pleased or displeased?¹⁶
4. Write out the authorial intention¹⁷ (purpose) of the passage for the original audience in one or two sentences.¹⁸

Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage

The principles in the passage are either explicitly stated or implied. Principles to be discerned are the points, arguments, or statements the author is explicitly stating or implying in order to accomplish his intention.

Identify explicit and implicit principles within the passage of Scripture:

1. Is there a principle or principles stated explicitly by the author in the passage?¹⁹

¹⁵Fabarez contends rightly that when the imperatives are identified, “the application to the original audience is usually obvious.” Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 41-42. Also Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

¹⁶Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

¹⁷“Seek for God’s purposes and eternal will in Scripture. . . . In determining the meaning of a passage, the interpreter also seeks to ascertain God’s will for His present people.” Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 213-214.

¹⁸Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 293.

¹⁹Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

2. Why was this command or principle given?²⁰
3. If you believe there are principles that are explicit within the passage, are there any textual indications or reasons why the author is explicit rather than abstract?
4. Is there a principle or principles stated in the broader context of the passage?²¹
5. Is this passage the record of a broad principle that is being applied specifically?²²
6. Is there a general principle revealed in the broader context of the book?²³
7. Is the author drawing out an implication of the Ten Commandments?²⁴

Write out each of the principles the author was explicitly stating or implying about his main point of emphasis (purpose):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

²⁰Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

²¹Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

²²Kaiser, "A Principlizing Model," in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 20-21. This is what Kaiser refers to as a "particularismus" or "particularisms." See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

²³Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

²⁴Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

4. _____

Assess the Transferability of a Principle

After understanding what the author has said about his purpose or accomplishing his purpose in the passage, those principles must be assessed for transferability to the modern audience. Several factors must be considered when assessing whether or not the principles within a passage of Scripture are cultural expressions of a timeless truth or if they are already in a timeless format.²⁵ To assess the transferability of a principle, answer the following questions about the principles discerned from the passage of Scripture:

Identify the difference between content in a passage that is cultural or supracultural.²⁶

1. What is the relationship between the ethical command and the issue to which it is addressed?²⁷
2. Is there anything in the immediate context of this passage that limits the application of the principle to the original audience?²⁸

²⁵Osborne contends that this step is a major difficulty. Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 420.

²⁶“The process of deciding supracultural or cultural does not entail the former having greater ‘authority’ than the latter. Rather, we seek to delineate *how* a passage applies to us in our context, whether at the level of the surface command (if it is supracultural) or at the deeper level of the underlying principle (if the surface command is cultural or meant for the first century but not applying literally today).” Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 426.

²⁷Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423. See also, Richard. “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 214.

3. Is there anything in the Bible that limits the application of this principle?²⁹
4. Was the biblical writer stating a normative command, or was he contextualizing a normative command to address a problem in the culture?³⁰
5. Is this command given addressing a specific situation?³¹ If not, it is likely already in a general, timeless format. If the command is addressing a specific situation, it must be determined what content within the command is culturally bound and what content is not culturally bound (supracultural).
6. What are the differences between the original audience and the modern audience?³²

A principle will almost always be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions:

1. Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle similar to the modern audience?³³
2. Is this principle founded upon the work of God in Creation?³⁴

²⁸Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

³¹Richard, ‘Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,’ 212.

³²Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42-43.

³³Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 21. Application will necessitate identifying a modern situation that analogous to the biblical situation. See Adams, *Truth Applied*, 48-49; and Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

³⁴Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Past the Bible to Theology,” 297. See Also, Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-423. Supracultural indicators are statements that demonstrate the command to be grounded in a timeless foundation:

3. Is this principle founded upon the character of God?³⁵
4. Is this principle founded upon the redemptive work of God?³⁶
5. Is this principle founded upon the Ten Commandments?³⁷
6. Is the author relying on earlier biblical teaching in this principle?³⁸
7. Does the teaching transcend cultural biases in its original setting?³⁹
8. Is the command moral or theological?⁴⁰

A principle will not be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the questions that follow. If the answer is “Yes” to any of the following questions, more work must be done to refine the format of the principle to arrive at the timeless truth. If the principle is clothed in supracultural content, the theology of the principle

the character of God, a principle of Creation, or a command of God that has not been fulfilled or superseded by a new command.

³⁵Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Past the Bible to Theology,” 297-298.

³⁶Ibid., 298.

³⁷Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

³⁸Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 424.

³⁹“When the teaching transcends cultural biases of the author or readers, it is more likely to be normative. This is true regarding Galatians 3:28 and the issue of slavery, as well as passages related to the universal mission. Clearly, they are not tied to any specific cultural situation and therefore are programmatic theological statements.” Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 424.

⁴⁰“Commands that by nature are moral or theological will be closely tied to the divine will. Commands dealing generally with such issues as adultery or prayer by nature transcend any particular cultural setting. Here we would note that the later prohibition of polygamy was not merely due to cultural change but was rooted in the progressive revelation of God’s will. In the same way, we must see the prohibition of homosexuality as normative, tied as it is to divinely established moral laws.” Ibid., 422-426.

must be maintained,⁴¹ while the timeless elements are distilled for the purpose of preaching to the modern audience.

1. Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle different from what it would be for the modern audience?⁴²
2. Is the principle wholly tied to a cultural expression?⁴³
3. Is the principle fulfilled on behalf of believers by the atoning work of Christ?⁴⁴
4. Write out each of the timeless principles the author was explicitly stating or implying to achieve his purpose:

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

- d. _____

⁴¹Kaiser, "A Principlization Method," 21.

⁴²Ibid., 483.

⁴³Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 425.

⁴⁴This does not mean the principle is invalid, it simply means that Jesus fulfilled the obedience to this principle on behalf of sinners. When this occurs, the preacher has the natural opportunity to proclaim the message of the gospel to sinners in the midst of the sermon.

Formatting Principled Statements of Theological Truth

The formatting of principled statements is crucial for the purpose of preaching. Formatting principles as timeless statements is a vital step that must be taken with precision before practical application is made. These principles are sentences from which the main points of the sermon are to be built. A principle is a timeless statement of theological truth, and as such must not be fundamentally general in essence and not culturally bound in its format. If the principle is culturally bound, then it has not been fully principled. The following are guidelines for formatting principled statements of theological truth for the purpose of preaching:

1. State the principle in a complete sentence.⁴⁵
2. If the cultural-historical expression of the principle remains the same in the present day, keep the principle as it is formatted in the passage.⁴⁶
3. If the cultural-historical expression of the principle is different in the present day, state the principle generally before applying it specifically to the analogous present day situation.⁴⁷
4. Remove all proper nouns except God.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2011), 45.

⁴⁶“In some cases in interpreting the Bible, we will keep the principle affirmed in the theology taught, along with the cultural-historical expression of that principle where the cultural expression remains similar to its meaning in our times as well.” [responsibility between husband and wife]. Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 21.

⁴⁷“On other occasions, we will keep the theology of the passage (i.e., one that is now embodied in a principle), but replace the behavioral expression from our contemporary world. ... Principles, then, must be given priority over accompanying cultural elements, especially when directed to the times and settings in which that text was written—times now different and separate from the contemporary manner of expressing that same principle.” Ibid., 21. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45.

5. Replace past-tense verbs with present-tense verbs. Use future tense verbs only if the theology demands it.⁴⁹
6. Replace third person pronouns with first person plural or singular nouns.⁵⁰
7. State the principle in a declarative or imperative form if at all possible and only if necessary an interrogative format.⁵¹
8. Format the principle to be applicational: addressing the thinking, attitudes, motivations, which must be brought into compliance with the truth of the passage of Scripture.⁵²

Write out each the principles in the proper format:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

⁴⁸Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. See also Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

⁴⁹Remove all “dated statements...all proper names, places, incidents, and descriptions.” He says failure to remove dated statements from the main points of the sermon is the “main pitfall to avoid in formulating these main points.” Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. Also see Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

⁵⁰Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58. See also, Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

⁵¹Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 137.

4. _____

Evaluate the Accuracy of a Principle

When deriving and developing principled statements of theological truth for the purpose of preaching, the preacher must take care to accurately reflect the truth of the passage he is studying. There are two erroneous principization processes that result in five “final product errors.”⁵³ Errors can occur when the preacher is either too specific in his principle or too general.⁵⁴ The goal of a principle is to communicate both the essence and extended meaning of the passage of Scripture.⁵⁵ The principles “must be so worded as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text.”⁵⁶ The purpose of principization is to accurately discern, develop, and declare the timeless truth of Scripture to the modern audience. The two

⁵³Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 152.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 153.

⁵⁵“The essence of a statement of theological principle is the portion of the statement that identifies the subject-matter. This is similar to the subject component of the plural noun proposition which, you will recall, answers the question, what is he talking about? The essence of a statement of theological principle identifies what the preacher is talking about? ... The extent of the statement of theological principle is analogous to the complement of the plural noun propositional statement which answers the question, what is he saying about what he is talking about? In other words, the extent of the statement of theological principle comprises the boundaries or the limitation of how the subject will be modified, or what will be said about the subject matter.” *Ibid.*, 158.

⁵⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 158.

erroneous principlization processes are sub-principlization and supra-principlization.

Evaluate the accuracy of principles by following the following method:

Sub-principlization of Scripture is a principlized statement that communicates, “less than what the text teaches—less than what the text teaches in essence, less than what the text teaches in extent, or both” and “can take place because the terminology used is either too specific or too general.”⁵⁷

Ask these questions when evaluating every principle:

1. Does this principle communicate less than what this passage of Scripture is communicating?
2. Is the terminology used in this principle too specific or too general?
3. Does this principle accurately articulate “the exact subject matter of the portion of the text from which the statement of theological principle is drawn”?⁵⁸
4. Does this principle understate the extent of what the passage of Scripture is communicating?⁵⁹

Supra-principlization of Scripture is a principlized statement that communicates “theological principles that are more than what the text teaches—more than what the text teaches in essence or more than what the text teaches in extent” which occurs, “because the terminology used is too general.”⁶⁰

Ask the following question when evaluating every principle:

⁵⁷Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 154.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 155.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 156.

1. Does this principle communicate more than the passage of Scripture is communicating?

These two erroneous principlization processes can result in five different categories of errors. As a helpful guide in identifying the exact nature of these errors examine each principle in light of these five final product errors:

1. The *hyper-principlized* statement is an error of supra-principlization, which caused the statement to communicate more in essence and extent than the author intended.
2. The *supra-principlized* statement is caused by language that is too general, resulting in the communication of more than was communicated in the extent of the text.
3. The *meta-principlized* statement represents failure to express the essence of the text, while at the same time overstating the extent.
4. The *sub-principlized* statement is caused by using language that is too specific, resulting in the communication of less than what the text says.
5. The *under-principlized* statement is caused by a total sub-principlization process, resulting in communicating less than what the text means in both essence and extent.⁶¹

Revise the principles accordingly so that they accurately reflect the passage of Scripture in both essence and extent. Write out the principles again, revising when necessary:

1. _____

2. _____

⁶¹Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 162-167.

3. _____

4. _____

Verify the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

Many errors in principlization will be avoided simply by verifying the theological legitimacy of a principle. To verify the theological legitimacy of a principle you believe you have discerned from the passage of Scripture, answer the following questions:

1. Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?⁶²
2. If this principle is an implication or extrapolation from the passage of Scripture, is it stated explicitly elsewhere in the Scripture?
3. What verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?

Write out the principles, this time including supporting text references.

1. _____

⁶²Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45. See Also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 296. This is the classic principle of the *anologia fidei* or *anologia scriptura*. "Luther propounded the *anologia fidei* ('analogy of faith'). Luther opposed the centrality of ecclesial tradition and believed that Scripture alone should determine dogma. On the basis of the unity and clarity of Scripture, he proposed that the basic doctrines must cohere with and not contradict the holistic teaching of Scripture.... Calvin took the final step, suggesting the principle of *anologia scriptura* ('analogy of Scripture') as an alternative." Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28. See also, Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 196-198.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Analyzing Implications of Principles

There is a difference between a truthful statement and a principlized statement of theological truth for the purpose of preaching. A principle for preaching communicates both the essence and extent of the passage of Scripture. There are many truthful statements that can be made, but that does not mean the statement is a principle for preaching. Implications and extrapolations drawn from or based on a passage of Scripture may be true statements, but they do not communicate the essence and extent of the passage and are therefore not to be declared principles. It is important to discern the difference between principles, implications, and extrapolations. A principle, being derived accurately and directly from the passage of Scripture, is ultimately authoritative because it is biblical propositional truth. An implication, while truthful, does not convey the essence or extent of the passage of Scripture and as such is not a principle for preaching, but will likely be part of the sermon and application. An implication must be thoroughly confirmed by the context of the passage and the analogy of Scripture. Extrapolations are possible conclusions that can be drawn from a passage of Scripture, and while possibly truthful, do not

communicate the essence and extent of the passage. Extrapolations are not principles for preaching. They may be truth that is declared in the exposition of a passage, but they do not communicate the essence and extent of the passage of Scripture. The following are definitions of the terms principle, implication, and extrapolation.

Determine if the statements you are considering principles are indeed principles, or if they are implications or extrapolations.

1. A principle articulates the essence and extent of the passage of Scripture.⁶³
2. An implication is a conclusion drawn based on the propositional truth of the passage.⁶⁴
3. An extrapolation is a principle stated explicitly elsewhere that is applied specifically in this passage.⁶⁵

If you have determined that a statement is a true implication of the passage of Scripture, then use the following five categories to determine the authority of the implication:

1. A *necessary* implication of “You shall not commit adultery” is you cannot have a sexual relationship with a person who is not your spouse.”
2. A *probable* implication is you ought to be very careful of strong bonding friendships with a person who is not your spouse.

⁶³Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 158.

⁶⁴“*Implications* answer, “Is this what the divine and human authors meant by this verse?” and “Would the biblical author agree that the exegesis aligns with the overall thrust of his thoughts?” Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 213.

⁶⁵“In determining extrapolations ask, Are there “principles stated explicitly elsewhere in Scripture that are here applied specifically?” Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 213.

3. A *possible* implication is you ought not travel regularly to conventions or other places with a person who is not your spouse.
4. An *improbable* conclusion is you should not at any time have lunch with someone who is not your spouse.
5. An *impossible* implication is you ought not have dinner with another couple because you are the same table with a person who is not your spouse.⁶⁶

Review the Errors to Avoid in Principilizing

After arriving at the timeless principles believed to be explicit or implicit in the passage, review the following errors that must be avoided in principilizing a passage of Scripture:

1. Are you failing to express the plain meaning of the passage in its historical context (allegorizing)?⁶⁷
2. Are you making spiritual analogies not made by the author (spiritualizing)?⁶⁸
3. Are you using this passage to dictate moral commands that go beyond the intention of the author (moralizing)?⁶⁹

⁶⁶Rowell, “The Heresy of Application,” 20-27.

⁶⁷Sidney Greidanus writes that allegorizing “fails to bring across the plain meaning of the passage in its historical context and thus falsifies the message.”⁶⁷ Also, “Spiritualizing takes place when the preacher discards the earthly, physical, historical reality the text speaks about and crosses the gap with a spiritual analogy of that historical reality.” Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 160.

⁶⁸Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 74. The author of the text of Scripture has authority to assign meaning to the text, not the preacher. In *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson points out the allegorizing error Origen made in interpreting Joshua 6. See Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 88.

⁶⁹Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 78. Bryan Chapell refers to moralizing as the “be good” message. Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 282.

4. Are you using this passage of Scripture to establish a pattern to follow that the author did not intend (patternizing)?⁷⁰
5. Are you minimalizing the importance of this passage of Scripture in order to be clever or cliché (trivializing)?⁷¹
6. Are you implying without biblical warrant that the application of this principle will be identical in the original setting as well as the modern setting (normalizing)?⁷²
7. Are you using this passage of Scripture to teach a principle you imported to the text rather than expounded (proof-texting)?⁷³
8. Are you using this passage of Scripture to promise something to your audience that is actually promised to them (promising the unpromised)?⁷⁴

Write out the principles that have been refined and verified.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

⁷⁰Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 87. Chapell calls these “Be like” sermons in *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 281-282. There has to be legitimate exegetical reasons that establish a person or action as a pattern to imitate.

⁷¹Ibid., 88.

⁷²Ibid., 92.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., 97.

4. _____

Genre-Specific Guidelines and Guiding Questions

The guidelines for principlizing Scripture are general, not specific. There are concerns that are unique to each genre in Scripture when it comes to exegesis and principlization. In this section, questions will be posited to aid the preacher in discerning principlized statements of theological truth from the various biblical genres for the purpose of preaching. The six genres are: narrative, law code (rules/principles), poetry, wisdom, epistles, prophecy and apocalyptic. The following genre-specific questions will help the preacher discern the purpose of the passage and discover how the author is accomplishing that purpose.

Narrative

The following are helpful questions for determining the principles within a biblical narrative. These questions are arranged to address the setting and structure, characters, actions of God, actions of the characters, the purpose, and the differences in cultural settings.

Setting and Structure:

1. What does the setting contribute to the story?
2. What structure holds the story together and provides its unity?
3. How do the individual episodes fit into the total framework?

4. What conflicts develop and how are they resolved?⁷⁵

Characters:

1. Who are the characters in the story and why did the author include them?
2. Do the characters contrast with one another?
3. How do these characters develop as the story develops?⁷⁶

Actions of God:

1. Since God acts according to His unchanging nature, and past actions indicate what He might do in parallel circumstances today, what then are the ways in which God responded to the events?
2. What does this narrative tell of the story of God's work of redemption?
3. Knowing this is not an isolated story, how does this narrative fall within God's plan of redemption?⁷⁷
4. Does the text in any way reveal how God judged the actions recorded in the narrative?⁷⁸

Imitable and Condemnable Actions:

1. Does the narrative establish a pattern of righteous actions by the faithful biblical character that are intended to be imitated even if not explicitly stated in such terms?⁷⁹
2. Does the narrative indicate that imitation of a protagonist is appropriate?

⁷⁵Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 68-69.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 211-212.

⁷⁸Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54.

⁷⁹Doriani writes, "Where a series of acts by the faithful [the biblical character] create a pattern, and God or the narrator approves the pattern, it directs believers, even if no law spells out the lesson." Doriani, "A Response to Walter Kaiser Jr.," in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 89.

3. Were the character's actions unique to his office and therefore not able to be imitated?
4. What proper or improper responses to God are demonstrated by the characters in this narrative?
5. Do any of the characters' actions correlate with theological principles in Scripture?⁸⁰
6. Is there any indication that this passage was given as a template to follow?⁸¹

Purpose:

1. Why did the writer bother telling the story?⁸²
2. What ideas lie behind the story that may be implied but not stated?⁸³
3. Can those ideas be stated through a subject and complement?⁸⁴
4. Does the text promise something that applies universally, to both the character(s) and us?⁸⁵
5. How did the biblical author intend for this passage of Scripture to apply to his original readers?

Differences in Cultural Setting:

1. How are the language, social structure, and customs of the original setting different from those of the contemporary audience?⁸⁶

⁸⁰Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 211-212.

⁸¹Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 42.

⁸²Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 68-69. See also Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54.

⁸³Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 68-69.

⁸⁴Ibid. The *subject* is what the author is talking about, and the *complement* is what the author is saying about that subject.

⁸⁵Daniel Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 59.

Law Code, Rules, and Cultural Statements⁸⁷

To evaluate rules and cultural statements answer the following:

1. What was the original meaning in the original setting?
2. Is the command restated in the New Testament?⁸⁸
3. Is the command revoked in the New Testament?⁸⁹
4. Is the command assumed in the New Testament?⁹⁰
5. What is the principle behind the Old Testament command?⁹¹
6. How much specificity and transferability is there within this command? If not directly transferable, is there a principle behind the command?
7. How does the command reflect the character of God?⁹²

⁸⁶Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 211-212.

⁸⁷For Doriani, a rule is a narrowly defined mandate (what Osborne calls a *cultural statement*), while a principle is a broad statement of truth (Osborne's *supracultural statement*). Rules or cultural statements must be unraveled through careful exegesis, while principles or supracultural statements must be meditated on to evaluate how they are applied in various situations. Ibid., 211-212.

⁸⁸Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 95-96.

⁸⁹Ibid. The laws of sacrifice are fulfilled in Christ and the dietary restrictions are lifted in Mark 7:19 and Acts 10.

⁹⁰It is a false conclusion to assert that an Old Testament command is null and void simply because it is not explicitly restated. If the command is neither restated nor revoked, it should be concluded that it is still in effect; or assumed.

⁹¹Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 95-96.

⁹²Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 241.

8. Does the law apply to the contemporary reader “(1) identically, (2) analogously, and (3) typologically”?⁹³

To determine the applicability of rules and cultural statements, answer the following:

1. Does the book itself limit the application of the teaching?
2. Does later revelation limit the scope of a teaching?
3. Does the passage present a broad moral principle or a specific manifestation of one?
4. Do cultural conditions make it appropriate to apply teaching in new ways for new cultures?
5. If a cultural form in the text still exists today, does it have the same significance it once did?
6. Is a law rooted in something permanent, such as the creation order, the character of God, the Decalogue, or the plan of redemption? Or is it grounded in something temporary, such as the permission Moses gave Israel to divorce due to hardness of heart?
7. Is the command contrary to the standards of the day, and part of a biblical protest against ungodly standards? If so, it is probably binding.⁹⁴

Poetry

To aid in discerning principles within biblical poetry use the following questions:

1. What meaning lies behind the images and figures of speech?
2. What feelings does the poet express by the choice of language?
3. What elements of form and structure does the poet use to discipline thought?
4. What would be lost if the same truth were presented in prose?⁹⁵

⁹³ Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 241.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 249-250.

Wisdom

To aid in discerning principles within biblical wisdom literature use the following questions:

1. Is this proverb expressing a general tendency or a unique situation?⁹⁶
2. Is this proverb or wisdom passage expressing a universal truth in a particular example?⁹⁷
3. Is this passage descriptive, or a wise observation on life?⁹⁸
4. Is this passage prescriptive, giving a command to be obeyed?⁹⁹
5. If the passage is descriptive, what are the exceptions where this is not the outcome?¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 69.

⁹⁶“Proverbs always express an observation about a general tendency in life, not about unique occurrence.” Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 123.

⁹⁷“Proverbs thus follow a very basic literary principle: their way of getting at the universal is through the particular.” Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid., 124.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 124. Kaiser and Silva write, “Especially difficult in this area of finding general principles in the promises of God are the proverbs of the Old Testament. One must be careful not to assume that just because a proverb sounds like a promise that it is one. Proverbs are, instead, Wisdom sayings that apply to situations generally, without listing the exceptions that must often qualify them.” Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 282. One example he points to is Proverbs 22:6, about which he says, “is not an ironclad guarantee that if one abides by the rules established there that in every instance all will turn out well for a child.” They also state, “Many a person has come to grief by universalizing the proverbs into unconditional truths or into promises without qualifications.”

6. Does this passage express an implication of the Mosaic Law?¹⁰¹
7. Is this proverb a metaphor that applies generally to life?
8. Is this wisdom passage a celebration of a biblical ideal?

Epistle

To aid in discerning principles within the biblical epistolary literature use the following questions:

1. What specific situation(s) was this epistle written to address?
2. How did the author address the situation(s)?
3. What situation does this particular passage in the epistle address?
4. Does the author condemn, rebuke, or correct any attitudes or actions?
5. Does the author praise, encourage, or command any attitudes or actions?
6. What doctrines does the author teach in this passage?
7. How does the author teach those doctrines?
8. In what ways are the recipients commanded to act in response to those doctrines?
9. Does the author correct any false doctrines?

¹⁰¹“To be sure, there are texts that many believe hint at these conclusions, but there is more or less a going beyond the words on the page to achieve certain understandings. It is sort of like having your feet anchored in the canon while leaning over into the current world in order to achieve a full accounting of how biblical truth applies. This imagery seems somewhat supported by how the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament unpacks the implications of the law without quoting it directly. In the Old Testament, all of life seems ‘nested’ in small bits of data that continue to frame life application. Theological paradigms are therefore required to make assertions about what is ‘biblical,’ that is, what God requires, in any given situation.” Meadors, ed., *Four Views On Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 9.

10. How does the author correct those false doctrines?

Prophecy and Apocalyptic

To aid in discerning principles within biblical prophecy and apocalyptic literature use the following questions:

1. Is this passage declaring a prophecy that has already been fulfilled?
2. Is this passage declaring a prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled?
3. What was the expected response of the author's original readers?
4. What aspects of the future has the author revealed in this passage?
5. Is this passage a prophetic ridiculing of a false god, false belief, or unrighteous behavior?¹⁰²
6. If this passage is prophetic ridiculing, what is being ridiculed and how is it being ridiculed?

¹⁰²For example, Isaiah 44:9-20.

CHAPTER 5: APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY

Chapter 1 was a presentation of the biblical justification for developing a methodology for deriving principlized truth from Scripture which is accurate hermeneutically and more beneficial for the purpose of preaching. Chapter 2 was a survey of literature relevant to the development of a more complete methodology of principlization. In Chapter 3, these contributions were evaluated and interacted with, rendering their beneficial elements. After the contributions were analyzed, they were synthesized into a singular methodology of principlization and at the same time supplemented with original contributions from the writer of this dissertation. The final product of that process yielded the most complete methodology of principlization available at the time of the writing of this dissertation. In Chapter 5 this methodology is applied to preaching a portion of Scripture from each genre represented in Scripture: narrative, law code, poetry, wisdom, epistle, and prophecy/apocalyptic. The application of this methodology to a representative passage of Scripture from each genre serves to illustrate the use the principlization methodology and also to answer any remaining questions concerning principlization.

The passages that will be examined in the forthcoming section will be from representatives of the six major genres of Scripture: narrative, law code, poetry, wisdom, epistle, and prophecy/apocalyptic. Understandably, there will be some scholars who choose to further categorize the genres represented in Scripture, however, the purpose of this dissertation is not to present an argument for genre

classifications. The purpose is to develop a more complete methodology of principlization for the purpose of preaching. The following passages will be used as representative of the genres in Scripture:

Narrative	Genesis 16:1-16
Law Code	Leviticus 19:9-18
Poetry	Psalms 77:1-20
Wisdom	Proverbs 5:1-23
Epistle	1 John 5:13-21
Prophetic/Apocalyptic	Revelation 13:11-18

Narrative – Genesis 16:1-16

The text under consideration here as a preaching portion of Scripture that is representative of the narrative genre of Scripture is Genesis 16:1-16:

¹Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. ²And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold, now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. ⁴And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!" ⁶But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her.

⁷The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai." ⁹The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress

and submit to her.” ¹⁰The angel of the LORD also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.”

¹¹And the angel of the LORD said to her,

“Behold, you are pregnant
and shall bear a son.
You shall call his name Ishmael,
Because the LORD has listened to your affliction.

¹²He shall be a wild donkey of a man,
his hand against everyone
and everyone’s hand against him,
and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”

¹³So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen Him who looks after me.”

¹⁴Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

In this passage, both Sarai and Abram respond to their childless situation with faithless actions. The outcomes or effects of that faithless frustration are the focal point of the passage. Their actions are not portrayed in any way that would suggest they are imitable in this instance. In fact, the negative outcomes of their actions are exposed for all to see. In this passage, what can be seen is four effects of faithless frustration.

Context

The Book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. Genesis is a record of the work of God in creating the heavens, the earth, and all the creatures therein. This is a record of the beginning of creation and the beginning of mankind. It is also a record of the beginning of the demise of man, where the man and woman sin in the Garden

of Eden and immediately begin to die (Genesis 3). In response to the sin of man, God pronounces judgment (Gn 3:14-19), but also declares the beginning of the redemptive work of God in the salvation of man through the seed of the woman (Gn 3:15). From that point, the seed of salvation is traced out in the lives of Seth, Noah, and then to the time of this passage of Scripture, Abram (later Abraham). Abraham has been called from paganism to follow God and is promised he will be the father of a great nation (Gn 12:1-9). That promise is further explained in Genesis 13:14-16, where he is told that his offspring will number “as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted” (Gn 13:16). The problem Abram has with being the father of a multitude is that he is childless and his wife is barren. In Genesis 15, God cuts a covenant with Abram and assures him that he will have a son from his own body (Gn 15:4).

General Guidelines and Guiding Questions

In order to discern the principles for preaching within the passage, the general guidelines, guiding questions, and genre-specific insights for principization will be followed. The questions that are pertinent to this passage will be answered. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate this principization methodology and to provide genre-specific application of the methodology.

Identify

Identify the Purpose and Emphasis of the Passage

- 1) Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, and grammatical hermeneutic.¹
- 2) What is the biblical narrative, the emerging theology, leading up to this passage?²
- 3) Where does this passage occur in the timeline of God's activity recorded in Scripture?
 - a) The emerging theology and timeline of God's activity is discussed in the "Context" paragraph above. God has promised Abram a child from his own body, but has not given him that child.
- 4) What is the purpose of this biblical book?³
 - a) The purpose of the Book of Genesis is to describe the fall of mankind into sin and the work of God to bring about redemption from the seed of the woman. Ultimately, the Book of Genesis records the gathering of the children of Israel in Egypt in preparation for fulfillment of the covenant promises God gave to Abraham.
- 5) What was the setting to which this passage of Scripture was originally addressed?⁴

¹Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 221. See also, J. Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 42, also Ramesh Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 571 (July 1986): 212-213. Thorough and sound exegesis was performed on this passage when the writer of this dissertation prepared to preach this passage at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland, TX. At this time, the preacher was working through the dissertation process and was fully immersed in the study of principlization. This sermon is representative of the principlization methodology. To view this sermon video see Jordan Rogers, "Four Effects of Faithless Frustration" (video), August 8, 2018, <https://youtu.be/q-YdL6lOsn0>.

²Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 162.

³*Ibid.*, 153.

⁴Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 91-93.

- a) This Book of Genesis was written by Moses and would have been done so during the Israelites' Wilderness wanderings. The Book of Genesis was intended to teach the people of Israel who God is, where they came from, and how they got to where they are.
- 6) What are the major sections of the book and how does the author progress the main argument of the book through his flow of thought?⁵
 - a) The major sections and flow of Genesis are described in the "Context" paragraph in this section.
- 7) What is the purpose of this passage within its respective book and the whole of Scripture?⁶
 - a) The purpose of this passage is to describe the origin of Ishmael as a product of the faithless decisions of Abram and Sarai.
- 8) What response was the author expecting of his original audience?⁷
 - a) The author was expecting his original readers to understand the origins of Ishmael, the father of the Ishmaelites, and also to understand the actions of Abram and Sarai before Isaac was born.
- 9) What was the Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account?
 - a) The Holy Spirit inspired this passage to convey this vital information about the birth of Ishmael and to teach clearly the terrible results when people make faithless decisions rather than trusting God.

See also, Jack Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 33.

⁵Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. Being cognizant of this will aid the preacher in avoiding the error of eisegesis his own personal favorite questions or cultural issues into the text.

⁶Jay E. Adams, *Truth Applied: Application in Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wakeman Trust, 1990), 54. See also, Mark L. Strauss, "Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology: A Reflection by Mark L. Strauss," in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary Meadors (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 294-295.

⁷Michael Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 483. Also, Daniel Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon: How to Balance Biblical Integrity and Cultural Relevance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2009), 140-143.

- 10) What would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture?⁸
- a) If this passage were not included in Scripture there would be no biblical record of the decisions that led to the conception of Ishmael.
- 11) What does this passage teach about God?⁹
- a) This passage shows God to be kind and gracious to a woman with an evil disposition (Hagar) and a boy that had yet to be born (Ishmael). It shows God's sovereign rule and control over the unveiling of history.
- 12) What does this passage teach about the depravity of man?¹⁰
- a) This passage teaches that man is capable of catastrophically sinful decisions that are totally devoid of faith even when God has clearly revealed His will and declared His promises.
- 13) Identify how the author has emphasized the purpose of the passage of Scripture:
- a) Does the author use any of the following devices to direct the attention of the reader to his intended emphasis?
 - i) What are the stylistic elements?
 - ii) Are there any grammatical keys?
 - iii) What is the rhetorical structure?¹¹
 - (1) The structure of v.2 is almost verbatim repetition of the condemning words of God to Adam after he sinned in the garden. Observe:
 - (a) Genesis 16:2, "And Sarai said to Abram, 'Behold, now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.' And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai."
 - (b) Genesis 3:17-19, "¹⁷And to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were

⁸Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 89-90.

⁹Ibid., 94-95. See also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

¹⁰Ed Rowell, "The Heresy of Application" *Leadership Journal* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 20-27.

¹¹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. See also, Ramesh Richard "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 571 (July 1986): 214.

taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

- (2) The structure of v.3 is nearly identical to the record of clearly condemned actions in Genesis 3:6. Observe:
 - (a) Genesis 16:3, “³So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.”
 - (b) Genesis 3:6, “⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”

iv) Is there a theme sentence?

- (1) There does not appear to be a singular sentence that serves as a theme sentence.

v) Are there any distinctive or unusual features?

- (1) The poetic form of blessing on Ishmael is distinctive.

vi) Are there any theological judgments?¹²

- (1) The actions of Abram and Sarai are implicitly condemned. This is shown by the intentional similarities between the structure of Genesis 16 and Genesis 3 as discussed above.

vii) What imperatives are in the text?¹³

- (1) There are imperatives used in the passage, but not as moral imperatives. The following imperatives are used:
 - (a) v.2, “Go into my servant...”
 - (i) Sarai said this to Abram. This is not a moral command from God.
 - (b) v.6, “Behold, your servant is in your power; do to her as you please.”
 - (i) Abram said this to Sarai. This is not a moral command from God.
 - (c) v.9, “The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.”
 - (i) The angel of the LORD said this to Hagar. This was a command specifically for Hagar, not a command given

¹²Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See Also, Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

¹³Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 41-42. See also, Strauss, “Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

generally to all people.

viii) How does God view this idea, event, or action? Is He pleased or displeased?¹⁴

(1) There is no explicit condemnation from God given in this passage. The implicit condemnation was described above in detail.

14) Write out the authorial intention¹⁵ (purpose) of the passage for the original audience in one or two sentences.¹⁶

a) The author wanted the original audience to see the effects of faithless actions and the grace of God to the undeserving.

Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage

1) Are there any principles stated explicitly by the author in the passage?¹⁷

a) No, the author does not explicitly state any principles in this passage.

2) Are there any principles stated in the broader context of the passage?¹⁸

a) God's approval of the faith of Abram is an explicitly stated principle in Genesis 15. The faithless actions of Abram in Genesis 16 serve as a contrast to his faithful actions in Genesis 15.

(1) Genesis 14:6, "And he believed the LORD, and He counted it to him as righteousness."

3) Is this passage the record of a broad principle that is being applied specifically?¹⁹

¹⁴Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, "Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 293.

¹⁵Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 571 (July 1986): 213-214.

¹⁶Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 293.

¹⁷Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

¹⁸Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 276.

¹⁹Kaiser, "A Principlizing Model," in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 20-21. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

(1) No, this passage is a shocking turn of faithlessness in contrast to the events of Genesis 15.

- 4) Write out each of the principles the author was explicitly stating or implying about his main point of emphasis (purpose):
- a) Sarai's faithless frustration leads her to trust her schemes rather than God's plan.
 - i) Sarai expresses this faithless frustration when she says in v.2, "Behold, now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." Because she is frustrated that God has made her barren, she decides to scheme instead of believe God's promise.
 - b) Sarai's faithless frustration blinds her to an accurate understanding of her circumstances.
 - i) After conceiving, Hagar "looked with contempt on her mistress" (v.4). It would be absurd to believe this is the first sign of Hagar's hateful disposition. The issue is that Sarai is determined to have a child, and so she must have ignored Hagar's demeanor and also miscalculated the entire situation.
 - c) Sarai's faithless frustration caused her to be a bitter and unloving person.
 - i) In her faithless frustration, Sarai is bitter toward God, as she assigns Him blame for her barrenness (v.2) and she is bitter about her condition. Then, after Hagar conceives and looks on Sarai with contempt, Sarai explodes in anger as she chastises Abram (v.5) and deals "harshly" with Hagar (v.6). Sarai's faithless frustration causes her to be a bitter and unloving person.
 - d) Sarai's faithless frustration, when acted upon, produces long lasting and unintended consequences.
 - i) The results of Sarai and Abram's faithlessly frustrated actions are unintended and long lasting, even in the day of Moses recording this passage (see Gn 25:12-18) and to this modern day with Ishmael's descendants. They certainly were not planning on the child becoming "a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen" (v.12). They were surely not planning on these actions disrupting their family, and in fact they thought they were building up their family.

Assess the Transferability

Identify the difference between content in a passage that is cultural and that which is supracultural.²⁰

- 1) What is the relationship between the ethical command and the issue it addresses?²¹
 - i) There are no ethical commands given explicitly in this passage.
- b) Is there anything in the immediate context of this passage that limits the application of the principle to the original audience?²²
 - i) The command given to Hagar is limited to her.
- c) Is there anything in the Bible that limits the application of this principle?²³
 - i) The timeless principles are not limited in their application.
- d) Was the biblical writer stating a normative command, or was he contextualizing a normative command to address a problem in the culture?²⁴
 - i) The writer did not state any normative commands.
- e) Is this command given addressing a specific situation?²⁵
 - i) There is no ethical or moral command given explicitly in this passage.
- f) What are the differences between the original audience and the modern audience?²⁶

²⁰Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 426.

²¹Ibid., 423. See also, Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 214.

²²Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

²³Ibid., 44.

²⁴Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

²⁵Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212.

²⁶Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42-43.

- i) The time and setting of this passage are distinctly different from this passage. The cultural acceptance of a maidservant bearing a child on behalf of the matriarch may have been a common practice among the pagan nations in Abram's day, but the creation principle of monogamous heterosexual marriage had already been established in the beginning (Gn 2:24).

A principle will almost always be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is "Yes" to the following questions:

- 1) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle similar to the modern audience?²⁷
 - a) The timeless principle is not a cultural expression, it is an expression of depraved human nature, which is timeless.
- 2) Is this principle founded upon the work of God in Creation?²⁸
 - a) No.
- 3) Is this principle founded upon the character of God?²⁹
 - a) No.
- 4) Is this principle founded upon the redemptive work of God?³⁰
 - a) No.
- 5) Is this principle founded upon the Ten Commandments?³¹
 - a) This passage occurred before the revelation of the Ten Commandments.
- 6) Is the author relying on earlier biblical teaching in this principle?³²

²⁷Kaiser, "A Principizing Model," 21. See also Adams, *Truth Applied*, 48-49; and William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Revised and Updated Edition (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2004), Klein, 483.

²⁸Mark Strauss, "Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible," 297. See also, Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-423.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 297-298.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 298.

³¹Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

- i) It appears that Moses was implicitly offering judgment in the manner in which he recorded these events by structuring them so as to show the similarities between Adam and Eve and Abram and Sarai.

- 7) Does the teaching transcend cultural biases in its original setting?³³
 - a) Yes.

A principle will not be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions. If the answer is “Yes” to any of the following questions, more work must be done to refine the format of the principle to arrive at the timeless truth. If the principle is clothed in supracultural content, the theology of the principle must be maintained, while the timeless elements are distilled for the purpose of preaching to the modern audience.³⁴

- 1) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle different from how it would be to a modern audience?³⁵
 - a) No.
- 2) Is the principle wholly tied to a cultural expression?³⁶
 - a) No.
- 3) Is the principle fulfilled on behalf of believers by the atoning work of Christ?
 - a) No.

Genre-Specific Guidelines and Guiding Questions: Narrative

The following are helpful questions to determine the principles within biblical narrative:

Setting and Structure:

- 1) What does the setting contribute to the story?³⁷

³²Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 424.

³³*Ibid.*, 424.

³⁴Kaiser, “A Principiizing Model,” 21.

³⁵*Ibid.* See also, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

³⁶Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 425.

- 2) What structure holds the story together and provides its unity?³⁸
 - a) There are two main scenes in this narrative:
 - i) vv.1-6—A Scene in the Home
 - (1) Interactions between Sarai, Abram, and Hagar
 - ii) vv.7-16—A Scene with the LORD
 - (1) Interactions between the LORD and Hagar
 - (a) vv.11-12—the divine blessing on Ishmael
 - (b) vv.13-14—the declaration of God as “You are a God of seeing”
 - (c) v.15—the return of Hagar to the home
 - (d) v.16—emphatic recapitulation of Abram’s advanced age (86), which anticipates the miraculous proclamation in Genesis 17:15-27.
- 3) What conflicts develop and how are they resolved?³⁹
 - a) vv.1-3—Sarai is frustrated with God and her situation, resolves a scheme in response
 - b) vv.4-6—Sarai is in conflict with Hagar and Abram, resolves to mistreat Hagar. Hagar responds by fleeing.
 - c) vv.7-14—Hagar is faced with dire circumstances, but God resolves to bless her and Ishmael. Then, God sends her back to Sarai and Abram, commanding her to submit.

Characters:

- 1) Who are the characters in the story and why did the author include them?⁴⁰
 - (1) The LORD (Jehovah)-God of Abram who called him out and gave him covenant promises
 - (2) Abram-recipient of the call of God and the covenant promises
 - (3) Sarai-wife of Abram and future mother of Isaac
 - (4) Hagar-an Egyptian slave/maidservant to Sarai
 - (5) Ishmael-the conceived child of Abram and Hagar; father of the Ishmaelites and an enemy of all
- 2) Do the characters contrast with one another?⁴¹

³⁷Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 68-69.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 68-69

⁴¹Ibid.

- a) Sarai and Hagar are alike and yet different. Both have unseemly dispositions in this narrative. However, Sarai represents the free woman and the inheritor of covenant promises through Abram. Hagar represents the slave woman who is outside of the covenant promises given to Abram and his offspring.
- 3) How do these characters develop as the story develops?⁴²
- (1) Abram is shown to sinfully submit to Sarai's unfaithful scheme.
 - (2) Sarai unfaithfully schemes against God and is shown to be bitter and unloving toward Hagar.
 - (3) Hagar is shown to be a wicked and contemptuous woman.
 - (4) Ishmael is prophesied to be a contentious man and an enemy of all.
 - (5) God is shown to be merciful to the slave and outcast, Hagar and Ishmael.
- 4) Actions of God:
- a) Since God acts according to His unchanging nature, past actions indicate what He might do in parallel circumstances today; so what are the ways in which God responded to the events?⁴³
 - i) God maintained faithfulness to His covenant promises.
 - ii) God responded with mercy to the outcast.
 - b) What does this narrative tell of the story of God's work of redemption?⁴⁴
 - i) This narrative shows how God treats the outcast with mercy.
 - c) Knowing this is not an isolated story, how does this narrative fall within God's plan of redemption?⁴⁵
 - i) Later revelation will show that this narrative demonstrates that God had a specific and unalterable plan for redemption through Isaac, not Ishmael.
 - d) Does the text in any way reveal how God judged the actions recorded in the narrative?⁴⁶

⁴²Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 68-69.

⁴³Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 211-212.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 211-212.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 211-212.

⁴⁶Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54.

- i) No. There are no explicit judgments given from God regarding the actions recorded in this narrative.
- e) Imitable and Condemnable Actions:
 - i) Does the narrative establish a pattern of righteous actions by the faithful biblical character that are intended to be imitated even if not explicitly stated in such terms?⁴⁷
 - (1) No, there are no actions of the faithful that are imitable in this passage.
 - (2) The merciful actions of God are imitable.
 - ii) Does the narrative indicate that imitation of a protagonist is appropriate?⁴⁸
 - (1) God as the protagonist is imitable in His merciful actions.
 - (2) The human protagonists in this passage, Abram and Sarai, are not imitable here.
 - iii) Were the character's actions unique to his office and therefore not able to be imitated?⁴⁹
 - (1) No.
 - iv) What are the proper or improper responses to God demonstrated by the characters in this narrative?⁵⁰
 - (1) The actions of Sarai and Abram were utterly faithless. Abram abandoned his place of leadership in the home and allowed his wife to lead him into sin. Neither Abram nor Sarai responded to their situation with faith. Instead, Sarai schemed to help God's plan—an action God never demanded nor needed.
 - (2) Hagar's obedience to the command of God to return is noteworthy.
 - v) Do any of the characters' actions find correlation with theological principles in Scripture?⁵¹

⁴⁷Doriani, "A Response to Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.," in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 89.

⁴⁸Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 211-212.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

- (1) The characters' actions are portrayed in a negative light, but the way in which they should have responded is seen through Scripture.
- vi) Is there any indication that this passage was given to serve as a template to follow?⁵²
- (1) No. There is absolutely no indication that this passage was set up as a template to follow.
- 5) Write out each of the timeless principles the author was explicitly stating or implying to achieve his purpose:
- a) Sarai's faithless frustration led her to trust her schemes rather than God's plan.
 - b) Sarai's faithless frustration blinded her from accurately understanding her circumstances.
 - c) Sarai's faithless frustration caused her to be a bitter and unloving person.
 - d) Sarai's faithless frustration, when acted upon, produced long-lasting and unintended consequences.

Format

Formatting the Principled Statements for the Purpose of Preaching:

- 1) State the principle in a complete sentence.⁵³
- 2) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle remains the same in the present day, keep the principle as it is formatted in the passage.⁵⁴
- 3) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle is different in the present day, state the principle generally before applying it specifically to the present-day analogous situation.⁵⁵
- 4) Remove all proper nouns except God.⁵⁶

⁵²Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 42.

⁵³Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2011), 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

⁵⁴Kaiser, "A Principlizing Model," 21.

⁵⁵Ibid., 21. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

⁵⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. See also Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

- 5) Replace past-tense verbs with present-tense verbs. Use future tense verbs only if the theology demands it.⁵⁷
- 6) Replace third person pronouns with first person plural or singular nouns.⁵⁸
- 7) State the principle in a declarative or imperative form if at all possible and only if necessary an interrogative format.⁵⁹
- 8) Format the principle to be applicational: addressing the thinking, attitudes, and motivations that must be brought into compliance with the truth of the passage of Scripture.⁶⁰
- 9) Write out each of the principles in the proper format:
 - a) Faithless frustration will tempt you to trust your schemes rather than God's plan.
 - b) Faithless frustration will blind you from accurately understanding your circumstances.
 - c) Faithless frustration will cause you to be a bitter and unloving person.
 - d) Faithless frustration, when acted upon, will produce long lasting and unintended consequences.

Evaluate

Evaluate the Accuracy of a Principle

After evaluating the accuracy of these principles, they do preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text.⁶¹ These principles accurately articulate both the essence and extent of this passage of Scripture.

⁵⁷ Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. Also see Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

⁵⁸ Walter C. Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003 57-58. See also, Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

⁵⁹ Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 137.

⁶¹ Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 158.

Evaluate the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

- 1) Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?⁶²
 - a) Yes. These principles are consistent with all of Scripture.
- 2) If this principle is an implication or extrapolation from the passage of Scripture, is it stated explicitly elsewhere in the Scripture?
 - a) These principles are not presented abstractly in explicit statements in the passage, but they are demonstrated clearly in the passage.
- 3) Which verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?
 - a) Faithless frustration will tempt you to trust your schemes rather than God's plan.
 - i) Trusting in one's own schemes or strengths rather than God is explicitly condemned in Scripture:
 - (1) Proverbs 10:2, "Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death."
 - (2) Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."
 - b) Faithless frustration will blind you from accurately understanding your circumstances.
 - i) The positive restatement of this principle yields supporting texts: faith in the Lord will light your path and give understanding.
 - (1) Psalm 37:1-40
 - (2) Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."
 - c) Faithless frustration will cause you to be a bitter and unloving person.
 - i) The Bible is replete with condemnation of bitterness and hatred toward others.
 - (1) Leviticus 19:34, "You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."

⁶²Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45. See also, Strauss, "Reflections on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 296.

- (2) Hebrews 12:15, “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.”
- (3) See also Ephesians 4:26, 31-32, James 3:14, Hebrews 12:14, Leviticus 19:9-18.
- d) Faithless frustration, when acted upon, will produce long-lasting and unintended consequences.
 - i) There are many biblical illustrations where a person’s sin has long-lasting and unintended consequences. A few of these include:
 - (1) Genesis 3—Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden
 - (2) 2 Samuel 11—David’s sin against Uriah and Bathsheba
 - (3) 1 Chronicles 21—David’s prideful census

Verify

Verify the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

- 1) Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?⁶³
 - a) Yes, each of these four principles is consistent with all of Scripture.
- 2) If this principle is an implication or extrapolation from the passage of Scripture, is it stated explicitly elsewhere in the Scripture?
 - a) These principles are not stated explicitly anywhere in Scripture, but their content is reaffirmed and not contradicted anywhere in Scripture.
- 3) What verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?
 - a) See the references given above.

Analyze

Analyzing Implications of Principles

The principles written above are not implications of the text, but rather are restatements of the truth within the text.

⁶³Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 296; Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28; and Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 196-198.

Review the Errors to Avoid in Principilizing

After arriving at the timeless principles and having reviewed the *errors to avoid in principilizing*, the principles listed above accurately articulate the authorial intent of the passage in both essence and extent.

Results

The following are the principles for preaching, along with the supporting texts. It is significant that these principles are arranged in congruence with the passage of Scripture; are in substance expressing both the essence and extent of the passage of Scripture; and are supported by the analogy of Scripture. There is more work to be done to prepare this outline for preaching, but the structure, substance, and support are faithful to the text and the Bible as a whole.⁶⁴

- 1) Genesis 16:1-16—Four Effects of Faithless Frustration
 - a) vv.1-6—A Scene in the Home
 - i) vv.1-2
 - (1) Effect #1: Faithless frustration will tempt you to trust your schemes rather than God's plan.
 - (a) Trusting in one's own schemes or strengths rather than God is explicitly condemned in Scripture:
 - (b) Proverbs 10:2, "Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death."
 - (c) Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge

⁶⁴This outline still needs an introduction, transitional statements, exegetical explanation, illustrations, specific application, and conclusion. There is also a Gospel presentation that needs to be formulated. The most natural place for the Gospel presentation is in the Lord's merciful interaction with Hagar. It should also be noted that though Sarai and Abram acted faithlessly here in their frustration the Lord did not become frustrated with them nor did this frustrate His plan. The grace of God is on full display in the very next chapter, Genesis 15, where God cuts a covenant with Abram and blesses Sarai with a son, Isaac.

Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

ii) v.4

- (1) Effect #2: Faithless frustration will blind you from accurately understanding your circumstances.
 - (a) The positive restatement of this principle yields supporting texts: faith in the Lord will light your path and give understanding.
 - (b) Psalm 37:1-40
 - (c) Jeremiah 9:23-24, “Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

iii) vv.4-6

- (1) Effect #3: Faithless frustration will cause you to be a bitter and unloving person.
 - (a) The Bible is replete with condemnation of bitterness and hatred toward others.
 - (b) Leviticus 19:34, “You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”
 - (c) Hebrews 12:15, “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.”
 - (i) See also, Ephesians 4:26, 31-32, James 3:14, Hebrews 12:14, Leviticus 19:9-18

b) vv.7-16—A Scene with the LORD

i) vv.7-16

- (1) Effect #4: Faithless frustration, when acted upon, will produce long-lasting and unintended consequences.
 - (a) There are many biblical illustrations where a person’s sin has long-lasting and unintended consequences; a few include:
 - (i) Genesis 3—Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden
 - (ii) 2 Samuel 11—David’s sin against Uriah and Bathsheba
 - (iii) 1 Chronicles 21—David’s prideful census

Law Code – Leviticus 19:9-18

The text under consideration here as a preaching portion of Scripture representative of the law code genre of Scripture is Leviticus 19:9-18:

⁹When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after you harvest. ¹⁰And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

¹¹You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. ¹²You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

¹³You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

¹⁵You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

¹⁷You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Context

The Book of Leviticus is a record of the laws given to Moses by God. These laws in the Mosaic Law were given to make the Israelites holy, just as God is holy (Lv 19:1-2, 20:22-26). They were called to be a unique and a peculiar people, set apart as God's holy people. Leviticus 19:9-18 illustrates the unique love in which God's people were commanded to abide.

General Guidelines and Guiding Questions

This passage of Scripture will now be processed through the principlization methodology, including the general guidelines and guiding questions, along with the genre-specific guidelines and guiding questions pertinent to the Law Code.

Identify

Identify the Purpose and Emphasis of the Passage

- 1) Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, and grammatical hermeneutic.⁶⁵
- 2) What is the biblical narrative and the emerging theology leading up to this passage?⁶⁶
- 3) Where does this passage occur in the timeline of God's activity recorded in Scripture?
 - a) This passage is part of the Mosaic Law, which was given by God to Moses. The Law of Moses was given to the Israelites after God delivered them out of Egypt.
- 4) What is the purpose of this biblical book?⁶⁷
 - a) The purpose of the Book was to make the Israelites holy, just as God is holy (Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26).
- 5) What was the setting to which this passage of Scripture was originally addressed?⁶⁸

⁶⁵Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 221. See Also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 42. Also, Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 212-213. Sound exegesis was performed in the study of this passage as a supplementary text for a sermon the writer of this dissertation preached at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland, TX. The principles derived from Leviticus 19:9-18 were presented as practical examples of Christlike love. To view the sermon video, see Jordan Rogers, "How Christlike Love will Keep you From Sinning and Validate Your Salvation" (video), February 25, 2018, https://youtu.be/wMz_tZR8WI8.

⁶⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

⁶⁷Ibid. 153.

- a) The setting to which this passage was originally addressed was the Israelites as they were brought out of Egypt and made a distinct people during their time in the Wilderness of Sin.
- 6) What are the major sections of the book and how does the author progress the main argument of the book through his flow of thought?⁶⁹
 - a) The major sections of Leviticus appear to be as follows:
 - i) Leviticus 1-7: sacrificial laws
 - ii) Leviticus 8-10: priesthood regulations
 - iii) Leviticus 11-16: clean/unclean regulations
 - iv) Leviticus 17-27: practical holiness laws
- 7) Where does this passage occur in the flow of its respective book?⁷⁰
 - a) This passage occurs in the section that seems to be addressing regulations that govern practical issues of holiness.
- 8) What is the purpose of this passage within its respective book and the whole of Scripture?⁷¹
 - a) This particular passage addresses how the holy people of God treat one another and others.
- 9) What response was the author expecting of his original audience?⁷²
 - a) The author was expecting complete obedience to these commands.
- 10) What was the Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account?
 - a) The Holy Spirit was/is expecting complete obedience to these commands.
- 11) What would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture?⁷³

⁶⁸Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

⁶⁹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153..

⁷⁰Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

⁷¹Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See Also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 294-295.

⁷²Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 483. Also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

⁷³Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 89-90.

- a) If this passage were not included in Scripture then this particular unique practical illustration of the command to “love your neighbor” would be lost. The command to “love your neighbor” would not be lost (Mt 5:43-46, 19:19, 22:39, Mk 12:31-33, Lk 10:27, Rom 13:8-9, Gal 5:14, Jas 2:8, Lk 6:27-35).
- 12) What does this passage teach about God?⁷⁴
- a) There are no explicit statements about theology proper in this passage.
- 13) What does this passage teach about the depravity of man?⁷⁵
- a) The presence of this passage implies that man would not naturally act this way in his depraved condition.
- 14) Identify how the author has emphasized the purpose of the passage of Scripture:
- a) Does the author use any of the following devices to direct the attention of the reader to his intended emphasis?
 - i) What are the stylistic elements?
 - ii) Are there any grammatical keys?
 - (1) The repetition of “You shall not” is significant.
 - iii) What is the rhetorical structure?⁷⁶
 - (1) The sections are marked off clearly by the concluding remark, “I am the LORD” (19:10, 12, 14, 16, 18).
 - iv) Is there are theme sentence?
 - (1) The sentence that concludes the section also announces the specific principle that is being practically applied to specific situations in vv.13-18. Verse18b says, “but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”
 - v) Are there any distinctive or unusual features?
 - (1) No.
 - vi) Are there any pivotal statements?⁷⁷

⁷⁴Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 94-95. See also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

⁷⁵Rowell, “The Heresy of Application,” 20-27.

⁷⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. See also, Richard. “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 214.

⁷⁷Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 483.

- (1) The statements, “I am the LORD” (19:10, 12, 14, 16, 18) serve as concluding statements indicating transition to the next example.
- vii) Are there any theological judgments?⁷⁸
 - (1) The actions that are forbidden (“You shall not”) are negative judgments against unloving behaviors toward one’s neighbor(s).
- viii) What imperatives are in the text?⁷⁹
 - (1) The text is full of imperative prohibitions:
 - (a) (v.9), “you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after you harvest.”
 - (b) (v.10), “And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.”
 - (c) (v.11), “You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another.”
 - (d) (v.12), “You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.”
 - (e) (v.13), “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.”
 - (f) (v.14), “You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.”
 - (g) (v.15), “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.
 - (h) (v.16), “You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.”
 - (2) These negative prohibitions do not only to negate certain behaviors, they serve the purpose of implying the proper behavior toward others: Leviticus 19:9-10 is a *case law* example of the timeless principle explicitly stated in that same section of Scripture. Moses writes in Leviticus 19:18b, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” Leviticus 19:9-18 is based entirely on the second great

⁷⁸Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

⁷⁹Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 41-42. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

command (Mt 22:29). In this pericope, Moses gives five case examples of *how* the principle of love is expressed:

- (a) vv.9-10: You love your neighbor by being generous to him (not stripping your fields clean but leaving some for the poor).
- (b) vv.11-12: You love your neighbor by being honest (not stealing, not swearing falsely).
- (c) vv.13-14: You love your neighbor by being fair to those whom you have power over (those you could oppress, those you employ, those who are handicapped).
- (d) vv.15-16: You love your neighbor by being just and righteous (giving justice legally to all, giving honest testimony about all).
- (e) vv.17-18: You love your neighbor by telling them when they have offended you and working it out (not hating or taking vengeance).

15) Write out the authorial intention (purpose)⁸⁰ of the passage for the original audience in one or two sentences.⁸¹

- a) The purpose of this passage is to prohibit unloving behaviors one would commit against his or her neighbor. Stated positively, the purpose of this passage is to show that loving one's neighbor means being generous, honest, fair, just, and forthcoming in reconciling offenses.

Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage

- 1) Is there a principle or principles stated explicitly by the author in the passage?⁸²
 - a) Each of the commands stated in this passage and listed above is an explicit principle.
- 2) Why was this command or principle given?⁸³

⁸⁰Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 213-214.

⁸¹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 293.

⁸²Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

⁸³Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

- a) The command to love one's neighbor was given because that is what God expects of His people.
- 3) Is this passage the record of a broad principle that is being applied specifically?⁸⁴
 - a) Yes. The principles in v.18, "love your neighbor as yourself" is being applied specifically in vv.13-18.
- 4) Is the author here drawing out an implication of the Ten Commandments?⁸⁵
 - a) No. If anything God is expanding on the second half of the Ten Commandments as it relates to how others are to be treated.
- 5) Write out each of the principles the author was explicitly stating or implying about his main point of emphasis (purpose):
 - a) The Lord appears to be implying what is supposed to be done for one's neighbor by stating what must not be done.
 - i) (vv.9-10): Love your neighbor by not stripping your fields clean but leaving some for the poor.
 - ii) (vv.11-12): Love your neighbor by not stealing or swearing falsely.
 - iii) (vv.13-14): Love your neighbor not oppressing others including those you employ or those who are handicapped.
 - iv) (vv.15-16): Love your neighbor by not being unjust to others in legal matters and by not giving being dishonest.
 - v) (vv.17-18): Love your neighbor by not hating or taking vengeance, but by being forthcoming about offenses and reconciliation.

Assess the Transferability

Assess the Transferability of a Principle

- 1) What is the relationship between the ethical command and the issue to which it is addressed?⁸⁶

⁸⁴Kaiser, *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 20-21. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

⁸⁵Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

⁸⁶Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423. See also, Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 214.

- a) The ethical command is given in v.18, “love your neighbor as yourself.” The application of the ethical command is seen in five different particular scenarios in vv.9-18.
- 2) Is there anything in the immediate context of this passage that limits the application of the principle to the original audience?⁸⁷
 - a) The original audience was agricultural, but many modern audiences are not.
- 3) Is there anything in the Bible that limits the application of this principle?⁸⁸
 - a) No.
- 4) Was the biblical writer stating a normative command, or was he contextualizing a normative command to address a problem in the culture?⁸⁹
 - a) The writer was stating a normative command.
- 5) Is this command given addressing a specific situation?⁹⁰ If not, it is likely already in a general, timeless format. If the command is addressing a specific situation, it must be determined what content within the command is culturally bound and what content is not culturally bound (supracultural).
 - a) No.
- 6) What are the differences between the original audience and the modern audience?⁹¹
 - a) The original audience was agricultural, but many modern audiences are not and the particular example in 19:9-10 is foreign to the culture of the modern audience.
- 7) A principle will almost always be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions:
 - a) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle similar to the modern audience?⁹²

⁸⁷Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

⁸⁸Ibid., 44.

⁸⁹Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

⁹⁰Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212.

⁹¹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 42-43.

⁹²Kaiser, in “A Principlizing Method,” 21. Application will necessitate identifying a modern situation that is analogous to the biblical situation. See

- i) In 19:9-10 the cultural expression is not timeless, but in 19:11-18 it is.
- b) Is this principle founded upon the work of God in Creation?⁹³
 - i) No.
- c) Is this principle founded upon the character of God?⁹⁴
 - i) No, but these principles are founded upon God as Lord.
- d) Is this principle founded upon the redemptive work of God?⁹⁵
 - i) No.
- e) Is this principle founded upon the Ten Commandments?⁹⁶
 - i) No.
- f) Is the author relying on earlier biblical teaching in this principle?⁹⁷
 - i) No.
- g) Does the teaching transcend cultural biases in its original setting?⁹⁸
 - i) Yes. There is no indication that other cultures in the original setting were abiding by any of these commands, including vv.9-10.
- h) Is the command moral or theological?⁹⁹
 - i) Moral

Adams, *Truth Applied*, 48-49; and Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

⁹³Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 297. See also, Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-423

⁹⁴Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 297-298.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 298.

⁹⁶Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

⁹⁷Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 424.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 422-426.

- 8) A principle will not be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions. If the answer is “Yes” to any of the following questions, more work must be done to refine the format of the principle to arrive at the timeless truth. If the principle is clothed in supracultural content, the theology of the principle must be maintained,¹⁰⁰ while the timeless elements are distilled for the purpose of preaching to the modern audience.
- a) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle different than it would be for the modern audience?¹⁰¹
 - i) Yes.
 - b) Is the principle wholly tied to a cultural expression?¹⁰²
 - i) No.
 - c) Is the principle fulfilled on behalf of believers by the atoning work of Christ?
 - i) No. Violation of these commands is covered by the atoning work of Christ.
- 9) Write out each of the timeless principles the author was explicitly stating or implying to achieve his purpose:
- a) (vs.9-10): Love your neighbor by not stripping your fields clean, but leaving some for the poor.
 - b) (vs.11-12): Love your neighbor by not stealing or swearing falsely.
 - c) (vs.13-14): Love your neighbor not oppressing others, including those you employ or those who are handicapped.
 - d) (vs.15-16): Love your neighbor by not being unjust to others in legal matters and by not giving being dishonest.
 - e) (vs.17-18): Love your neighbor by not hating or taking vengeance, but by being forthcoming about offenses and reconciliatory.

¹⁰⁰Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 21.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 21. See also, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

¹⁰²Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 425.

Genre-Specific Guidelines and Guiding Questions: Law Code

- 1) What was the original meaning in the original setting?
 - a) The meaning in the original setting is the same as the meaning in the modern setting. The only difference is the mode of expression.
- 2) Is the command restated in the New Testament?¹⁰³
 - a) Yes.
- 3) Is the command revoked in the New Testament?¹⁰⁴
 - a) No.
- 4) Is the command assumed in the New Testament?¹⁰⁵
 - a) The command is restated in the New Testament (Mt 5:43-46, 19:19, 22:39, Mk 12:31-33, Lk 10:27, Rom 13:8-9, Gal 5:14, Jas 2:8, Lk 6:27-35).
- 5) What is the principle behind the Old Testament command?¹⁰⁶
 - a) The principle behind the five commands found in vv.13-18 is the end statement in v.18, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- 6) How much specificity and transferability is present within this command? If not directly transferable, is there a principle behind the command?
 - a) The command in vv.9-10 is specific to the cultural and not immediately transferrable; it must be generalized. The commands in vv.11-18 are transferable as they are.
- 7) How does the command reflect the character of God?¹⁰⁷
 - a) The commands reflect God’s love, generosity, honesty, faithfulness, justice, and work to reconcile.

¹⁰³Jack Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 95-96.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 95-96. The laws of sacrifice are fulfilled in Christ and the dietary restrictions are lifted in Mark 7:19 and Acts 10.

¹⁰⁵It is a false conclusion to assert that an Old Testament command is null and void simply because it is not explicitly restated. If the command is neither restated nor revoked, it should be concluded that it is still in effect; or assumed.

¹⁰⁶Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 95-96.

¹⁰⁷Dorani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 241.

- 8) Does the law apply to the contemporary reader “(1) identically, (2) analogously, and (3) typologically”?¹⁰⁸
- a) The law in vv.9-10 applies analogously, and the laws in vv.11-18 apply identically.

To determine the applicability of rules and cultural statements answer the following:

- 1) Does the book itself limit the application of the teaching?
 - a) No.
- 2) Does later revelation limit the scope of a teaching?
 - a) No.
- 3) Does the passage present a broad moral principle or a specific manifestation of one?
 - a) The passage presents a broad moral principle (v.18) manifested in five specific scenarios (vv.9-18).
- 4) Do cultural conditions make it appropriate to apply teaching in new ways for new cultures?
 - a) There needs to be an analogous situation identified for the command given in vv.9-10.
- 5) If a cultural form in the text still exists today, does it have the same significance it once did?
 - a) The analogous application of vv.9-10 still has the same significance.
- 6) Is a law rooted in something permanent, such as the creation order, the character of God, the Decalogue, or the plan of redemption? Or is it grounded in something temporary, such as the permission Moses gave Israel to divorce due to hardness of heart?
 - a) The law is affirmed as the second great command that is part of the summary of the entire Law of Moses (Mt 22:36-40).
- 7) Is the command contrary to the standards of the day, part of a biblical protest against ungodly standards? If so, it is probably binding.¹⁰⁹
 - a) These commands were unique to Israel as God’s holy people, and were certainly been unique among the nations.

¹⁰⁸Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 241.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 249-250.

Format

Format the Principled Statements for the Purpose of Preaching

- 1) State the principle in a complete sentence.¹¹⁰
- 2) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle remains the same in the present day, keep the principle as it is formatted in the passage.¹¹¹
- 3) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle is different in the present day, state the principle generally before applying it specifically to the present-day analogous situation.¹¹²
- 4) Remove all proper nouns except God.¹¹³
- 5) Replace past-tense verbs with present-tense verbs. Use future tense verbs only if the theology demands it.¹¹⁴
- 6) Replace third person pronouns with first person plural or singular nouns.¹¹⁵
- 7) State the principle in a declarative or imperative form if at all possible, and only if necessary, an interrogative format.¹¹⁶
- 8) Format the principle to be applicational: addressing the thinking, attitudes, and motivations that must be brought into compliance with the truth of the passage of Scripture.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

¹¹¹Kaiser, "A Principled Model," 21.

¹¹²Ibid., 21. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

¹¹³Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. See also Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

¹¹⁴Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157; Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136; and Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

¹¹⁵Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58. See also, Kaiser *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

¹¹⁶Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

- 9) Write out each of the principles in the proper format:
- a) The passage presents the imperatives as prohibitions in order to illustrate the positive overarching principle given in v.18, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The theme command establishes the intent of the five examples as positive in their aim. For the purpose of preaching, the following five principles are stated as positive imperatives in order to accurately articulate the essence of v.18. The extent of the commands of vv.9-18 will be achieved by the statements as well:
 - i) (vs.9-10): Love your neighbor by generously helping those in need.
 - ii) (vs.11-12): Love your neighbor by being honest in all your actions.
 - iii) (vs.13-14): Love your neighbor by being fair and kind to those you have opportunity to oppress.
 - iv) (vs.15-16): Love your neighbor by being just and righteous in all situations.
 - v) (vs.17-18): Love your neighbor by being forthcoming about offenses in order to bring about reconciliation.

Evaluate

Evaluate the Accuracy of a Principle

These principles are worded so as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text. These principles also articulate completely both the essence and extent of this preaching portion of Scripture.

Verify

Verify the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

- 1) Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

¹¹⁸Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 296; and Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28.

- a) Yes, these principles are consistent with all of Scripture.
- 2) If this principle is an implication or extrapolation from the passage of Scripture, is it stated explicitly elsewhere in the Scripture?
- a) These principles are not implications or extrapolations of the passage, nor are they stated verbatim elsewhere in Scripture.
- 3) What verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?
- a) (vs.9-10): Love your neighbor by generously helping those in need.
 - i) Proverbs 11:25, "Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and everyone who waters will himself be watered."
 - ii) 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
 - iii) Luke 6:38, "Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put in your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."
 - iv) 1 John 3:18, "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."
 - b) (vs.11-12): Love your neighbor by being honest in all your actions.
 - i) Proverbs 10:2, "Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death."
 - ii) Romans 13:7, "Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed."
 - c) (vs.13-14): Love your neighbor being fair and kind to those whom you would have opportunity to oppress.
 - i) Proverbs 3:27, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it."
 - ii) Proverbs 16:11, "A just balance and scales are the LORD's; all the weights in the bag are his work."
 - d) (vs.15-16): Love your neighbor by being just and righteous in all situations.
 - i) Proverbs 21:3, "To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."
 - ii) Micah 6:8, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
 - e) (vs.17-18): Love your neighbor by being forthcoming about offenses in order to bring reconciliation.
 - i) Colossians 3:12-13, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and

patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

- ii) Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
- iii) Hebrews 12:14, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

Analyze

Analyzing Implications of Principles

The principles written above are not implications of the text, but rather are restatements of the truth within the text.

Review the Errors to Avoid in Principilizing

After arriving at the timeless principles and having reviewed the *errors to avoid in principilizing*, the principles listed above accurately articulate the authorial intent of the passage in both essence and extent.

Results

The following are the principles for preaching, along with the supporting texts. It is significant that these principles are arranged in congruence with the passage of Scripture; are in substance expressing both the essence and extent of the passage of Scripture; and are supported by the analogy of Scripture. There is more work to be done to prepare this outline for preaching,¹¹⁹ but the structure, substance, and support are faithful to the text and the Bible as a whole:

¹¹⁹This outline still needs an introduction, transitional statements, exegetical explanation, illustrations, specific application, and conclusion.

Leviticus 19:9-18—Five Ways You Must Love Your Neighbor

1) (vs.9-10):

a) Way #1: Love your neighbor by generously helping those in need.

- i) Proverbs 11:25, “Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and everyone who waters will himself be watered.”
- ii) 2 Corinthians 9:7, “Each one must give as he has decided in his hart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”
- iii) Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put in your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”
- iv) 1 John 3:18, “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

2) (vs.11-12):

a) Way #2: Love your neighbor by being honest in all your actions.

- i) Proverbs 10:2, “Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.”
- ii) Romans 13:7, “Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”

3) (vs.13-14):

a) Way #3: Love your neighbor by being fair and kind to those you would have opportunity to oppress.

- i) Proverbs 3:27, “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.”
- ii) Proverbs 16:11, “A just balance and scales are the LORD’s; all the weights in the bag are his work.”

4) (vs.15-16):

a) Way #4: Love your neighbor by being just and righteous in all situations.

- i) Proverbs 21:3, “To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”
- ii) Micah 6:8, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

5) (vs.17-18):

a) Way #5: Love your neighbor by being forthcoming about offenses in order to bring reconciliation.

- i) Colossians 3:12-13, “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against

another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

(1) Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

(2) Hebrews 12:14, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

Poetry – Psalm 77:1-20

The text under consideration here as a preaching portion of Scripture representative of the poetic genre of Scripture is Psalm 77:1-20:

¹I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, and He will hear me.
²In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.
³When I remember God, I moan;
when I meditate, my spirit faints. *Selah*

⁴You hold my eyelids open;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
⁵I consider the days of old,
the years long ago.
⁶I said, “Let me remember my song in the night;
let me meditate in my heart.”
Then my spirit made a diligent search:
⁷“Will the Lord spurn forever,
and never again be favorable?
⁸Has His steadfast love forever ceased?
Are His promises at an end for all time?
⁹Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger shut up His compassion?” *Selah*

¹⁰Then I said, “I will appeal to this,
to the years of the right hand of the Most High.”

¹¹I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
yes, I will remember Your wonders of old.

¹²I will ponder all Your work,
and meditate on Your mighty deeds.

¹³Your way, O God, is holy.

What god is like our God?
¹⁴You are the God who works wonders;
 You have made known Your might among the peoples.
¹⁵You with Your arm redeemed Your people,
 the children of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*

¹⁶When the waters saw You, O God,
 when the waters saw You, they were afraid;
 indeed, the deep trembled.
¹⁷The clouds poured out water;
 the skies gave forth thunder;
 Your arrows flashed on every side.
¹⁸The crash of Your thunder was in the whirlwind;
 Your lightnings lighted up the world;
 The earth trembled and shook.
¹⁹Your way was through the sea,
 Your path through the great waters;
 yet Your footprints were unseen.
²⁰You led Your people like a flock
 by the hand of Moses and Aaron

Context

This psalm was titled by the scribes, “To The Choirmaster: According to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.” Twelve psalms are attributed to Asaph (Psalm 50, 73-83). The exact identification of the man to whom this psalm is attributed is uncertain from Scripture. The Asaphites were a guild of musicians in Solomon’s Temple, and a man named Asaph did perform at the dedication of Solomon’s Temple as recorded in 2 Chronicles 5:12. This Asaph was a descendant of Gershon, the son of Levi, and he is identified as a Levite (1 Chr 6:39, 2 Chr 5:12). The situation identified in the passage is general in nature, as the Psalmist identifies that something is troubling him to the point that it is keeping him up through the night (v.2).

General Guidelines and Guiding Questions

In order to discern the principles for preaching within the passage, the general guidelines, guiding questions, and genre-specific insights for principlization will be followed. The questions that are pertinent to this passage will be answered. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate this principlization methodology and to provide genre-specific application of the methodology.

Identify

Identify the Purpose and Emphasis of the Passage

- 1) Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, and grammatical hermeneutic.¹²⁰
- 2) What is the biblical narrative and emerging theology leading up to this passage?¹²¹
 - a) Prior to this passage is the completion of both the Law of Moses and the Temple of Solomon. The writer points to the events of Exodus (vv.16-20).
- 3) Where does this passage occur in the timeline of God's activity recorded in Scripture?
 - a) This passage of Scripture was written after the establishment of the Mosaic Law and the building of Solomon's Temple.
- 4) What is the purpose of this respective biblical book?¹²²

¹²⁰Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 221. See Also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 42. Also, Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 213. Thorough and sound exegesis was performed on this passage of Scripture as the writer of this dissertation was preparing to preach Psalm 77:1-20 at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland, TX. To view this sermon see Jordan Rogers, "What To Do When Trouble Steals Your Sleep" (video) August 19, 2018, <https://youtu.be/OY8hOalW9hA>.

¹²¹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 153.

- a) Psalms is book of songs for the people of God. The Psalms use Hebrew poetry to convey, celebrate, and command truth.
- 5) What was the setting to which this passage of Scripture was originally addressed?¹²³
- a) This particular Psalm was written by Asaph as a record of how he responded to an unnamed trouble that was robbing him of sleep. The responses he went through are instructive for God's people and illustrate principles of how God's people should respond when trouble steals their sleep.
- 6) What are the major sections of the book and how does the author progress the main argument of the book through his flow of thought?¹²⁴
- a) There is not necessarily an identifiable flow of thought in the Psalter. The book is a collection of individual Psalms that are self-contained. There are five major divisions in the Psalter: Book 1 (Psalms 1-41), Book 2 (Psalm 42-72), Book 3 (Psalms 73-89), Book 4 (Psalms 90-106), Book 5 (Psalms 107-150).
- 7) Where does this passage occur in the flow of its respective book?¹²⁵
- a) Psalm 77 is found within Book 3 of the Psalter.
- 8) What is the purpose of this passage in its respective book and the whole of Scripture?¹²⁶
- a) Psalm 77 is part of the collection of psalms in the Psalter, but its purpose is unique to itself, as it addresses the realizations of Asaph when he is troubled to the point of losing sleep.
- 9) What response was the author expecting of his original audience?¹²⁷

¹²³Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

¹²⁴Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

¹²⁵Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

¹²⁶Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 294-295.

¹²⁷Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 483. Also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

- a) The author does not explicitly state the response he was expecting of his original audience. It seems apparent that his desire was to give his audience insight into how he handled the thoughts he was wrestling with while some trouble was keeping him awake.
- 10) What was the Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account?
- a) The Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account appears to be to observe how Asaph handled this situation where some kind of trouble was keeping him from sleep.
- 11) What would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture?¹²⁸
- a) If this passage were not included in Scripture, what would be lost is the insights gained from observing Asaph's thoughts in this situation.
- 12) What does this passage teach about God?¹²⁹
- a) (v.13) An emphatic declaration of the holiness of God
 - b) (vv.14-20) A recounting of the wondrous works of God in the Exodus
- 13) What does this passage teach about the depravity of man?¹³⁰
- a) This passage does not comment on the depravity of man, but it does give insight into the mental and spiritual wrestling of a man who was deeply troubled.

Identify how the author has emphasized the purpose of the passage of Scripture:

- 1) Does the author use any of the following devices to direct the attention of the reader to his intended emphasis?
- a) What are the stylistic elements?
 - i) Psalm 77 is poetic, and it contains the stylistic elements common in Hebrew poetry.
 - b) Are there any grammatical keys?
 - c) What is the rhetorical structure?¹³¹

¹²⁸Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 89-90.

¹²⁹Ibid., 94-95. See also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

¹³⁰Rowell, "The Heresy of Application," 20-27.

¹³¹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. See also, Richard. "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 214.

- i) vv.1-10 records the mental and spiritual wrestling of Asaph;
 - ii) vv.11-19 records God's mighty works in the Exodus;
 - iii) vv.20 records the declaration of God as Shepherd of His people.
- 2) Is there a theme sentence?
 - a) No.
- 3) Are there any distinctive or unusual features?
 - a) No.
- 4) Are there any pivotal statements?¹³²
 - a) v.11 serves as a transitional sentence from Asaph's anguish to the answer.
- 5) Are there any theological judgments?¹³³
 - a) No.
- 6) What imperatives are in the text?¹³⁴
 - a) There are no imperatives in Psalm 77.
- 7) Write out the authorial intention¹³⁵ (purpose) of the passage for the original audience in one or two sentences.¹³⁶
 - a) The purpose of Psalm 77 is to teach the truths that when a person is troubled so deeply that they lose sleep, they can expect their faith to be tested. When a person's faith in God is tested, they must remember who God has proven Himself to be and find their rest in the Lord as He leads them.

Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage

- 1) Is there a principle or principles stated explicitly by the author in the passage?¹³⁷

¹³²Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 483.

¹³³Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 293.

¹³⁴Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 41-42. See Also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 293.

¹³⁵Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 213-214.

¹³⁶Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 293.

- a) No.
- 2) Why was this command or principle given?¹³⁸
 - a) There are no explicit principles in this passage.
- 3) If you believe there are principles that are explicit within the passage, are there any textual indications or reasons given for the author being explicit rather than abstract?
 - a) There are no explicit principles in this passage.
- 4) Is there a principle or principles stated in the broader context of the passage?¹³⁹
 - a) No.
- 5) Is this passage the record of a broad principle that is being applied specifically?¹⁴⁰
 - a) No.
- 6) Is there a general principle revealed in the broader context of the book?¹⁴¹
 - a) There are general principles throughout the Psalter, but they do not expose the meaning or purpose of Psalm 77.
- 7) Is the author here drawing out an implication of the Ten Commandments?¹⁴²
- 8) No.
- 9) Write out each of the principles the author was explicitly stating or implying about his main point of emphasis (purpose):
 - a) (vv.1-10) 1) When a person is so troubled that they lose sleep, they can expect their faith to be tested.

¹³⁷Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

¹³⁸Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

¹³⁹Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

¹⁴⁰Kaiser, "A Principlizing Method," 20-21. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

¹⁴¹Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

¹⁴²Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

- b) (vv.11-19) 2) When a person is so troubled that they lose sleep, they need to remember who God has proven Himself to be.
- c) (v.20) 3) When a person is so troubled that they lose sleep, they must find their rest in the Lord who leads them.

Assess the Transferability

Assess the Transferability of a Principle

Identify the difference between content in a passage that is cultural or supracultural.¹⁴³

- 1) What is the relationship between the ethical command and the issue to which it is addressed?¹⁴⁴
 - a) There are no ethical commands given in this passage.
- 2) Is there anything in the immediate context of this passage that limits the application of the principle to the original audience?¹⁴⁵
 - a) No.
- 3) Is there anything in the Bible that limits the application of this principle?¹⁴⁶
 - a) No.
- 4) Was the biblical writer stating a normative command, or was he contextualizing a normative command to address a problem in the culture?¹⁴⁷
 - a) The writer was not stating commands, nor was the Psalm written to a culturally specific problem.
- 5) Is this command given addressing a specific situation?¹⁴⁸ If not, it is likely already in a general, timeless format. If the command is addressing a specific

¹⁴³Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 426.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 423. See also, Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 214.

¹⁴⁵Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

situation, it must be determined what content within the command is culturally bound and what content is not culturally bound (supracultural).

- a) The passage was not addressed to a specific cultural situation. The passage actually addresses a situation that occurs universally.
- 6) What are the differences between the original audience and the modern audience?¹⁴⁹
 - a) The differences between the original audience and the modern audience are many, but they have no bearing on the general principles in this passage. The same Lord that delivered Israel out of Egypt is the same Lord that delivers His people out of spiritual bondage through His Son Jesus Christ.
- 7) A principle will almost always be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions:
 - a) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle similar to the modern audience?¹⁵⁰
 - i) Yes.
 - b) Is this principle founded upon the work of God in Creation?¹⁵¹
 - i) No.
 - 8) Is this principle founded upon the character of God?¹⁵²
 - a) Yes.
 - 9) Is this principle founded upon the redemptive work of God?¹⁵³
 - a) Yes. In the original setting the writer was referring to the great work of redemption God had done up to that point: the Exodus. The principles still apply now that God has accomplished eternal redemption through Jesus Christ.
 - 10) Is this principle founded upon the Ten Commandments?¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212.

¹⁴⁹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 42-43.

¹⁵⁰Kaiser, “A Principlization Model,” 21. See Adams, *Truth Applied*, 48-49; and Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

¹⁵¹Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 297. See also, Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-423.

¹⁵²Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 297-298.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, 298.

a) No.

11) Is the author relying on earlier biblical teaching in this principle?¹⁵⁵

a) Yes. The author is relying on the record of God's mighty works in the Exodus in order to console his soul and find rest in the Lord's power and faithfulness.

12) Does the teaching transcend cultural biases in its original setting?¹⁵⁶

a) Yes.

13) Is the command moral or theological?¹⁵⁷

a) There are no moral or theological commands in this passage.

A principle will not be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is "Yes" to the following questions. If the answer is "Yes" to any of the following questions, more work must be done to refine the format of the principle to arrive at the timeless truth. If the principle is clothed in supracultural content, the theology of the principle must be maintained,¹⁵⁸ while the timeless elements are distilled for the purpose of preaching to the modern audience.

14) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle different than it would be to the modern audience?¹⁵⁹

a) No.

15) Is the principle wholly tied to a cultural expression?¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

¹⁵⁵Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 424.

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 424.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 422-426.

¹⁵⁸Kaiser, "A Principilizing Model," 21.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.* See also, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

- a) No.
- 16) Is the principle fulfilled on behalf of believers by the atoning work of Christ?
- a) Yes. Through Christ, believers in Jesus have experienced ultimate redemption, not from bondage in Egypt, but from bondage to sin, death, and eternal hell.
- 17) Write out each of the timeless principles the author was explicitly stating or implying to achieve his purpose:
- a) (vv.1-10) 1) When a person is so troubled that they lose sleep, they can expect their faith to be tested.
 - b) (vv.11-19) 2) When a person is so troubled that they lose sleep, they need to remember who God has proven Himself to be.
 - c) (v.20) 3) When a person is so troubled that they lose sleep, they must find their rest in the Lord who leads them.

Genre-Specific Guidelines and Guiding Questions: Poetry

- 1) What meaning lies behind the images and figures of speech?
 - a) The writer expresses his anguish and wrestling with God by stating, “You hold my eyelids open” (v.4).
- 2) What feelings does the poet express by the choice of language?
 - a) The author expresses anxiety, sleeplessness, anguish of soul, frustration, and then comfort.
- 3) What elements of form and structure does the poet use to dispense thought?
 - a) The three rhetorical questions (vv.7-9) demonstrate the intense anguish the writer is experiencing in his crisis of belief.
- 4) What would be lost if the same truth were presented in prose?¹⁶¹
 - a) If the same truth were presented in prose, it may be difficult to feel the internal anguish and the intense pace of the Psalm. The poetic structure provides an appropriate mode of expressing intense emotion in terse

¹⁶⁰Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 425.

¹⁶¹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 69.

statements.

- 5) Is this portion of Scripture a celebration of the biblical ideal?
 - a) No.

Format

Format the Principled Statements for the Purpose of Preaching

- 1) State the principle in a complete sentence.¹⁶²
- 2) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle remains the same in the present day, keep the principle as it is formatted in the passage.¹⁶³
- 3) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle is different in the present day, state the principle generally before applying it specifically to the present-day analogous situation.¹⁶⁴
- 4) Remove all proper nouns except God.¹⁶⁵
- 5) Replace past-tense verbs with present-tense verbs. Use future tense verbs only if the theology demands it.¹⁶⁶
- 6) Replace third person pronouns with first person plural or singular nouns.¹⁶⁷
- 7) State the principle in a declarative or imperative form if at all possible and only if necessary, in an interrogative format.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶²Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

¹⁶³Kaiser, "A Principled Model," 21.

¹⁶⁴Ibid. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

¹⁶⁵Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. See also Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

¹⁶⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157; also Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136; Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

¹⁶⁷Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58. See also, Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

- 8) Format the principle to be applicational: addressing the thinking, attitudes, motivations that must be brought into compliance with the truth of the passage of Scripture.¹⁶⁹

(1) Write out each the principles in the proper format:

(2) (vv.1-10)

1. Action #1: When trouble steals your sleep, expect your faith to be tested.

(3) (vv.11-19)

1. Action #2: When trouble steals your sleep, remember who God has proven Himself to be.

(4) (v.20)

1. Action 3: When trouble steals your sleep, find your rest in the Lord who leads you.

Evaluate

Evaluate the Accuracy of a Principle

These principles are worded so as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text. These principles also articulate completely both the essence and extent of this preaching portion of Scripture.

Verify

Verify the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

- 1) Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?¹⁷⁰
 - a) Yes, these principles are consistent with all of Scripture.

¹⁶⁸Ben Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 137.

¹⁷⁰Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45. See also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 28.

- 2) If this principle is an implication or extrapolation from the passage of Scripture, is it stated explicitly elsewhere in the Scripture?
 - a) These principles are not implications or extrapolations of the passage, nor are they stated verbatim elsewhere in Scripture.

- 3) What verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?
 - a) (vv.1-10)
 - i) Action #1: When trouble steals your sleep, expect your faith to be tested.
 - (1) James 1:2-4, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

 - b) (vv.11-19)
 - i) Action #2: When trouble steals your sleep, remember who God has proven Himself to be.
 - (1) Numbers 23:19, “¹God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?”
 - (2) James 1:17, “Every good gift and ever perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”
 - (3) Romans 5:8, “But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - (4) Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

 - c) (v.20)
 - i) Action 3: When trouble steals your sleep, find your rest in the Lord who leads you.
 - (1) Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Analyze

Analyzing Implications of Principles

The principles written above are not implications of the text, but rather are restatements of the truth within the text.

Review the Errors to Avoid in Principilizing

After arriving at the timeless principles and having reviewed the *errors to avoid in principilizing*, the principles listed above accurately articulate the authorial intent of the passage in both essence and extent.

Results

The following are the principles for preaching, along with the supporting texts. It is significant to note that these principles are arranged in congruence with the passage of Scripture; are in substance expressing both the essence and extent of the passage of Scripture; and are supported by the analogy of Scripture. There is more work to be done to prepare this outline for preaching,¹⁷¹ but the structure, substance, and support are faithful to the text and the Bible as a whole:

- 1) Psalm 77:1-20: Three Actions to Take When Trouble Steals Your Sleep
 - a) (vv.1-10)
 - i) Action #1: When trouble steals your sleep, expect your faith to be tested.
 - (1) James 1:2-4, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”
 - b) (vv.11-19)
 - i) Action #2: When trouble steals your sleep, remember who God has proven Himself to be.
 - (1) Numbers 23:19, “God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?”

¹⁷¹This outline still needs an introduction, transitional statements, exegetical explanation, illustrations, specific application, and conclusion.

- (2) James 1:17, “Every good gift and ever perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”
 - (3) Romans 5:8, “but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - (4) Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”
- c) (v.20)
- i) Action 3: When trouble steals your sleep, find your rest in the Lord who leads you.
 - (1) Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Wisdom – Proverbs 5:1-23

The text under consideration here as a preaching portion of Scripture representative of the wisdom genre of Scripture is Proverbs 5:1-23:

- ¹My son, be attentive to my wisdom;
 Incline your ear to my understanding,
²that you may keep discretion,
 and your lips may guard knowledge.
- ³For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey,
 and her speech is smoother than oil,
⁴but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
 sharp as a two-edged sword.
- ⁵Her feet go down to death;
 her steps follow the path to Sheol;
⁶she does not ponder the path of life;
 her ways wander, and she does not know it.
- ⁷And now, O sons, listen to me,
 and do not depart from the words of my mouth.
- ⁸Keep your way far from her,
 and do not go near the door of her house,
⁹lest you give your honor others
 and your years to the merciless,
¹⁰lest strangers take their fill of your strength,
 and your labors go to the house of a foreigner,

¹¹and at the end of your life you groan,
 when your flesh and body are consumed,
¹²and you say, “How I hated discipline,
 and my heart despised reproof!
¹³I did not listen to the voice of my teachers
 or incline my ear to my instructors.
¹⁴I am at the brink of utter ruin
 in the assembled congregation.”

¹⁵Drink water from your own cistern,
 flowing water from your own well.
¹⁶Should your springs be scattered abroad,
 streams of water in the streets?
¹⁷Let them be for yourself alone,
 and not for strangers with you.
¹⁸Let your fountain be blessed,
 and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
¹⁹a lovely deer, a graceful doe.
 Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
 be intoxicated always in her love.

²⁰Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman
 and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?
²¹For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the LORD,
 and He ponders all his paths.
²²The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,
 and he is held fast in the cords of sin.
²³He dies for a lack of discipline,
 and because of great folly he is led astray.”

Context

There is no supplementary context other than Proverbs as a book of wise, godly instruction. The purpose of the Book of Proverbs is to provide wise sayings and proverbs in order to teach the beginning of all knowledge: the fear of the Lord (Prv 1:7). The proverbs provide wise guidance in righteousness.

General Guidelines and Guiding Questions

In order to discern the principles for preaching within the passage, the general guidelines, guiding questions, and genre-specific insights for principlization will be followed. The questions that are pertinent to this passage will be answered. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate this principlization methodology and to provide genre-specific application of the methodology.

Identify

Identify the Purpose and Emphasis of the Passage

Identify the purpose of the passage of Scripture in relation to Scripture which precedes it:

- 1) Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, and grammatical hermeneutic.¹⁷²
- 2) What is the biblical narrative and emerging theology leading up to this passage?¹⁷³
 - a) The Book of Proverbs was compiled after the writings of Moses, the period of the Judges, and the kingly reigns of both Saul and David.
- 3) Where does this passage occur in the timeline of God's activity recorded in Scripture?
 - a) This passage was written during the reign of King Solomon.

¹⁷²Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 221. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 42; and Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 212-213. Sound exegesis was performed in the study of this passage for a sermon the writer of this dissertation preached at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland, TX. To view this sermon see Jordan Rogers, "Four Truths to Guard You From Sexual Immorality" (video), July 1, 2018, <https://youtu.be/8YY7bDuHT74>.

¹⁷³Kaiser., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

Identify the purpose of the passage of Scripture in relation to the book where it is found:

- 1) What is the purpose of this respective biblical book?¹⁷⁴
 - a) The purpose of the Book of Proverbs is to provide wise sayings and proverbs in order to teach the beginning of all knowledge: the fear of the Lord (Prv 1:7). The proverbs provide wise guidance in righteousness.
- 2) What was the setting to which this passage of Scripture was originally addressed?¹⁷⁵
 - a) This is written generally, with the writer either addressing his son literally, or all youth figuratively.
- 3) What are the major sections of the book and how does the author progress the main argument of the book through his flow of thought?¹⁷⁶
 - i) What it means to function wisely in the fear of the Lord is the main argument of the book. There is no widespread agreement amongst commentators as to a specific structure of Proverbs. Proverbs 5 is unique in the sense that it is a long exposition on one topic. Many of the proverbs are short and self-contained.
- 4) Where does this passage occur in the flow of its respective book?¹⁷⁷
 - a) Proverbs 5 follows along the same line of Proverbs 4, where Solomon is offering wise counsel to his sons. Proverbs 4 is general instruction about getting wisdom, and Proverbs 5 is specific instruction about the improper and proper expression of sexual intercourse.
- 5) What is the purpose of this passage within its respective book and the whole of Scripture?¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴Kaiser., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

¹⁷⁵Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

¹⁷⁶Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

¹⁷⁷Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

¹⁷⁸Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 294-295.

- a) This passage is wise instruction on the unrighteous and righteous expression of sexual intercourse.
- 6) What response was the author expecting of his original audience?¹⁷⁹
 - a) The author was expecting his original audience to be wise and obey his counsel. To obey this counsel means to flee from any sexual temptation or expression outside of sex within a monogamous heterosexual marriage.
- 7) What was the Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account?
 - a) The Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account is to describe the disastrous consequences of sexual immorality and in contrast to describe the proper expression of sex within marriage.
- 8) What would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture?¹⁸⁰
 - a) This passage is one of the most complete expositions on sexual immorality within the Bible. The proverbial style of this teaching makes the understanding so simple that a child can grasp its content.
- 9) What does this passage teach about God?¹⁸¹
 - a) This passage teaches that God approves of the expression of human sexuality between a man and woman united in the lifelong covenant of marriage and that God disapproves of any sexual expression outside of those bounds.
- 10) What does this passage teach about the depravity of man?¹⁸²
 - a) This teaches that man is inevitably tempted with sexual sin, and that the uninstructed and unwise will likely be lured into its disastrous consequences.

Identify how the author has emphasized the purpose of the passage of Scripture:

- 1) Does the author use any of the following devices to direct the attention of the reader to his intended emphasis?
 - a) What are the stylistic elements?

¹⁷⁹Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 483. Also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

¹⁸⁰Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 89-90.

¹⁸¹Ibid. 94-95. See also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

¹⁸²Rowell, "The Heresy of Application," 20-27.

- i) This chapter is in the classic Hebrew style of poetry/proverb.
- b) Are there any grammatical keys?
 - i) No.
- c) What is the rhetorical structure?¹⁸³
 - i) The chapter appears to contain four distinct thoughts concerning sexual immorality.
- d) Is there a theme sentence?
 - i) No.
- e) Are there any distinctive or unusual features?
 - i) No.
- f) Are there any pivotal statements?¹⁸⁴
 - i) The four distinct sections seem to be marked by transitional statements:
 - (1) v.1, “My son, be attentive to my wisdom; Incline your ear to my understanding”
 - (2) v.7, “And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.”
 - (3) v.15, “Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.”
 - (4) v.20, “Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?”
- 2) Are there any theological judgments?¹⁸⁵
 - a) No, there are no explicit theological judgments given. Sexual immorality and its destruction are described in such a way that its condemnation is inescapably implied.
- 3) What imperatives are in the text?¹⁸⁶
 - a) v.1, “My son, be attentive to my wisdom; Incline your ear to my understanding”

¹⁸³Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. See Also, Richard. “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 14.

¹⁸⁴Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 483.

¹⁸⁵Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*

- b) v.7, “And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.
 - c) v.8, “Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house”
 - d) v.15, “Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.
 - e) v.16-17, “Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you.”
 - f) v.18, “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth”
 - g) v.19b, “Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.”
- 4) How does God view this idea, event, or action? Is He pleased or displeased?¹⁸⁷
- a) The condemnation of sexual immorality is obvious, albeit implied.
- 5) Write out the authorial intention¹⁸⁸ (purpose) of the passage for the original audience in one or two sentences.¹⁸⁹
- a) The purpose of this passage is to teach that sexual immorality is disastrously destructive, but sex within marriage is blessed.

Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage

- 1) Is there a principle or principles stated explicitly by the author in the passage?¹⁹⁰
- a) Each of the imperatives identified above are explicit principles of truth.
- 2) Why was this command or principle given?¹⁹¹
- a) These principles were given to protect the readers from the disastrous consequences of sexual immorality. These principles were also given to instruct the readers in the righteous expression of sexual intercourse.

¹⁸⁷Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

¹⁸⁸Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 213-214.

¹⁸⁹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 293.

¹⁹⁰Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

¹⁹¹Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

- 3) If you believe there are principles that are explicit within the passage, are there any textual indications or reasons given for the author being explicit rather than abstract?
 - a) The author is writing very plainly and explicitly so as to leave no ambiguity in his meaning.
- 4) Is there a principle or principles stated in the broader context of the passage?¹⁹²
 - a) No.
- 5) Is this passage the record of a broad principle that is being applied specifically?¹⁹³
 - a) One could contend that Proverbs 5 is an exposition on Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”
- 6) Is the author here drawing out an implication of the Ten Commandments?¹⁹⁴
 - a) Yes, the author is drawing out numerous implications of violating Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”
- 7) Write out each of the principles the author was explicitly stating or implying about his main point of emphasis (purpose):
 - a) The four main principles the writer is contending for are drawn from the four main sections. Three of the principles are complemented by supporting principles:
 - i) vv.1-6
 - (1) Sexual immorality is inescapably destructive.
 - ii) vv.7-14
 - (1) Sexual immorality has disastrous consequences.
 - (a) (v.9) Cost #1: Sexual immorality will cost you the best years of your life.
 - (b) (v.10) Cost #2: Sexual immorality will cost you what you have worked for.
 - (c) (vv.11) Cost #3: Sexual immorality will cost you great anguish in your soul.

¹⁹²Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

¹⁹³Kaiser, “A Principlization Model,” 20-21. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

¹⁹⁴Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

- (d) (vv.12-13) Cost #4: Sexual immorality will cost you lifelong regret.
 - (e) (vv.14) Cost #5: Sexual immorality will cost you great humiliation.
- iii) vv.15-19
- (1) Sex within marriage is God's good design.
 - (a) (v.15) Encouragement #1: Sex within marriage is biblically ordained.
 - (b) (v.15) Encouragement #2: Sex within marriage is pure.
 - (c) (v.17) Encouragement #3: Sex within marriage is sacred and must be guarded.
 - (d) (v.18-19) Encouragement #4: Sex within marriage is supposed to be enjoyed.
- iv) vv.20-23
- (1) There is no way to sin harmlessly.
 - (a) (v.21) Reason #1: You cannot sin secretly.
 - (b) (v.22) Reason #2: You cannot sin casually.
 - (c) (v.23) Reason #3: You cannot sin safely.

Assess the Transferability

Assess the Transferability of a Principle

- 1) Identify the difference between content in a passage that is cultural or supracultural.¹⁹⁵
- 2) What is the relationship between the ethical command and the issue to which it is addressed?¹⁹⁶
 - a) The doctrine here is not addressed to a particular cultural issue. The ethical commands are addressing the expression of human sexuality. These are universal commands applied to a universal situation.
- 3) Is there anything in the immediate context of this passage that limits the application of the principle to the original audience?¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 426.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 423. See also, Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 214.

¹⁹⁷Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

- a) No.
- 4) Is there anything in the Bible that limits the application of this principle?¹⁹⁸
 - a) No.
- 5) Was the biblical writer stating a normative command, or was he contextualizing a normative command to address a problem in the culture?¹⁹⁹
 - a) The biblical writer was stating normative commands.
- 6) Is this command addressing a specific situation?²⁰⁰ If not, it is likely already in a general, timeless format. If the command is addressing a specific situation, it must be determined what content within the command is culturally bound and what content is not culturally bound (supracultural).
 - a) The content of Proverbs 5:1-23 is already in timeless and general format.
- 7) What are the differences between the original audience and the modern audience?²⁰¹
 - a) There are many cultural differences between the original and modern audience, but those cultural differences do not limit the transferability of these principles because they were written in timeless format, not as an address to a particular cultural situation.

A principle will almost always be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions:

- 1) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle similar to the modern audience?²⁰²
 - a) Yes.
- 2) Is this principle founded upon the work of God in Creation?²⁰³

¹⁹⁸Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

¹⁹⁹Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

²⁰⁰Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212.

²⁰¹Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42-43.

²⁰²Kaiser, “A Principilizing Model,” 21. See Adams, *Truth Applied*, 48-49; and Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

- a) Yes. The foundation of human sexuality was established in Creation by God:
 - i) Genesis 2:22-25, “And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”
- 3) Is this principle founded upon the character of God?²⁰⁴
 - a) No.
- 4) Is this principle founded upon the redemptive work of God?²⁰⁵
 - a) No.
- 5) Is this principle founded upon the Ten Commandments?
 - a) Yes. There are implications of the violation of Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”
- 6) Is the author relying on earlier biblical teaching in this principle?²⁰⁶
 - a) There are no earlier biblical references used in this passage. However, the content of Proverbs 5:1-23 appears to be an exposition on the violation of Genesis 2:22-25 and Exodus 20:14.
- 7) Does the teaching transcend cultural biases in its original setting?²⁰⁷
 - a) Yes.
- 8) Is the command moral or theological?²⁰⁸

²⁰³Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 297. See also, Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-423.

²⁰⁴Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 297-298.

²⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 298.

²⁰⁶Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 424.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 422-426.

- a) The commands are moral.

A principle will not be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions. If the answer is “Yes” to any of the following questions, more work must be done to refine the format of the principle to arrive at the timeless truth. If the principle is clothed in supracultural content, the theology of the principle must be maintained,²⁰⁹ while the timeless elements are distilled for the purpose of preaching to the modern audience.

- 1) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle different from what it would be to a modern audience?²¹⁰
 - a) No.
- 2) Is the principle wholly tied to a cultural expression?²¹¹
 - a) No. Nothing about the teaching in Proverbs 5:1-23 is tied to a cultural expression.
- 3) Is the principle fulfilled on behalf of believers by the atoning work of Christ?
 - a) Sexual sin is atoned for by the atoning work of Christ. This is the logical and legitimate place in the sermon to make a full presentation of the Gospel. Two passages that would aid in the presentation of the Gospel as it relates to forgiveness of sexual sin are Romans 8:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:
 - i) Romans 8:1-4, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually

²⁰⁹Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 21.

²¹⁰Ibid. See also, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

²¹¹Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 425.

immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the LORD Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God.”

- 4) Write out each of the timeless principles the author was explicitly stating or implying to achieve his purpose:
- a) (vv.1-6) 1) Sexual immorality is inescapably destructive.
 - b) (vv.7-14) 2) Sexual immorality has disastrous consequences.
 - i) (v.9) Cost #1: Sexual immorality will cost you the best years of your life.
 - ii) (v.10) Cost #2: Sexual immorality will cost you what you have worked for.
 - iii) (vv.11) Cost #3: Sexual immorality will cost you great anguish in your soul.
 - iv) (vv.12-13) Cost #4: Sexual immorality will cost you lifelong regret.
 - v) (vv.14) Cost #5: Sexual immorality will cost you great humiliation.
 - c) (vv.15-19) 3) Sex within marriage is God’s good design.
 - i) (v.15) Encouragement #1: Sex within marriage is biblically ordained.
 - ii) (v.15) Encouragement #2: Sex within marriage is pure.
 - iii) (v.17) Encouragement #3: Sex within marriage is sacred and must be guarded.
 - iv) (v.18-19) Encouragement #4: Sex within marriage is supposed to be enjoyed.
 - d) (vv.20-23) 4) There is no way to sin harmlessly.
 - i) (v.21) Reason #1: You cannot sin secretly.
 - ii) (v.22) Reason #2: You cannot sin casually.
 - iii) (v.23) Reason #3: You cannot sin safely.

Genre-Specific Guidelines and Guiding Questions: Wisdom

To aid in discerning principles within biblical wisdom literature use the following questions:

- 1) Is this proverb expressing a general tendency or a unique situation?²¹²
 - a) No.
- 2) Is this proverb or wisdom passage expressing a universal truth in a particular example?²¹³
 - a) No.
- 3) Is this passage descriptive, or a wise observation of life?²¹⁴
 - a) Yes.
- 4) Is this passage prescriptive, giving a command to be obeyed?²¹⁵
 - a) Yes.
- 5) If the passage is descriptive, then what are the exceptions where this is not the outcome?²¹⁶
 - a) The passage is descriptive, but it is also prescriptive: there are no exceptions.
- 6) Does this passage express an implication of the Mosaic Law?²¹⁷

²¹²“Proverbs always express an observation about a general tendency in life, not about unique occurrence.” Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 123.

²¹³“Proverbs thus follow a very basic literary principle: their way of getting at the universal is through the particular.” Ibid.

²¹⁴Ibid. 124.

²¹⁵Ibid.

²¹⁶Ibid. Also, Kaiser and Silva write, “Especially difficult in this area of finding general principles in the promises of God are the proverbs of the Old Testament. One must be careful not to assume that just because a proverb sounds like a promise that it is one. Proverbs are, instead, Wisdom sayings that apply to situations generally, without listing the exceptions that must often qualify them.” Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 282. One example they point to is Proverbs 22:6, which they state, “is not an ironclad guarantee that if one abides by the rules established there that in every instance all will turn out well for a child.” They also state, “Many a person has come to grief by universalizing the proverbs into unconditional truths or into promises without qualifications.”

²¹⁷“To be sure, there are texts that many believe hint at these conclusions, but there is more or less a going beyond the words on the page to achieve certain understandings. It is sort of like having your feet anchored in the canon while leaning

- a) Yes, this passage exposit consequences for violating Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”
- 7) Is this proverb a metaphor that applies to life generally?
 - a) No, this proverb is very specific to sexual immorality.
- 8) Is this wisdom passage a celebration of a biblical ideal?
 - a) No.

Format

Format the Principled Statements for the Purpose of Preaching

- 1) State the principle in a complete sentence.²¹⁸
- 2) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle remains the same in the present day, keep the principle as it is formatted in the passage.²¹⁹
- 3) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle is different in the present day, state the principle generally before applying it specifically to the present-day analogous situation.²²⁰
- 4) Remove all proper nouns except God.²²¹

over into the current world in order to achieve a full accounting of how biblical truth applies. This imagery seems somewhat supported by how the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament unpacks the implications of the law without quoting it directly. In the Old Testament, all of life seems ‘nested’ in small bits of data that continue to frame life application. Theological paradigms are therefore required to make assertions about what is ‘biblical,’ that is, what God requires, in any given situation.” Meadors, *Four Views On Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, 9.

²¹⁸Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 45.

²¹⁹Kaiser, “A Principlization Model,” 21.

²²⁰Ibid. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45.

²²¹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157; and Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

- 5) Replace past-tense verbs with present-tense verbs. Use future tense verbs only if the theology demands it.²²²
- 6) Replace third person pronouns with first person plural or singular nouns.²²³
- 7) State the principle in a declarative or imperative form if at all possible and only if necessary in an interrogative format.²²⁴
- 8) Format the principle to be applicational: addressing the thinking, attitudes, motivations, which must be brought into compliance with the truth of the passage of Scripture.²²⁵
- 9) Write out each the principles in the proper format:
 - a) (vv.1-6) 1) Sexual immorality is inescapably destructive.
 - b) (vv.7-14) 2) Sexual immorality has disastrous consequences.
 - i) (v.9) Cost #1: Sexual immorality will cost you the best years of your life.
 - ii) (v.10) Cost #2: Sexual immorality will cost you what you have worked for.
 - iii) (vv.11) Cost #3: Sexual immorality will cost you great anguish in your soul.
 - iv) (vv.12-13) Cost #4: Sexual immorality will cost you lifelong regret.
 - v) (vv.14) Cost #5: Sexual immorality will cost you great humiliation.
 - c) (vv.15-19) 3) Sex within marriage is God's good design.
 - i) (v.15) Encouragement #1: Sex within marriage is biblically ordained.
 - ii) (v.15) Encouragement #2: Sex within marriage is pure.
 - iii) (v.17) Encouragement #3: Sex within marriage is sacred and must be guarded.
 - iv) (v.18-19) Encouragement #4: Sex within marriage is supposed to be enjoyed.
 - d) (vv.20-23) 4) There is no way to sin harmlessly.

²²²Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. Also see Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136; and Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

²²³Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58. See also, Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

²²⁴Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

²²⁵*Ibid.*, 137.

- i) (v.21) Reason #1: You cannot sin secretly.
- ii) (v.22) Reason #2: You cannot sin casually.
- iii) (v.23) Reason #3: You cannot sin safely.

Evaluate

Evaluate the Accuracy of a Principle

These principles are worded so as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text. These principles also articulate completely both the essence and extent of this preaching portion of Scripture.

Verify

Verify the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

- 1) Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?²²⁶
 - a) Yes, these principles are consistent with all of Scripture.
- 2) If this principle is an implication or extrapolation from the passage of Scripture, is it stated explicitly elsewhere in the Scripture?
 - a) These statements are principles not implications or extrapolations from the passage. These principles are not restated verbatim in Scripture, but they are supported and not contradicted by Scripture.
- 3) What verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?
 - a) (vv.1-6) 1) Sexual immorality is inescapably destructive.
 - i) All sin is ultimately destructive: Romans 3:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - b) (vv.7-14) 2) Sexual immorality has disastrous consequences.
 - i) Proverbs 6:23-29, “For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, to preserve you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a

²²⁶Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 296; and Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28.

married woman hunts down a precious life. Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished."

- c) (vv.15-19) 3) Sex within marriage is God's good design.
 - i) Genesis 2:22-25, "And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."
- d) (vv.20-23) 4) There is no way to sin harmlessly.
 - i) John 8:34, "Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."
 - ii) Romans 6:23, Proverbs 6:23-29 (especially vv.27-28)

Analyze

Analyzing Implications of Principles

The principles written above are not implications of the text, but rather are restatements of the truth within the text.

Review the Errors to Avoid in Principiizing

After arriving at the timeless principles and having reviewed the *errors to avoid in principiizing*, the principles listed above accurately articulate the authorial intent of the passage in both essence and extent.

Results

The following are the principles for preaching, along with the supporting texts. It is significant that these principles are arranged in congruence with the

passage of Scripture; are in substance expressing both the essence and extent of the passage of Scripture; and are supported by the analogy of Scripture. There is more work to be done to prepare this outline for preaching,²²⁷ but the structure, substance, and support are faithful to the text and the Bible as a whole:

- 1) Proverbs 5:1-23—Four Insights to Guard You From Sexual Immorality Truth
 - a) (vv.1-6)
 - i) Insight #1: Sexual immorality is inescapably destructive.
 - (1) Romans 6:23
 - b) (vv.7-14)
 - i) Insight #2: Sexual immorality has disastrous consequences.
 - (1) (v.9) Cost #1: Sexual immorality will cost you the best years of your life.
 - (2) (v.10) Cost #2: Sexual immorality will cost you what you have worked for.
 - (3) (vv.11) Cost #3: Sexual immorality will cost you great anguish in your soul.
 - (4) (vv.12-13) Cost #4: Sexual immorality will cost you lifelong regret.
 - (5) (vv.14) Cost #5: Sexual immorality will cost you great humiliation.
 - (a) Proverbs 6:23-29
 - c) (vv.15-19)
 - i) Insight #3: Sex within marriage is God's good design.
 - (1) (v.15) Encouragement #1: Sex within marriage is biblically ordained.
 - (2) (v.15) Encouragement #2: Sex within marriage is pure.
 - (3) (v.17) Encouragement #3: Sex within marriage is sacred and must be guarded.
 - (4) (v.18-19) Encouragement #4: Sex within marriage is supposed to be enjoyed.
 - (a) Genesis 2:22-25
 - d) (vv.20-23)
 - i) Insight #4 There is no way to sin harmlessly.
 - (1) (v.21) Reason #1: You cannot sin secretly.
 - (2) (v.22) Reason #2: You cannot sin casually.
 - (3) (v.23) Reason #3: You cannot sin safely.

²²⁷This outline still needs an introduction, transitional statements, exegetical explanation, illustrations, specific application, and conclusion.

(a) John 8:34, Proverbs 6:27-28, Romans 6:23

Epistle – 1 John 5:13-21

The text under consideration here as a preaching portion of Scripture representative of the prophetic and apocalyptic genre of Scripture is 1 John 5:13-21:

¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.

¹⁶If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

¹⁸We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who has been born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. ¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

Context

First John is a doctrinal epistle that teaches fundamental proofs of authentic Christianity. The purpose of 1 John is stated explicitly in 1 John 5:13, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” The following test of authentic Christianity is seen in the texts leading up to the passage under consideration here:

- (a) 1 John 2:3—Christians keep God’s commandments
- (b) 1 John 2:10—Christians love one another
- (c) 1 John 2:17—Christians do the will of God
- (d) 1 John 2:23—Christians confess the Father
- (e) 1 John 2:29—Christians practice righteousness
- (f) 1 John 3:10—Christians do not continue in sin
- (g) 1 John 3:24—Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit
- (h) 1 John 4:6—Christians believe the Apostolic testimony
- (i) 1 John 4:7—Christians love one another
- (j) 1 John 4:15—Christians confess Jesus is the Son of God
- (k) 1 John 5:1—Christians believe Jesus is the Christ
- (l) 1 John 5:10—Christians believe in the Son of God

General Guidelines and Guiding Questions

In order to discern the principles for preaching within the passage, the general guidelines, guiding questions, and genre-specific insights for principlization will be followed. The questions that are pertinent to this passage will be answered. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate this principlization methodology and to provide genre-specific application of the methodology.

Identify

Identify the Purpose and Emphasis of the Passage

Identify the purpose of the passage of Scripture in relation to the Scripture that precedes it:

- 1) Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, and grammatical hermeneutic.²²⁸

²²⁸Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 221. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42; and Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212-213. Sound exegesis was performed in the study of this passage for a sermon the writer of this dissertation preached at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland, TX. To view this sermon see Jordan Rogers, “Three Assurances that Only Christians Have” (video), May 27, 2018, <https://youtu.be/zagFdtfMu8w>.

- 2) What is the biblical narrative and the emerging theology leading up to this passage?²²⁹
 - a) The Book of Proverbs was compiled after the writings of Moses, the period of the Judges, and the kingly reigns of both Saul and David.
- 3) Where does this passage occur in the timeline of God's activity recorded in Scripture?
 - a) This passage was written during the reign of King Solomon.
- 4) Identify the purpose of the passage of Scripture in relation to the book where it is found:
 - a) What is the purpose of this biblical book?²³⁰
 - b) The purpose of this epistle is to provide Christians with tests that verify an authentic Christian.
- 5) What was the setting to which this passage of Scripture was originally addressed?²³¹
 - a) There is no explicit statement as to a specific issue John was addressing. The content of 1 John along with the testimony of some early church commentators suggests that John was partially writing a polemic against the heresies of Gnosticism. This epistle then would serve as the definitive tests to verify the authenticity of a person's salvation.
- 6) What are the major sections of the book and how does the author progress the main argument of the book through his flow of thought?²³²
 - a) The major sections are the verifying tests provided by John. The major sections are identified above.
- 7) Where does this passage occur in the flow of its respective book?²³³
 - a) This is the final passage in the epistle.

²²⁹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

²³⁰*Ibid.*, 153.

²³¹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

²³²Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

²³³Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

- 8) What is the purpose of this passage within its respective book and the whole of Scripture?²³⁴
 - a) The purpose of this passage is to provide the reader with knowledge of three assurances that only Christians possess.
- 9) What response was the author expecting of his original audience?²³⁵
 - a) The author was expecting his readers to be encouraged by these truths and to be motivated to keep themselves from idols.
- 10) What was the Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring the author to record this account?
 - a) The Holy Spirit's purpose in inspiring this account is the same as the authorial intent.
- 11) What would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture?²³⁶
 - a) The concise presentation of these three principles would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture. Also, the comments concerning *sin unto death* would be lost.
- 12) What does this passage teach about God?²³⁷
 - a) This passage does provide doctrines in theology proper.
- 13) What does this passage teach about the depravity of man?²³⁸
 - a) This passage teaches on certain aspects of man's depravity that are overcome by the redemptive work of Christ.

Identify how the author has emphasized the purpose of the passage of Scripture:

²³⁴Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 294-295.

²³⁵Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 483. Also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

²³⁶Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 89-90.

²³⁷*Ibid.*, 94-95. See also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

²³⁸Rowell, "The Heresy of Application," 20-27.

- 1) Does the author use any of the following devices to direct the attention of the reader to his intended emphasis?
 - a) What are the stylistic elements?
 - b) Are there any grammatical keys?
 - i) Seven times the writer uses a form of “we know” in this passage. This indicates truth claims that are not in doubt.
 - c) What is the rhetorical structure?²³⁹
 - i) The rhetorical structure is seen in the “we know” statements. Three of the “we know” statements mark off three distinct thoughts.
 - d) Is there a theme sentence?
 - i) 1 John 5:13, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”
 - e) Are there any distinctive or unusual features?
 - i) No.
 - f) Are there any pivotal statements?²⁴⁰
 - i) The statements “we know” mark independent but connected thoughts (v.15, 18, 20)
- 2) Are there any theological judgments?²⁴¹
 - a) No.
- 3) What imperatives are in the text?²⁴²
 - a) 1 John 5:21, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”
- 4) How does God view this idea, event, or action? Is He pleased or displeased?²⁴³

²³⁹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153. See also, Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 214.

²⁴⁰Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 483.

²⁴¹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

²⁴²Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 41-42. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

²⁴³Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

- a) There are no explicit theological judgments in this passage.
- 5) Write out the authorial intention²⁴⁴ (purpose) of the passage for the original audience in one or two sentences.²⁴⁵
 - a) The purpose of this passage is to teach that true Christians have assurance when they pray according to God's will; assurance of divine protection from sin and Satan; and assurance of God's sovereign grace to know Him. These assurances are ultimate reasons for the command in v.21 to "keep yourselves from idols."

Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage

- 1) Are there any principles stated explicitly by the author in the passage?²⁴⁶
 - a) Each of the statements identified above are explicit principles of truth.
- 2) Why was this command or principle given?²⁴⁷
 - a) These principles were given to teach Christians about three assurances that only Christians possess. These three assurances provide a foundation for keeping away from idolatry.
- 3) If you believe there are principles that are explicit within the passage, are there any textual indications or reasons given for the author being explicit rather than abstract?
 - a) The author is writing very plainly and explicitly so as to leave no ambiguity in his meaning.
- 4) Are there any principles stated in the broader context of the passage?²⁴⁸
 - a) No.
- 5) Is this passage the record of a broad principle that is being applied specifically?²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 213-214.

²⁴⁵Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 293.

²⁴⁶Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

²⁴⁷Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

²⁴⁸Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

- a) No.
- 6) Is the author here drawing out an implication of the Ten Commandments?²⁵⁰
 - a) No.
- 7) Write out each of the principles the author was explicitly stating or implying about his main point of emphasis (purpose):
 - a) (vv.13-17) 1) The true Christian has assurance when they pray according to God's will.
 - b) (vv.18-19) 2) The true Christian has assurance of divine protection from sin and Satan.
 - c) (vv.20-21) 3) The true Christian has assurance of the sovereign grace of God to know Him.

Assess the Transferability

Assess the Transferability of a Principle

Identify the difference between content in a passage that is cultural or supracultural.²⁵¹

- 1) What is the relationship between the ethical command and the issue to which it is addressed?²⁵²
 - a) The doctrine here is not addressed to a particular cultural issue.
- 2) Is there anything in the immediate context of this passage that limits the application of the principle to the original audience?²⁵³

²⁴⁹Kaiser, "A Principilizing Model," 20-21. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

²⁵⁰Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

²⁵¹Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 426.

²⁵²*Ibid.*, 423. See also, Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 214.

²⁵³Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

- a) No.
- 3) Is there anything in the Bible that limits the application of this principle?²⁵⁴
 - a) No, except for these doctrines being applicable only to true Christians.
- 4) Was the biblical writer stating a normative command, or was he contextualizing a normative command to address a problem in the culture?²⁵⁵
 - a) The biblical writer was stating normative commands.
- 5) Is this command given addressing a specific situation?²⁵⁶ If not, it is likely already in a general, timeless format. If the command is addressing a specific situation, it must be determined what content within the command is culturally bound and what content is not culturally bound (supracultural).
 - a) The content of 1 John 5:13-21 is already in timeless and general format.
- 6) What are the differences between the original audience and the modern audience?²⁵⁷
 - a) There are many cultural differences between the original and modern audience, but those cultural differences do not limit the transferability of these principles because they were written in timeless format, not as an address to a particular situation.

A principle will almost always be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions:

- 1) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle similar to the modern audience?²⁵⁸
 - a) Yes.

²⁵⁴Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

²⁵⁵Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 423.

²⁵⁶Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 212.

²⁵⁷Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 42-43.

²⁵⁸Kaiser, “A Principilizing Model,” 21. See also Adams, *Truth Applied*, 48-49; and Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

- 2) Is this principle founded upon the work of God in Creation?²⁵⁹
 - a) No.
- 3) Is this principle founded upon the character of God?²⁶⁰
 - a) These principles are founded upon the work of God.
- 4) Is this principle founded upon the redemptive work of God?²⁶¹
 - a) These principles are founded upon the work of God on behalf of those He has already redeemed.
- 5) Is this principle founded upon the Ten Commandments?²⁶²
 - a) No.
- 6) Is the author relying on earlier biblical teaching in this principle?²⁶³
 - a) There are no earlier biblical references used in this passage. However, the content of 1 John appears in many places to be a compact discourse on the teachings of Christ recorded by the author in the Gospel of John.
- 7) Does the teaching transcend cultural biases in its original setting?²⁶⁴
 - a) Yes.
- 8) Is the command moral or theological?²⁶⁵
 - a) There is one imperative in this passage, and it is theological.

A principle will not be transferable to the modern audience if the answer is “Yes” to the following questions. If the answer is “Yes” to any of the following

²⁵⁹Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 297. See also, Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 422-423.

²⁶⁰Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 297-298.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*, 298.

²⁶²Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 156.

²⁶³Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 424.

²⁶⁴*Ibid.*

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 422-426.

questions, more work must be done to refine the format of the principle to arrive at the timeless truth. If the principle is clothed in supracultural content, the theology of the principle must be maintained, while the timeless elements are distilled for the purpose of preaching to the modern audience.²⁶⁶

- 9) Is the cultural expression of the timeless principle different from how it would be to a modern audience?²⁶⁷
 - a) No.
- 10) Is the principle wholly tied to a cultural expression?²⁶⁸
 - a) No. Nothing about the teaching in 1 John 5:13-21 is tied to a cultural expression.
- 11) Is the principle fulfilled on behalf of believers by the atoning work of Christ?
 - a) The principles are available to those who have been redeemed by the atoning work of Christ.
- 12) Write out each of the timeless principles the author was explicitly stating or implying to achieve his purpose:
 - i) The true Christian has assurance when they pray according to God's will.
 - ii) The true Christian has assurance of divine protection from sin and Satan.
 - iii) The true Christian has assurance of the sovereign grace of God to know Him.

Format

Genre-Specific Guidelines and Guiding Questions: Epistle

- 1) What specific situation(s) was this epistle written to address?
 - a) The Epistle of 1 John does not state an explicit situation that is being addressed in the letter. The content and early church testimony seems to

²⁶⁶Kaiser, "A Principlizing Model," 21.

²⁶⁷Ibid. See also, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 483.

²⁶⁸Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 425.

suggest that it was polemic against Gnosticism. What is explicitly stated in the epistle is that this letter was written so that Christians could know for sure that they are truly saved.

- 2) How did the author address the situation(s)?
- 3) What situation does this particular passage in the epistle address?
- 4) Does the author condemn, rebuke, or correct in any attitudes or actions?
 - a) The author does not condemn or rebuke any attitudes in this passage. The author does correct the action of praying for someone who sinning a sin unto death (v.16-17) and suggests not praying for such a person. John does not describe the *sin unto death* with any specificity.
- 5) Does the author praise, encourage, or command any attitudes or actions?
 - a) The author encourages praying according to God's will (vv.14-15).
 - b) The author encourages prayer on behalf on one not sinning a sin unto death (v.16).
 - c) The author implicitly is encouraging the hearts of his readers with these truths.
 - d) The author explicitly commands the readers to keep themselves from idols (v.21).
- 6) What doctrines does the author teach in this passage?
 - a) Christians should pray for those not sinning unto death.
 - b) Christians should not pray for those sinning unto death.
 - c) There is sin unto death.
 - d) Christian prayer is answered positively when it is according to God's will.
 - e) Everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning because God protects him.
 - f) It is God's gift of sovereign grace to give Christians understanding to know Him.
- 7) How does the author describe those doctrines?
 - a) The author states these doctrines explicitly.
- 8) In what ways are the recipients commanded to act in response to those doctrines?
 - a) The recipients are commanded to keep themselves from idols.
- 9) Does the author correct any false doctrines?
 - a) Not in this passage.
- 10) How does the author correct those false doctrines?
 - a) The author neither addresses nor corrects any false doctrines in this passage.

Format the Principled Statements for the Purpose of Preaching

The formatting of principled statements is crucial for the purpose of preaching. Formatting the principles as timeless statements is a vital step that must be accomplished with precision before practical application is made. These principles are sentences from which the main points of the sermon are to be built. A principle is a timeless statement of theological truth, and as such must not be fundamentally general in essence and not culturally bound in its format. If the principle is culturally bound, then it has not been fully principled. The following are guidelines for formatting principled statements of theological truth for the purpose of preaching:

- 1) State the principle in a complete sentence.²⁶⁹
- 2) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle remains the same in the present day, keep the principle as it is formatted in the passage.²⁷⁰
- 3) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle is different in the present day, state the principle generally before applying it specifically to the present-day analogous situation.²⁷¹
- 4) Remove all proper nouns except God.²⁷²
- 5) Replace past-tense verbs with present-tense verbs. Use future tense verbs only if the theology demands it.²⁷³

²⁶⁹Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

²⁷⁰Kaiser, "A Principled Model," 21.

²⁷¹*Ibid.*, See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

²⁷²Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. See also Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

- 6) Replace third person pronouns with first person plural or singular nouns.²⁷⁴
- 7) State the principle in a declarative or imperative form if at all possible and only if necessary an interrogative format.²⁷⁵
- 8) Format the principle to be applicational: addressing the thinking, attitudes, motivations, which must be brought into compliance with the truth of the passage of Scripture.²⁷⁶
- 9) Write out each the principles in the proper format:
 - a) As a child of God, you have assurance when you pray according to God's will.
 - b) As a child of God, you have assurance of divine protection from sin and Satan.
 - c) As a child of God, you have assurance of the sovereign grace of God to know Him.

Evaluate

Evaluate the Accuracy of a Principle

These principles are worded so as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text. These principles also articulate completely both the essence and extent of this preaching portion of Scripture.

²⁷³Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. Also see Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45.

²⁷⁴Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58. See also, Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

²⁷⁵Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

²⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 137.

Verify

Verify the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

- 1) Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?²⁷⁷
 - a) Yes, these principles are consistent with all of Scripture.
- 2) If this principle is an implication or extrapolation from the passage of Scripture, is it stated explicitly elsewhere in the Scripture?
 - a) These statements are principles not implications or extrapolations from the passage. These principles are not restated verbatim in Scripture, but Scripture supports them.
- 3) What verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?
 - a) As a child of God, you have assurance when you pray according to God's will.
 - i) This principle is given explicitly in v.14-15, "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him"
 - ii) 1 John 3:21-22, "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him."
 - iii) John 14:13-14, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."²⁷⁸
 - b) As a child of God, you have assurance of divine protection from sin and Satan.
 - i) John 17:12-15, "While I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given Me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world,

²⁷⁷Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45. See also, Strauss, "A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology," 296, and Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28.

²⁷⁸The use of this passage in a sermon would necessitate proving in the exposition that *asking something in the name of Jesus* is another way of saying, *according to my will*.

- just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one.”
- ii) John 6:39, “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day.”
- c) As a child of God, you have assurance of the sovereign grace of God to know Him.
- i) Matthew 11:25-27, “At that time Jesus declared, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them little children; yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”
 - ii) John 6:44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

Analyze

Analyzing Implications of Principles

The principles written above are not implications of the text, but rather are restatements of the truth within the text.

Review the Errors to Avoid in Principilizing

After arriving at the timeless principles and having reviewed the *errors to avoid in principilizing*, the principles listed above accurately articulate the authorial intent of the passage in both essence and extent.

Results

The following are the principles for preaching, along with the supporting texts. It is significant that these principles are arranged in congruence with the passage of Scripture; are in substance expressing both the essence and extent of the

passage of Scripture; and are supported by the analogy of Scripture. There is more work to be done to prepare this outline for preaching,²⁷⁹ but the structure, substance, and support are faithful to the text and the Bible as a whole:

- 1) 1 John 5:13-21—Three Assurances Only Christians Have
 - a) vv.13-17
 - i) Assurance #1: As a child of God, you have assurance when you pray according to God's will.
 - (1) This principle is given explicitly in v.14-15, "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him."
 - (2) 1 John 3:21-22, "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;²² and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him."
 - (3) John 14:13-14, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."
 - b) vv.18-19
 - i) Assurance #2: As a child of God, you have assurance of divine protection from sin and Satan.
 - (1) John 17:12-15, "While I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given Me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one."
 - (2) John 6:39, "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day."

²⁷⁹This outline still needs an introduction, transitional statements, exegetical explanation, illustrations, specific application, and conclusion.

c) vv.20-21

i) Assurance #3: As a child of God, you have assurance of the sovereign grace of God to know Him.

(1) Matthew 11:25-27, “At that time Jesus declared, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them little children; yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”

(2) John 6:44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

Prophecy and Apocalyptic – Revelation 13:11-18

The text under consideration here as a preaching portion of Scripture representative of the prophetic and apocalyptic genre of Scripture is Revelation 13:11-18:

¹¹Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹²It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. ¹⁶Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. ¹⁸This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

Context

In Revelation 12, the writer continues to reveal what he has been shown in his great vision of the end of all things. In Revelation 12 the writer is shown a great

dragon that is seeking to destroy the woman (representing Israel) and her child (representing Jesus). The dragon is identified in Revelation 12:9 as Satan, “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan.” Revelation 12 is a record of historical events told in symbolic fashion; a marked characteristic of Apocalyptic and Prophetic literature in the Bible. There are times when those symbols are not readily identifiable, but there are also times when the writer clarifies the meaning. The actions and intentions of Satan are identified in Revelation 12, where he is ultimately seen in the present-day, making war on the Church, the faithful followers of Jesus. In the concluding verse of Revelation 12, Satan is seen standing on the shore of the sea, appearing as it were as one summoning the coming of the first beast. The sea is identified in Revelation 13 as the place out of which a first beast arises. The appearance of the first beast is appalling and frightening, “with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear’s, and its mouth was like a lion’s mouth” (Rv 13:1a-2). The first beast has a terrible appearance and great authority (granted by Satan) and serves as the representative of Satan. The second beast is the subject of Revelation 13:11-18. The responsibility of the writer is to record what he is shown, and here he is shown the appearance and actions of the second beast. The second beast serves as a prophet for the first, “and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast” (Rv 13:12).

General Guidelines and Guiding Questions

In order to discern the principles for preaching within the passage, the general guidelines, guiding questions, and genre-specific insights for principization will be followed. The questions that are pertinent to this passage will be answered. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate this principization methodology and to provide genre-specific application of the methodology.

Identify

Identify the Purpose and Emphasis of the Passage

- 1) Exegete the passage of Scripture through a historical, geographical, cultural, literary, and grammatical hermeneutic.²⁸⁰
- 2) What is the biblical narrative, the emerging theology, leading up to this passage?²⁸¹
 - a) John, the writer of Revelation, is recording the vision granted to him of the things that he has seen, the things that are, and the things that are to come (Rv 1:19).
- 3) Where does this passage occur in the timeline of God's activity recorded in Scripture?
 - a) This records an event that has yet to occur, but will occur in the times of tribulation in the end of days.

²⁸⁰Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 221. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 42. Also, Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 212-213. The exegesis required to complete this principization process was done separately when the writer of this dissertation was preaching through The Book of Revelation at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland, TX. The exegesis was sound, but this writer was still working through the study of principization and thus the sermon was not a representative of principization. To view the sermon video see Jordan Rogers, "The Mark of the Beast, 666" (video), June 2016, https://youtu.be/5_rrFknxrMg.

²⁸¹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 162.

Identify the purpose of the passage of Scripture in relation to the book where it is found:

- 1) What is the purpose of this biblical book?²⁸²
 - a) The purpose of the Book of Revelation is to detail prophetically the events that will lead up to the revealing of the Lord Jesus to consummate His Kingdom on earth and to usher in the eternal kingdom of God in the New Heavens and the New Earth.
- 2) What was the setting to which this passage of Scripture was originally addressed?²⁸³
 - a) This passage was originally addressed to the churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 2-3), and intended for all of the churches who would receive it from them.
- 3) What are the major sections of the book and how does the author progress the main argument of the book through his flow of thought?²⁸⁴
 - a) The Book of Revelation is not a chronological recording of the end of days. There are portions that are chronological and others that are ideological. This portion of Revelation thematic in but contains chronological elements. The theme of Revelation 12-13 is the character, characteristics, and program of the Antichrist and his False Prophet.
- 4) Where does this passage occur in the flow of its respective book?²⁸⁵
 - a) This passage occurs after the churches have been addressed, the seven seals opened and the seven trumpets of judgment blown. This passage precedes a detailed description of God's special plan of redemption for the 144,000 whom He will redeem and the proclamation of the Gospel by the three angels in Revelation 14. The conclusion of Revelation 14 is a picture of devastating judgment followed by more judgment in Revelation 15-16.
- 5) What is the purpose of this passage within its respective book and the whole of Scripture?²⁸⁶

²⁸²Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

²⁸³Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

²⁸⁴Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 153.

²⁸⁵Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

- a) Within the context of Revelation, the purpose of the passage is clear: this passage is designed to prepare the people of God to be wise against the deceptions of Satan in the last day as they faithfully wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus.
- 6) What response was the author expecting of his original audience?²⁸⁷
 - a) The author is expecting the Christians who read this to be wise. He even says in conclusion, “This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666” (v.18).
- 7) What was the Holy Spirit’s purpose in inspiring the author to record this account?
 - a) The purpose of the Holy Spirit in inspiring John to write this account is to warn the people of God of the things to come so as to make them wise for obedience and endurance of their faith.
- 8) What would be lost if this passage were not included in Scripture?²⁸⁸
 - a) Without this passage of Scripture there would be far less information available about the character, characteristics, and program of the False Prophet. Less information for the people of God could provide greater success in the False Prophet’s works of deception.
- 9) What does this passage teach about God?²⁸⁹
 - a) The knowledge given to John in this passage reveals the sovereign control that God possesses over the future, the complete knowledge God possesses of the future, and the grace of God to reveal the future to His people.
- 10) What does this passage teach about the depravity of man?²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 294-295.

²⁸⁷Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 483. Also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

²⁸⁸Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 89-90.

²⁸⁹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 94-95. See also, Overdorf, *Applying the Sermon*, 140-143.

²⁹⁰Rowell, “The Heresy of Application,” 20-27.

- a) This passage teaches that man is prone to deception and will one day encounter a deception so great and a pressure to idolatry so great that without the gracious help of the omnipotent God, there would be no successful resistance.

Identify how the author has emphasized the purpose of the passage of Scripture:

- 11) Does the author use any of the following devices to direct the attention of the reader to his intended emphasis?
 - a) What are the stylistic elements?
 - i) Beyond the descriptive elements, there is an explicit *call for wisdom* in v.18, which marks off the desire of the writer that the reader be prepared to discern the evil that is to come.
 - b) Is there a theme sentence?
 - i) The theme sentence appears to be v.18.
- 12) Are there any theological judgments?²⁹¹
 - a) There are no explicit theological judgments given in this passage. The False Prophet is clearly pictured as wicked and deceptive as it promotes idol worship (v.12-14), commits murders (v.15), and causes suffering (vs.16-17).
- 13) What imperatives are in the text?²⁹²
 - a) The imperative is found in v.18, “Let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast...”
- 14) How does God view this idea, event, or action? Is He pleased or displeased?²⁹³
 - a) The actions of the False Prophet are clearly pictured in a condemning fashion.
- 15) Write out the authorial intention²⁹⁴ (purpose) of the passage for the original audience in one or two sentences.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 91-93. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

²⁹²Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 41-42. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

²⁹³Adams, *Truth Applied*, 54. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 293.

²⁹⁴Richard, “Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3,” 213-214.

- (1) The purpose of this passage is to prepare the people of God to endure faithfully through the great deceptions of the False Prophet. Knowing the abilities, intentions, and program of the False Prophet will prepare Christians to discern their times and walk faithfully with Christ through suffering.

Identify Explicit and Implicit Principles within the Passage

- 1) Are there any principles stated explicitly by the author in the passage?²⁹⁶
 - a) The only explicit principle in this passage is the imperative to be wise: “This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast...” (v.18).
- 2) Why was this command or principle given?²⁹⁷
 - a) This command/principle was given to make the intention of the passage clear: God wants His people to be wisely prepared to discern the lies of Satan and to continue to walk faithfully to the end.
- 3) Are there any principles stated in the broader context of the passage?²⁹⁸
 - a) There is a command to *have an ear to hear* (Rv 13:9) and also key statement made in Revelation 13:10, “Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.”
- 4) Is this passage the record of a broad principle that is being applied specifically?²⁹⁹
 - a) This passage is still calling for the “endurance and faith of the saints” (Rv 13:10) and the endurance and faith are being accomplished by a gift of prophetic knowledge of the future characteristics, intentions, and program of the False Prophet.

²⁹⁵Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 293.

²⁹⁶Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 224-227.

²⁹⁷Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 57-61.

²⁹⁸Kaiser and Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 276.

²⁹⁹Kaiser, “A Principlizing Model,” 20-21. See also, Kuhatschek, *Taking the Guesswork Out of Applying the Bible*, 33.

- 5) Write out each of the principles the author was explicitly stating or implying about his main point of emphasis (purpose):
- a) Christians will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when they understand the abilities of the deceiver.
 - b) Christians will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when they understand the intentions of the deceiver.
 - c) Christians will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when they understand the programs of the deceiver.

Assess the Transferability

Assess the Transferability of a Principle

Identify the difference between content in a passage that is cultural or supracultural.³⁰⁰

- 1) Is there anything in the immediate context of this passage that limits the application of the principle to the original audience?³⁰¹
- 2) Is there anything in the Bible that limits the application of this principle?³⁰²
 - a) No, there is nothing in the immediate or broader context of this passage that limits the application of these principles to the original audience. The events and characters spoken of are in the future. All Christians must be prepared for this and the passage makes that clear.
- 3) Is this command given addressing a specific situation?³⁰³
 - a) Yes, but the writer was addressing a future event and persons that have yet to be revealed. There are no cultural bonds on this passage or its principles.

³⁰⁰Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 426.

³⁰¹Fabarez, *Preaching That Changes Lives*, 44.

³⁰²Ibid.

³⁰³Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance, Part 3," 212.

- 4) What are the differences between the original audience and the modern audience?³⁰⁴
 - a) There are no differences between the original audience and the modern audience in regard to this specific passage since it is a future event.
- 5) Write out each of the timeless principles the author was explicitly stating or implying to achieve his purpose:
 - a) Christians will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when they understand the abilities of the deceiver.
 - b) Christians will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when they understand the intentions of the deceiver.
 - c) Christians will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when they understand the programs of the deceiver.

Genre-Specific Guidelines and Guiding Questions: Prophecy and Apocalyptic

- 1) Is this passage declaring a prophecy that has already been fulfilled?
 - a) No, the event being prophesied has not yet been fulfilled.
- 2) Is this passage declaring a prophecy that has yet to be fulfilled?
 - a) In the opinion of the writer of this dissertation, neither the False Prophet nor the Antichrist are revealed at the time of this dissertation.
- 3) What was the expected response of the author for his original readers?
 - a) The expected response of the author for his original readers is that they be made wise to discern their times and the schemes of the deceiver. This is for the purpose of strengthening their faith and building their endurance for these events.
- 4) What aspects of the future has the author revealed in this passage?
 - a) The author has revealed information about the False Prophet that is to come. The author has revealed his part in the plan of Satan and has described his abilities, intentions, and programs.
- 5) Why is the author revealing these things?
 - a) The author is revealing these things by the command of God for the purpose of strengthening the people of God to be wisely prepared to discern the lies of Satan and to continue to walk faithfully to the end.

³⁰⁴Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 42-43.

Format

Format the Principled Statements for the Purpose of Preaching:

- 1) State the principle in a complete sentence.³⁰⁵
- 2) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle remains the same in the present day, keep the principle as it is formatted in the passage.³⁰⁶
 - a) There is one imperative in the passage (v.18) and three principles contain the details of vv.11-18 which serve to accomplish the imperative of v.18.
- 3) If the cultural-historical expression of the principle is different in the present day, state the principle generally before applying it specifically to the present-day analogous situation.³⁰⁷
- 4) Remove all proper nouns except God.³⁰⁸
 - a) The proper noun, “False Prophet” is not included in these three principles because the False Prophet is a part of the plan of Satan, who is the deceiver. Also, the proper noun, “False Prophet” is not in the passage and is only revealed by later revelation (Rv 16:13, 19:20, 20:10).
- 5) Replace past-tense verbs with present-tense verbs. Use future tense verbs only if the theology demands it.³⁰⁹
 - a) The future-tense verb “will be strengthened” is used because the theology demands it.
- 6) Replace third person pronouns with first person plural or singular nouns.³¹⁰

³⁰⁵Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 45.

³⁰⁶Kaiser, “A Principled Model,” 21.

³⁰⁷Kaiser, “A Principled Model,” 21. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45.

³⁰⁸Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. See also Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 137.

³⁰⁹Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 156-157. Also see Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136. See also, Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, 45.

³¹⁰Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, 57-58. See also, Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 157.

- a) “Christians” and “they” will be replaced with “You” for the purpose of preaching, but it should be made clear that the Lord provided this information in order to prepare Christians. The unbelieving person must first be reconciled to God through faith in the Lord Jesus.
- 7) State the principle in a declarative or imperative form if at all possible and only if necessary an interrogative format.³¹¹
- 8) Format the principle to be applicational: addressing the thinking, attitudes, motivations, which must be brought into compliance with the truth of the passage of Scripture.³¹²
- 9) Write out each principle in the proper format:
- a) You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the abilities of the deceiver.
- i) v.11-12, “had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence”
 - ii) v.13, “It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people”
 - iii) v.15, “It was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak”
- b) You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the intentions of the deceiver.
- (1) v.12, “makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.”
 - (2) v.14, “by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived”
 - (3) v.18, “This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.”
- c) You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the programs of the deceiver.
- (1) v.15, “might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.”

³¹¹Awbrey, *How Effective Sermons Advance*, 136.

³¹²*Ibid.*, 137.

- (2) v.16-17, “it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.”

Evaluate

Evaluate the Accuracy of a Principle

These principles are worded so as to preserve the abiding, permanent, and fixed teaching of the text. These principles also articulate completely both the essence and extent of this preaching portion of Scripture.

Verify

Verify the Theological Legitimacy of a Principle

- 1) Is this principle consistent with all of Scripture?³¹³
 - a) Yes, each of these principles is consistent with all of Scripture.
- 2) What verses of Scripture can be used in support of this principle?
- 3) Write out the principles, this time including supporting text references.
 - a) Understanding #1: You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the abilities of the deceiver.
 - i) Biblical writers reveal that Satan is able to:
 - (1) Deceive: Genesis 3:4-5, 2 Corinthians 11:3, Revelation 20:3
 - (2) Steal the truth from potential believers: Matthew 13:19
 - (3) Tempt: Matthew 4:1-11, Acts 5:3, 1 Corinthians 7:5, 1 Thessalonians 3:5
 - (4) Inflict pain: Job 2:4-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7
 - (5) Perform miracles: Exodus 7:11-12, Matthew 24:24, Mark 13:13-14, Revelation 19:20
 - (6) Masquerade as an angel of light: 2 Corinthians 11:4

³¹³Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 45. See also, Strauss, “A Reflection on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology,” 296; and Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28.

- b) Understanding #2: You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the intentions of the deceiver.
 - i) Throughout Scripture, the writers reveal the intentions of Satan.
 - (1) 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
 - (2) John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
 - (3) John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly.”
- c) Understanding #3: You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the programs of the deceiver.
 - i) Ephesians 6:10-11, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
 - ii) 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, “Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

Analyze

The principles derived from Revelation 13:11 are straightforward principles, not implications of the passage. The generalizations of *abilities*, *intentions*, and *programs* are categories into which the text can be divided for the purpose of preaching. These “Errors to Avoid in Principizing” were also reviewed thoroughly and the three principles have passed those tests.

Results

The following are the principles for preaching, along with the supporting texts. It is significant that these principles are arranged in congruence with the passage of Scripture; are in substance expressing both the essence and extent of the passage of

Scripture; and are supported by the analogy of Scripture. There is more work to be done to prepare this outline for preaching, but the structure, substance, and support are faithful to the text and the Bible as a whole:

1) Revelation 13:11-17—Three Understandings to Build You Up for Faithful Endurance

a) (v.11-12, 13, 15)

i) Understanding #1: You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the abilities of the deceiver.

(1) Biblical writers reveal that Satan is able to:

- (a) Deceive: Genesis 3:4-5, 2 Corinthians 11:3, Revelation 20:3
- (b) Steal the truth from potential believers: Matthew 13:19
- (c) Tempt: Matthew 4:1-11, Acts 5:3, 1 Corinthians 7:5, 1 Thessalonians 3:5
- (d) Inflict pain: Job 2:4-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7
- (e) Perform miracles: Exodus 7:11-12, Matthew 24:24, Mark 13:13-14, Revelation 19:20
- (f) Masquerade as an angel of light: 2 Corinthians 11:4

b) (v.12, 14, 18)

i) Understanding #2: You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the intentions of the deceiver.

(1) Throughout Scripture, the writers reveal the intentions of Satan.

- (a) 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- (b) John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
- (c) John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly.”

2) (v.15-17)

a) Understanding #3: You will be strengthened to endure faithfully with Christ when you understand the programs of the deceiver.

- i) Ephesians 6:10-11, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”

- ii) 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, “Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

Conclusion

Chapter 1 of this dissertation was a presentation of the biblical justification for developing a methodology for deriving principled truth from Scripture that is accurate hermeneutically and beneficial for the purpose of preaching. Chapter 2 was a survey of literature and contributions relevant to the development of a more complete methodology of principization. In Chapter 3, the contributions relevant to a more complete methodology of principization were evaluated interactively in order to yield their beneficial elements. In Chapter 4, the contributions were analyzed, synthesized, and supplemented with original contributions into a singular methodology of principization. The final product presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation is the most complete methodology for principization to the time of writing this dissertation. In Chapter 5 this methodology was fully applied to a preaching portion of Scripture from each major genre in Scripture. This dissertation successfully accomplished the objective of formulating a more complete methodology of principization than was available at the time of writing.

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