

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs

Setting the Table:

Preparing to Dig into God's Word

Joshua 1:1–9

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STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

There is no substitute for thorough preparation, regardless of the task. Whether you're adding a deck onto the back of your home, planning to make a cross-country trek with four children and the family dog, or leading a group of short-term missionaries to the Congo, preparation is key to ensuring the best result.

The same is true in searching the Scriptures with the view of preparing a spiritual meal for those who need it. In preaching, for instance, this valuable process in preparing a sermon is called *exposition*—an essential approach to digging into God's Word with the purpose of sharing its truths with others.

HELPFUL HINT: For this study you will need a Bible atlas or study Bible with maps of the Old Testament and a Bible dictionary!



Whetting Your Appetite: Getting Started

Let's begin by looking closely at a definition of *exposition*.

Exposition is the process of learning and explaining the meaning and purpose of a given biblical text. This might happen in a sermon, in a classroom or small group setting, or anywhere people are gathered to read, receive, and apply principles from the Scriptures.

Exposition occurs when

- the biblical text is carefully observed, clearly understood, and interestingly explained;
- the text remains the central focus of attention throughout the delivery of a message;
- the text is illustrated and applied in keeping with today's real-world needs.

Quotable

*God has
written His will in
His Word, and
the keener you are
in the study and
preparation of
His Word, the better
equipped you will
be in teaching it
to others.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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An Example from Biblical History

One of God's requirements for spiritual leadership of His people is that the leader be a student of the Word of God—not only committed to digging deeply in studying the Scriptures but exemplifying a life of full surrender and devotion to its commands and counsel.

Joshua—Moses' successor—was such a qualified leader. But early on, after Moses' death, he must have stepped into this role of leading Israel with certain trepidation and perhaps even anxiety.

The Lord must have known Joshua would require some encouragement in his new post when He spoke these words:

“Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving to them. I promise you what I promised Moses: ‘Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you—from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.’ No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.” (Joshua 1:2–5)

God's promise to Joshua included a detailed description of the boundaries of the land. Find a map of the topography of Palestine either in the back of your study Bible or in a Bible atlas. Take some time to locate each of the places and divisions God mentions to Joshua: *Jordan River*, the *Negev wilderness*, the *Lebanon mountains*, the *Euphrates River*, the *Mediterranean Sea*. Now find your Bible dictionary and look up each area or body of water mentioned, and read the description of each.

What are some of your observations?

What are some things you learned for the first time about the boundaries of the Promised Land?



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Describe the varying types of terrain represented in each of these areas of the land. Why would terrain be significant?

Look up the word *Hittites* in your Bible dictionary. Where were they located? What kind of people were they? Why would they have been significant to mention here?

Now take some time to think about how you might illustrate, explain, and teach through the geography of the land as it is described in Joshua 1:2–4. Imagine your audience and how you would specifically communicate what you have discovered. Write down some notes below.

By the way, make your lesson personal by first thinking through how Joshua may have felt as he contemplated filling Moses' sandals. What emotions might he have been feeling? Think through how you would feel if you had to follow a leader of such immense reputation and remarkable stature. Share a story below of a time when you felt intimidated about a role you may have not felt fully prepared to fill.



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YOUR TURN IN THE KITCHEN

Preparing to teach or preach through a biblical passage is much the same as setting the table on which to serve a delicious meal. But before you serve the meal you have prepared, you must first taste it for yourself to make certain everything is right. Serving spiritual meals is the same. First, we need to apply to our own lives what we have discovered and learned from the Scriptures before serving those truths to others. The following few exercises can serve as a “taste test” of sorts to make certain you are on the right track.

1. At the end of the last message, we worked on applying Ephesians 4:17–32. Now it's time to get ready to present what you learned. Think of a person or group you might be able to teach these truths to. Perhaps it's a Sunday school class, your small-group Bible study, or a youth group. Once you've identified your audience, plan how you will present the truths in Ephesians 4:17–32 in a way that is engaging and helpful.

Here are some questions to consider:

What can you do to help your students see the observations you made in the text?

What needs to be explained so they will understand the meaning of the verses? (NOTE: This would be a good time to consult a commentary on Ephesians for some important insights.)

What other passages should you highlight to show the correlation between Paul's commands and other Scripture passages? Would it be helpful to use an additional Bible version or a paraphrase?

What are three or four specific applications that would be most helpful for those you are teaching? Remember: Be as specific and relevant as possible.

Take your time as you prepare the lesson you will present to your audience. Your listeners will benefit when you patiently yet confidently lead them through the passage and present the truths you have discovered.



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2. Now go back through one of the other passages we have studied so far in this series, and go through the same steps outlined above. You can use Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus in John 3, Paul's charge to the church at Philippi in Philippians 4:4–9, or Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37. Be sure to have an audience in mind to whom you will make your presentation.

Prepare whichever passage you choose by going through the questions. Press on with enthusiasm and great anticipation. Add color to your talk by consulting Bible dictionaries and commentaries that provide helpful and often unknown details about the people in the stories and the cultures in which they lived.

Remember: God's promise (as He made to Joshua) is that He will never leave you or forsake you. So take courage! You're going to be great at this!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I am humbled to know that You would use me and the insights You have taught me from the Scriptures to prepare a spiritually nourishing meal for others. Thank You for the privilege and the joy of serving You. Enable me through Your Holy Spirit to discover wonderful lessons for my own life that can also be shared with those You've called me to teach. I pray this in the name of Your Son, my Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.



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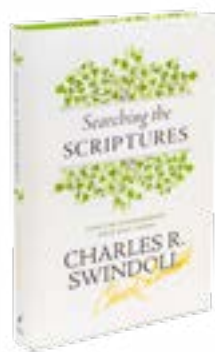
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When the book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* was written, the format for this STS study was developed by Charles R. Swindoll and Rhome van Dyck and published at the end of Chapter Three under the title “Your Turn in the Kitchen.” For the 2016 broadcast, this STS study was expanded with additional material by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Charles R. Swindoll based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts.



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