

Section 6: THE GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL METHOD: Examining the Grammatical Context

I. The Importance of Grammatical Analysis

- A. The necessity of analyzing the grammar of a passage begins with the observation that God, in setting forth the revelation his of Word, chose to reveal truth through existing human languages.

Roy Zuck: “Each biblical writing – that is, each word, sentence, and book – was recorded in a written language and followed normal, grammatical meanings.”

- B. Waymeyer: “In order to determine the divinely intended meaning of Scripture, the interpreter must be careful to analyze the grammar of any given passage according to the normal grammatical use of that language at the time the passage was written.”

KEY QUALIFICATION: Your grammatical analysis of an English translation might eventually be replaced by your grammatical analysis of the text in its original language. For this reason, much of this section is provisional and should be used until you study Greek and Hebrew. If the student does not learn those languages, the material in this lesson will serve as an adequate foundation for future study.

II. The Process of Grammatical Analysis

3 Steps:

1. Analyze the Grammar of the Passage
2. Diagram the Structure of the Passage
3. Outline the Flow of the Passage

¹ Notes compiled from The Master’s Seminary and Matt Waymeyer Hermeneutics course, *Grasping God’s Word* (Duvall and Hays), and *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Roy Zuck).

A. Step 1: Analyze the Grammar of the Passage

Waymeyer: “Analyzing the grammar of a given passage of Scripture involves recognizing the various parts of speech and understanding the role they play in the structure of the text. In addition, it is also necessary to understand the relationships of various phrases and clauses, as well as the contribution that each of them make to an accurate interpretation of the author’s intent.”

Parts of Speech

1. Nouns

A noun is a person, place, thing, or abstract concept. To understand the significance of the nouns in the passage under consideration, one must identify them and determine how they are functioning in the passage. There are several possibilities:

- **Subject**
 - “God so loved the world” (John 3:16)
 - “And [you] be kind to one another” (Eph 5:32)
- **Direct Object**
 - “God so loved the *world*” (John 3:16)
 - “He took along some *soldiers* and *centurions*” (Acts 21:32)
- **Indirect Object**
 - “He would have given *you* living water” (John 4:10)
 - “He had given *them* a signal” (Mark 14:44)
- **Object of a Preposition**
 - “Rejoice in the *Lord*” (Phil 4:4)
 - “Speak the things which are fitting for sound *doctrine*” (Titus 2:1)
- **Predicate Nominative**
 - “God is *spirit*” (John 4:24)
 - “Abraham is our *father*” (John 8:39)
- **Appositive**
 - “Paul, an *apostle* of Christ Jesus” (2 Cor 1:1)
 - “in whom we have redemption, the *forgiveness* of sins” (Col 1:14)

- **Vocative**
 - “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘*Lord, Lord*’” (Matt 7:22)
 - “*Teacher*, tell my brother to divide the inheritance” (Luke 12:13)

2. Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that serves as a substitute for a noun which occurs elsewhere in the context, usually just prior to the pronoun. There are several different types of pronouns:

- **Personal Pronouns**
 - “For *I* give *you* sound teaching” (Prov 4:2)
 - “So *they* will be life to your soul” (Prov 3:22)
- **Possessive Pronouns**
 - “All a man’s labor is for *his* mouth” (Eccl 6:7)
 - “They direct *their* desire toward their iniquity” (Hosea 4:8)
- **Reflexive Pronouns**
 - “Let him deny *himself*” (Mark 8:34)
 - “Consider *yourselves* to be dead to sin” (Rom 6:11)
- **Intensive Pronouns**
 - “They *themselves* report about us” (1 Thess 1:9)
 - “The Spirit *Himself* intercedes for us” (Rom 8:26)
- **Demonstrative Pronouns**
 - “*This* is the word which was preached to you” (1 Pet 1:25)
 - “*Those* who desire to make a good showing in the flesh” (Gal 6:12)
- **Relative Pronouns**
 - “Jesus Christ the Nazarene, *whom* you crucified” (Acts 4:10)
 - “the Holy Spirit of promise, *who* is given as a pledge” (Eph 1:14)

KEY STEP: Identifying the antecedent of every pronoun in the passage under consideration.

Exercise:

Read Ephesians 1:3-14 below and identify the antecedent of each pronoun by writing the appropriate number inside the brackets provided: 1 = God the Father; 2 = Jesus Christ; 3 = the Holy Spirit; and 4 = believers.

Blessed be the God and Father of our [] Lord Jesus Christ, who [] has blessed us [] with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He [] chose us [] in Him [] before the foundation of the world, that we [] should be holy and blameless before Him []. In love He [] predestined us [] to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself [], according to the kind intention of His [] will, to the praise of the glory of His [] grace, which He [] freely bestowed on us [] in the Beloved. In Him [] we [] have redemption through His [] blood, the forgiveness of our [] trespasses, according to the riches of His [] grace, which He [] lavished upon us []. In all wisdom and insight He [] made known to us [] the mystery of His [] will, according to His [] kind intention which He [] purposed in Him [] with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him [] also we [] have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His [] purpose who works all things after the counsel of His [] will, to the end that we [] who [] were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His [] glory. In Him [], you [] also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your [] salvation—having also believed, you [] were sealed in Him [] with the Holy Spirit of promise, who [] is given as a pledge of our [] inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His [] glory.

3. Verbs

A verb is a word that describes an action or state of being. Analyzing the grammatical significance of a given verb involves understanding its tense, mood, and voice.

▪ **The Tense of the Verb**

Waymeyer: “Verb tense in particular is an area that is better left to an analysis of the text in its original language. At the same time, even prior to studying Greek and Hebrew, the interpreter can begin to observe verb tenses in the English translation, especially when there is a contrast in tenses between two verbs in the same context.”

Example:

- “I *have made* [past tense] Your name known to them and *will make* [future tense] it known” (John 17:26)

QUESTION: What is the significance of the change in verb tense?

- **The Mood of the Verb**

The verb mood indicates a state of being or reality.

- **The Indicative Mood** (states a fact)
 - “God so *loved* the world” (John 3:16)
 - “I *thank* my God in all my remembrance of you” (Phil 1:3)
- **The Imperative Mood** (expresses a command)
 - “*Abhor* what is evil; *cling* to what is good” (Rom 12:9)
 - “*Bless* those who persecute you” (Rom 12:14)

PRIMARY INDICATIVE / IMPERATIVE PATTERNS

Waymeyer: “As the interpreter identifies the mood of the verbs in a given passage, it is extremely helpful to note the relationship between the indicative and imperative.”

a. **Indicative THEREFORE Imperative**

1 Corinthians 6:20: “You have been bought [states a fact/indicative] with a price: *therefore* glorify [command/imperative, in light of the fact/indicative] God in your body.”

1 Peter 4:7: “The end of all things is near [fact]; *therefore*, be of sound judgment [command/imperative, in light of the fact/indicative].”

Hebrews 4:15-16: “We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. *Therefore* let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Ephesians 4:1: “*Therefore* I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.”

Romans 12:1: “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice.”

b. Imperative FOR Indicative

Hebrews 10:23: “Let us hold fast [command/imperative] the confession of our hope without wavering, *for* He who promised is faithful [fact/indicative].”

Galatians 6:9: “Let us not lose heart in doing good, *for* in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”

Philippians 2:12b-13: “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; *for* it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

1 John 4:7: “Beloved, let us love one another, *for* love is from God”

1 Peter 1:16b: “You shall be holy, *for* I am holy.”

c. Imperative SINCE Indicative

Colossians 3:9: “Do not lie to one another, *since* you laid aside the old self with its evil practices”

d. SINCE Indicative Imperative

1 Thessalonians 5:8: “*Since* we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

Hebrews 4:14: “*Since* we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”

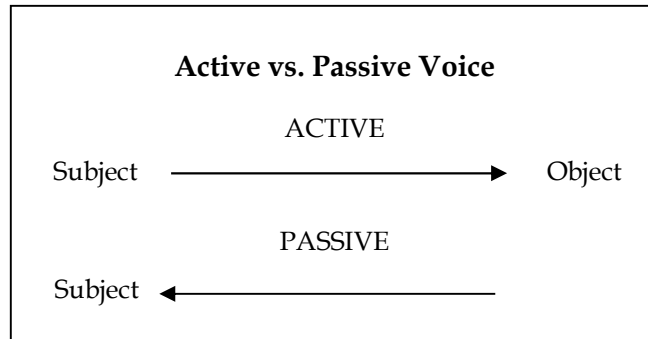
▪ **The Voice of the Verb**

Describes the relationship between the action (or state) that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments (subject, object, etc.).

➤ **The Active Voice**

- “They *exchanged* the truth of God for a lie” (Rom 1:25)
- “I *will vindicate* the holiness of My great name” (Ezek 36:23)

- **The Passive Voice**
 - “All Israel *will be saved*” (Rom 11:26)
 - “The promises *were spoken* to Abraham” (Gal 3:16)



4. Adjectives

An adjective is a word that describes a noun by ascribing a certain quality or qualities to it. It generally answers one of the following questions about the noun it modifies: *Which one? What kind? How many? How much?* There are four different types of adjectives:

- **Articles**
 - “Hear, O sons, *the* instruction of a father” (Prov 4:1)
(definite)
 - “Hear, O sons, the instruction of *a* father” (Prov 4:1)
(indefinite)
- **Demonstrative Adjectives**
 - “*this* Man...you nailed to a cross” (Acts 2:23)
 - “the least of *these* commandments” (Matt 5:19)

	Near	Far
Singular	<i>this</i>	<i>that</i>
Plural	<i>these</i>	<i>those</i>

- **Possessive Adjectives**
 - “take the log out of *your* own eye” (Luke 6:42)
 - “He promised beforehand through *His* prophets” (Luke 12:42)

- **Descriptive Adjectives**
 - “A *worthless* man digs up evil” (Prov 16:27)
 - “His words are like *scorching* fire” (Prov 16:27)

5. Adverbs

An adverb is a word that describes a verb, adjective, or another adverb:

- “The Spirit *explicitly* says that some will fall away” (1 Tim 4:1)
- “It is a *very* small thing that I should be examined by you” (1 Cor 4:3)

6. Prepositions

A preposition is a connective word that shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun (known as the object of the preposition) to some other word in the sentence. A prepositional phrase consists of the preposition, the object of the preposition, and any words that may modify that object.

EXAMPLE: “The Light has come into the world” (John 3:19)

- Preposition: “into”
- Object of Preposition: “world”
- Prepositional Phrase: “into the world”

Gordon Fee: “[T]here are times when the force of the prepositional phrases makes a considerable difference in the meaning of a whole sentence.”

For this reason, it is essential to identify prepositional phrases and to understand the contribution they make to the meaning of the passage under consideration.

7. Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word or group of words that connects or joins together two or more words, phrases, or clauses. In some cases, a conjunction connects even larger blocks of material, such as paragraphs. In functioning as a connector, a conjunction establishes a relationship between the two or more elements it joins together.

Robert Thomas: “It is impossible to follow an author’s logic without paying close attention to the conjunctions he uses. There is a sense in which conjunctions constitute the skeleton on which the meaning of the New Testament hangs. The meaning assigned to each statement to some degree grows out of the connective word used to introduce it.”

Three-Step Process:

1. Locate the Conjunction
2. Identify the Connected Elements
3. Determine the Nature of the Connection

POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS:

In determining the nature of the connection that a given conjunction establishes between the two elements it joins together, it is helpful to be aware of some of the more common possibilities:

- **Simple Connection** (*and*)
 - “They will kill Him, *and* He will be raised” (Matt 17:23)
 - “I am the true vine, *and* My Father is the vinedresser” (John 15:1-2)
- **Contrast** (*but, rather, however*)
 - “I did not come to bring peace, *but* a sword” (Matt 10:34)
 - “You did not choose Me, *but* I chose you” (John 15:16)
- **Disjunction** (*or*)
 - “that I came to abolish the Law *or* the Prophets” (Matt 5:17)
 - “But do not let immorality *or* any impurity *or* greed” (Eph 5:3)
- **Further Explanation** (*for*)
 - “*For* just as Jonah was three days...” (Matt 12:40)
 - “*For* I came to set a man against...” (Matt 10:35)
- **Inference / Conclusion** (*then, therefore, wherefore*)
 - “The end...is at hand; *therefore*, be of sound judgment ” (1 Pet 4:7)
 - “You were bought with a price: *therefore* glorify God” (1 Cor 6:20)

- **Transition** (*now, then*)
 - “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows” (Matt 1:18)
 - “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast” (John 7:37)
- **Cause/Reason** (*for, because, since*)
 - “You shall be holy, *for* I am holy” (1 Pet 1:16)
 - “He gave Him authority...*because* He is the Son of Man” (Jn 5:27)
- **Comparison** (*as, just as, thus*)
 - “forgiving each other, *just as* God...has forgiven you” (Eph 4:32)
 - “Be imitators of me, *just as* I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1)
- **Condition** (*if, if...then*)
 - “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law” (Gal 5:18)
 - “We shall reap *if* we do not grow weary” (Gal 6:9)
- **Result** (*that, so that, and*)
 - “God so loved the world *that* He gave” (John 3:16)
 - “Who sinned...*that* [this man] should be born blind?” (John 9:2)
- **Purpose** (*that, so that, in order that*)
 - “They were watching *so that* they might put him to death” (Acts 9:24)
 - “Be submissive to your husbands *so that* they may be won” (1 Pt 3:1)
- **Time** (*before, after, when, whenever, since, as, while, until*)
 - “God...*when* we were dead...made us alive” (Eph 2:4-5)
 - “*when* evening came, *after* the sun had set, they began” (Mk 1:32)
- **Content** (*that*)
 - “I testify *that* he is under obligation to keep the Law” (Gal 5:3)
 - “I delivered to you...what I received, *that* Christ died” (1 Cor 15:3)

- **Concession** (*though, even though, although*)
 - “*Even though* they knew God, they did not honor Him” (Rom 1:21)
 - “*Although* He was a Son, He learned obedience” (Heb 5:8)

NOTE: See “Appendix 6: Practice with Conjunctions.”

Phrases

A phrase is a group of words that function together but do not contain a subject and a verb. There are three kinds of phrases: prepositional phrases, participle phrases, and infinitive phrases:

1. **Prepositional Phrases**

A prepositional phrase consists of the preposition, the object of the preposition, and any words that modify that object. To understand the significance of prepositional phrases in the passage under consideration, the interpreter must locate each prepositional phrase, identify which word is being *modified* by the prepositional phrase, and determine the contribution the prepositional phrase makes to the meaning of the verse.

Three-Step Process:

1. Locate the Prepositional Phrase
2. Identify the Word Modified by the Phrase
3. Determine the Contribution of the Phrase

EXAMPLE: Ephesians 3:16: “that He would grant you...to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man”

- **Step 1: Locate the Prepositional Phrase(s)**
 - “with power”
 - “through His Spirit”
 - “in the inner man”
- **Step 2: Identify the Word(s) Modified by the Phrases**

These three prepositional phrases are all parallel to one another in that each of them modify the infinitive “to be strengthened”

in Paul's prayer. A mini block diagram of this verse provides a picture of this parallelism:

that He would grant you to be strengthened
with power
through His Spirit
in the inner man

- **Step 3: Determine the Contribution of the Phrase(s)**
 - "with power" – indicates the *means* by which Paul prays the Ephesians would be strengthened
 - "through His Spirit" – indicates the *personal agent* who Paul prays will strengthen the Ephesians
 - "in the inner man" – indicates the *realm* in which Paul prays they will be strengthened

Summary:

Paul's Request: that He would grant you to be strengthened

Means: with power

Agent: through His Spirit

Realm: in the inner man

- What is Paul prayer for the Ephesians?
That God would grant them to be strengthened
- What is to be the means of this strengthening?
The power of God
- Who specifically is to be the One to bring this power to believers to strengthen them?
The Holy Spirit
- In what realm is this strengthening to take place?
In the inner man (as opposed to the outer, physical man)

NOTE: See “Appendix 7: Practice with Prepositional Phrases.”

2. Participle Phrases

A participle is a verb form that functions either as an adjective or as a noun (although participles functioning as nouns are usually referred to as *gerunds*). Participles often end in either “-ing” (the present participle) or in “-d” or “-ed” (the past participle). The entire participle phrase consists of the participle itself plus any modifiers or complements.

- **Participles Functioning as Nouns (Gerunds):**
 - “The *wishing* is present...the *doing* of the good is not” (Rom 7:18)
 - “There is...a time to shun *embracing*” (Eccl 3:1, 5)
- **Participles Functioning as Adjectives:**
 - “He would have given you *living* water” (John 4:10)
 - “They kissed him, *grieving* over the word he had spoken” (Ac 20:37)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARTICIPLES:

- **Philippians 2:7:** “Jesus...emptied Himself, *taking* the form of a bond-servant, and *being made* in the likeness of men.”
 - Subject: “Jesus”
 - Main Verb: “emptied”
 - Direct Object: “Himself”
 - Participles: “taking” and “being made”
 - Pct Phrases: “taking the form of a bond-servant”
“being made in the likeness of men”

Significance: Indicates the *means* by which Jesus emptied Himself in Philippians 2:7

Question: *How did Jesus empty Himself?*

- “[by] taking the form of a bond-servant”
- “[by] being made in the likeness of men”

- **James 1:2-3:** “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance”

- Subject: “[You]”
- Main Clause: “Consider it all joy”
- Participle: “knowing”
- Pct Phrase: “knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance”

Significance: Indicates the *reason* that James’ readers should consider trials a reason to rejoice

Question: *Why should you consider it all joy?*

“[because you know] that the testing of your faith produces endurance”

3. Infinitive Phrases

An infinitive is a verb form which consists of the word “to” plus a verb (e.g., “to believe,” “to walk,” “to write”) and which functions as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. The entire infinitive phrase consists of the infinitive itself plus the object of the infinitive and/or any words or phrases that may modify the infinitive.

- **Used as a Noun**

- “*To live* is Christ, and *to die* is gain” (Phil 1:12)
- “My food is *to do* the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34)
- “Owe nothing to anyone except *to love* one another” (Rom 13:8)

- **Used as an Adjective**

- “I have need *to be baptized by you*” (Matt 3:14)
- “There is...a time *to give birth*, and a time *to die*” (Eccl 3:1-2)

- **Used as an Adverb (indicates purpose)**

- “God raised up His Servant, and sent Him *to bless you*” (Acts 3:26)
- “They led Him away *to crucify Him*” (Matt 27:31)

- **Used to Complete the Idea of a Preceding Verb**

- “But I do not allow a woman *to teach*” (1 Tim 2:12)

- “His disciples began *to pick* the heads of grain and eat” (Matt 12:1)

Clauses

A clause is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb. There are two main types of clauses – independent clauses and dependent clauses.

- Independent Clause: is able to stand alone and make sense by itself
(it is independent)
- Dependent Clause: is *not* able to stand alone and make sense by itself
(it is *dependent* on another clause)

1. Independent Clauses

An independent clause is a group of words which contains a subject and a verb and which is able to stand alone and make sense by itself. An independent clause is often referred to as a main clause because it is not grammatically subordinate to another clause. There is always at least one independent/main clause in each sentence. Locating the independent clauses in a given passage is one of the first priorities of the interpreter, because these main clauses contain the focal point of the sentences in which they occur.

Identify all the independent clauses in Romans 5:1-5:

(1) Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; (4) and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; (5) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

- Main Clause #1: _____

- Main Clause #2: _____
- Main Clause #3: _____
- Main Clause #4: _____

Waymeyer: “Eventually, the interpreter should be able to pick the main clause in each sentence as quickly as he is able to read the sentence itself. To do so, he needs to cultivate the habit of temporarily pushing everything else aside in his mind and zeroing in on the main clause.”

2. Dependent Clauses

A dependent clause is a group of words which contains a subject and a verb, but which cannot stand on its own because it is dependent on another clause. For example, notice how the following clauses cannot stand on their own and make sense by themselves: “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts” (Eph 3:17); “with which you have been called” (Eph 4:1); “if indeed you have heard Him” (Eph 4:21).

Because a dependent clause cannot stand on its own, it is said to be dependent upon – or subordinate to – another clause. There are three different kinds of dependent clauses – noun clauses, adjective clauses, and adverb clauses.

Three Types:

1. Noun Clauses
2. Adjective Clauses
3. Adverb Clauses

Once the interpreter has concluded that a group of words is indeed a dependent clause, the next step is to ask how the clause is functioning in the sentence – as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. It will always be one of the three.

- **The Noun Clause**
 - “*Whatever is not from faith is sin*” (Rom 14:23)
 - “*that you may prove what the will of God is*” (Rom 12:2)
- **The Adjective Clause** [modifies the noun in the ind. clause]

- “Christ Jesus, *who gave Himself for us*” (Titus 2:13-14)
- “His might *which He brought about in Christ*” (Eph 1:19-20)
- “*he who loves his neighbor* has fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8)

- **The Adverb Clause** [modifies the action in the ind. clause]
 - “He gave Himself for us, *that He might redeem us*” (Titus 2:14)
 - “*When they heard of the resurrection*, some began to sneer” (Acts 17:32)

NOTE: Waymeyer: “Most adverb clauses are introduced by a conjunction which connects the adverb clause to the clause upon which it is dependent.”

CLAUSE ANALYSIS:

Waymeyer: “One of the most important aspects of grammatical analysis is the process of discerning the relationship of the various clauses to one another. This allows the interpreter to follow the biblical author’s flow of thought and to see how one part of the verse/passage relates to the next. This type of clause analysis goes hand in hand with diagrammatical analysis.” (see below)

Four-Step Process

1. Locate the Clauses
2. Categorize the Clauses
3. Determine the Relationships of the Clauses
4. Block Diagram the Relationships of the Clauses

1. Clause Analysis of John 3:16:

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

- **Locate the Clauses** [What’s the indep. clause?]
 - Clause #1: God so loved the world
 - Clause #2: that He gave His only begotten Son
 - Clause #3: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life

- **Categorize the Clauses**

- Clause #1: Main Clause
- Clause #2: Dep. Clause - adverb
- Clause #3: dep. Clause - adverb

- **Determine the Relationships of the Clauses**

“God so loved the world, *that* [indicates result] He gave His only begotten Son, *that* [indicates purpose] whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

- **Block Diagram the Relationships of the Clauses**

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| (1) Main Clause: | God so loved the world |
| (2) Result of #1: | that He gave His only begotten Son |
| (3) Purpose of #2: | that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life |

2. Clause Analysis of Ephesians 6:1-3:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother...that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.”

- **Locate the Clauses**

- Clause #1: Children, obey your parents in the Lord
- Clause #2: for this is right
- Clause #3: Honor your father and mother
- Clause #4: that it may be well with you
- Clause #5: that you may live long on the earth

- **Categorize the Clauses**

- Clause #1: Main Clause
- Clause #2: dependent, adverb
- Clause #3: Independent
- Clause #4: dependent, adverb
- Clause #5: dep, adverb

- **Determine the Relationships of the Clauses**

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, *for* [indicates cause/reason] this is right. Honor your father and mother...*that* [indicates result] it may be well with you, *and* [simple connective] *that* [indicates result] you may live long on the earth.”

- **Block Diagram the Relationships of the Clauses**

- (1) Main Clause: Children, obey your parents in the Lord
- (2) Reason for #1: for this is right
- (3) Main Clause: Honor your father and mother
- (4) Result of #3: that it may be well with you
- (5) Result of #3: that you may live long on the earth

3. Clause Analysis of Hebrews 13:17:

“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

- **Locate the Clauses**

- Clause #1: Obey your leaders
- Clause #2: submit to them

- Clause #3: for they keep watch over your souls
- Clause #4: as those who will give an account
- Clause #5: Let them do this with joy and not with grief
- Clause #6: for this would be unprofitable for you

▪ **Categorize the Clauses**

- Clause #1: Ind.
- Clause #2: Ind.
- Clause #3: dependent, adj
- Clause #4: dep, adj
- Clause #5: ind
- Clause #6: dep, adverb

▪ **Determine the Relationships of the Clauses**

“Obey your leaders, *and* [simple connective] submit to them; *for* [indicates cause/reason] they keep watch over your souls, *as* [indicates manner] those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, *for* [indicates cause/reason] this would be unprofitable for you.”

▪ **Block Diagram the Relationships of the Clauses**

- (1) Main Clause: Obey your leaders
- (2) Main Clause: Submit to them
- (3) Reason for #1-2: for they keep watch over your souls
- (4) Manner of #3: as those who will give account
- (5) Main Clause: Let them do this with joy and not with grief

(6) Reason for #5: for this would be unprofitable for you

B. Step #2 in the Process of Grammatical Analysis: Diagram the Structure of the Passage

Jay E. Smith: “A sentence diagram is a visual schematic that organizes every element of a sentence according to a predetermined set of rules into a standardized framework...so that the syntactical relationships within the sentence are clearly revealed.”

Two Types of Diagramming

▪ **Advantages of Line Diagramming**

Waymeyer: “Line diagramming forces the interpreter at the outset to think through the syntactical relationship of every word, phrase, and clause in the passage. In this way, it compels him to ask and answer questions he may otherwise ignore or gloss over.”

Thomas Schreiner: “One of the great values of diagramming...is that it compels the interpreter to slow down and to think carefully through every element of the text, for the interpreter must make decisions about the placement of every word or phrase in the text.... If the interpreter does not understand a sentence syntactically, then he will lack confidence in the validity of his interpretation.”

Recommended Resources:

- Lee L. Kantenwein, *Diagrammatical Analysis*. Winona Lake, Ind.: 1979.
- Richard P. Belcher, *Diagramming the Greek New Testament*. Columbia, S.C.: Richbury, 1985.
- Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990.
- Jay E. Smith, “Sentence Diagramming, Clausal Layouts, and Exegetical Outlining,” in *Interpreting the New Testament Text*, eds. Darrell L. Bock and Buist M. Fanning. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2006.

- **Advantages of Block Diagramming** [also: quicker and easier]

Walt Kaiser: "The advantages of block diagramming over line diagramming are: (1) it forces us to focus on the total flow and thread of meaning throughout the whole paragraph rather than on isolated abstractions of individual words or phrases; and (2) it offers invaluable preparatory assistance for preaching and teaching because we can immediately see what is nuclear in the paragraph (the theme proposition) and what is subordinate."

Recommended Resources:

- Walt Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.
- Joel James, *Expository Studying: A Practical Guide to Preparing Expository Sermons*, 2008 (<http://www.gracefellowship.co.za/files/Expository%20Studying%20PDF,%202009.pdf>).
- Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993.

SUGGESTED APPROACH:

- Line Diagram the passage in the original language.
- Block Diagram the passage in the English translation.

Disclaimer: Diagramming is much more helpful in analyzing passages with lots of grammatical subordination and for this reason is not as critical to use with biblical narrative (see "Diagramming and Outlining Narrative," in *Expository Studying* by Joel James.)

THE BASICS OF BLOCK DIAGRAMMING

- Place the main/independent clauses flush left on the page.
- Indent subordinate clauses and phrases to show what they modify.
- Make sure coordinate clauses and phrases are parallel in their indentation.

The key is to observe a variety of examples of block diagrams. There is some flexibility regarding how many words or phrases are subordinated/indented in the diagram – and each interpreter may develop his own “style” to some degree – but the approach should be consistent and it should accurately reflect the syntax of the passage. The following examples should provide some guidance. Note how the grammatical explanations alongside the diagram clarify the structure and flow of the passage even further.

➤ **Block Diagram of 2 Timothy 3:16-17:**

Subject: All Scripture is

Adjective #1: God-breathed
and

Adjective #2: profitable

Purpose #1: for teaching
Purpose #2: for reproof
Purpose #3: for correction
Purpose #4: for training in righteousness

Results: that the man of God may be

#1: adequate
#2: equipped for every good work

➤ **Block Diagram of Philippians 4:6-7:**

Negative Prohibition: Be anxious for nothing
but

Positive Exhortation: Let your requests be made known to
God
in everything
by prayer and supplication
with thanksgiving
and

Promised Result: The peace of God (which surpasses...) will
guard
your hearts
and
your minds
in Christ Jesus.

➤ **Block Diagram of Isaiah 46:8-11:**

Remember this
and
Be assured

Recall it to mind (you transgressors)

Remember the former things long past
for
I am God
and
There is no other

I am God
and
There is no one like Me

declaring the end from the beginning
and
from ancient times things which have not been
done

saying: “My purpose will be established,
and
I will accomplish all My good pleasure”

calling a bird of prey from the east
the man of My purpose from a far country.

Truly I have spoken
Truly I will bring it to pass.

I have planned it
Surely I will do it.

➤ **Block Diagram of Proverbs 5:1-4:**

My son

Imperative: Give attention to my wisdom
Incline your ear to my understanding
that

Purpose: you may observe discretion
and
your lips may reserve knowledge.

For

Reason: The lips of an adulteress drip honey
and
Smoother than oil is her speech

Contrast: but
She is (in the end) bitter as wormwood
sharp as a two-edged sword

➤ **Block Diagram of 1 Peter 2:9-10:**

But

**Your Identity:
as the People
of God** You are a chosen race
a royal priesthood
a holy nation
a people for God's own possession

**Purpose of
Your Existence:** so that
you may proclaim His
excellencies of Him
as People of God: (who has called you...)

**Reason for the
Proclamation of
God's Excellencies:** for
You once were not a people
but now
You are the people of God

You had not received mercy
but now
You have received mercy

NOTE: For more examples of block diagrams, see appendix 8 of this syllabus, pages 165-181 of Kaiser's *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, and pages 72-83 of James' *Expository Studying*.

C. Step #3 in the Process of Grammatical Analysis: Outline the Flow of the Passage

1. Waymeyer: "The purpose of an exegetical outline is to capture the biblical author's flow of thought in outline form. Some outlines are driven by the grammatical structure of the passage, others are more conceptually driven, and still others are a combination of the two. The basic format of involves using various levels of subordination which exist between main points and sub-points in the passage. The relationship between these points can be indicated by using a consistent series of indentations and symbols."

- I. First Main Point
 - A. First Subordinate Point
 - B. Second Subordinate Point
 - 1. First Supporting Idea
 - 2. Second Supporting Idea
- II. Second Main Point
 - A. First Subordinate Point
 - B. Second Subordinate Point
 - 1. First Supporting Idea
 - 2. Second Supporting Idea
 - a. First Supporting Detail
 - b. Second Supporting Detail
- III. Third Main Point
 - A. First Subordinate Point
 - B. Second Subordinate Point
 - C. Third Subordinate Point
 - 1. First Supporting Idea
 - 2. Second Supporting Idea
 - 3. Third Supporting Idea

2. Jay Smith: "In this way, [the exegetical outline] functions as a kind of picture of the logical development of the passage. The main ideas form the major headings and the subordinate and supporting ideas form subheadings, with each succeeding level containing more specific information than the preceding one."

3. Waymeyer: “The most important part of outlining is to make sure that the outline is not imposed on the passage but rather arises from an inductive study of the passage. At the same time, there is some degree of subjectivity in the outlining process, and therefore not everyone’s outline will be the same.”

4. Waymeyer: “The key to constructing a good outline is to make sure that each point is a clear and accurate reflection of the text it represents. Furthermore, the relationships of subordination in the outline should accurately reflect the authorial intent of the passage. In other words, the main points of the outline should be the main points of the passage.”

**Example of Exegetical
Outlines**

OUTLINE OF 1 PETER 2:9-10:

- I. The Identity of God’s People (9a)
- II. The Purpose of God’s People (9b)
- III. The Redemption of God’s People (10)

**Appendix
EXAMPLES OF BLOCK DIAGRAMS**

Ephesians 5:15-21

Overarching

Command: Be careful how you walk

Contrast #1: [Walk] not as unwise men
but
[Walk] as wise [men]
making the most of your time (because the days are evil)

Contrast #2: Do not be foolish
but
Understand what the will of the Lord is

Contrast #3: Do not get drunk with wine (for that is dissipation)
but

Be filled with the Spirit
speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and
spiritual songs
singing and making melody with your heart to the
Lord
always giving thanks for all things in the name of our
Lord
and
be[ing] subject to one another in the fear of Christ

Philippians 3:17-21

Primary Exhortation: Brethren: Join in following my example
and
Observe those who walk according to the pattern you
have in us.

Reason #1: For many walk (of whom I often told you, and now tell you
weeping)
that:
they are enemies of the cross of Christ
whose end is destruction
whose god is their appetite
and
whose glory is in their shame
who set their minds on earthly things

Reason #2: For our citizenship is in heaven,
from which also we eagerly wait for
a Savior = the Lord Jesus Christ

who will transform the body of our humble
state into conformity with the body of His
glory [how?] by the exertion of the power that
He has even to subject all things to Himself

1 Peter 3:1-6

Intro:	In the same way you wives
Imperative #1:	Be submissive to your own husbands
Purpose:	so that
Protasis (if):	even if any of them are disobedient to the word
Apodosis (then):	they may be won without a word
	by the behavior of their wives
	as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior
Imperative #2:	And
Negative Prohibition:	Let not your adornment be merely external (braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses)
	but
Positive Exhortation:	Let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God
Reason:	For
General Example:	The holy women also (who hoped in God) adorned themselves in this way in former times being submissive to their own husbands
Specific Example:	Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord and You have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear