

## Getting all we can from Scripture

Men's Bible Study at Park View

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### Session 2 - Consider the context

*Example:* Genesis 31:49

#### Discipline #2

##### Consider the context

Does what is written before and after the text shed light on the text?

*Example:* Philippians 4:13

Almost all words carry ambiguity because they have a range of possible meaning.

eg. grace (as in "she has a lot of grace")

1. moves elegantly, easily
2. good manners, charm
3. mercy, kindness

eg. pig (as in "my cousin Mortimer has a pig")

male/female? old/young? pink/spotted?

We determine the specific meaning a word carries by looking at its context.

Words seldom mean one precise thing and never anything else.

*Example:* Acts 5:29

*Example:* Acts 16:33

1 Cor 1:16

Common mistake: putting every possible meaning of a word into each occurrence.

With few exceptions, a word has but one of its meanings each time it occurs; the context will tell us which one.

eg. Greek word *sarx* ("flesh")

- 1) our physical body  
1 Cor 15:39
- 2) a human being, person  
Luke 3:6
- 3) human nature as controlled by sin  
Gal 5:19

*Example:* John 1:14

Sometimes more than one meaning is intended for a word:

eg. puns!

poetry

Apostle John's writings - John often intends a double meaning.

*Example:* John 13:10

### **Questions for Table Discussion:**

Share an idea that struck you during this session.

How hard is it for us to consistently consider the context as we read Scripture? What are some things in our church and our lives that, unfortunately, discourage us from looking at the context — or encourage us to look at isolated verses?

Does the context show that the Psalmist's announcement that God owns "the cattle on a thousand hills" (50:10) was intended as an assurance that God can supply all our needs (the way most people apply it)? Do you agree that the call to "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) is a call to a time of meditation away from the rush of world (the way most people apply it)?

Come up with a list of several meanings that the word "day" might carry. Look at the following passages which use the word (in NIV, ESV, NLT) and see if you had its particular meaning on your list: Genesis 7:4; 8:22; Psalm 37:13; Joel 2:31.