

**LESSON 9**

**Principles of Understanding Scripture (8)  
Background Information for the Teacher**

Objectives:

1. The student can explain "necessary inference."
2. The student can list the ten principles for understanding scripture.

Preparation:

1. Have ready to distribute Written Review No. 8.
2. Have ready to distribute Worksheet No. 9. (Fill in one for yourself.)
3. Have sufficient Bibles and pens.
4. Have access to a chalkboard or overhead projector.

**Lesson Plan for the Teacher**

Introduction: (10 minutes)

1. Call the role and plan contact with those who are absent.
2. Make necessary announcements.
3. Songs and prayer as desired.
4. Give answers to Written Review No. 8. 1—application. 2—commands. 3—a. commands, obeyed; b. for us; c. limited or modified; d. obey, us. 4—example. 5—a. teach, will; b. approved practice; c. intended, generally; d. spiritually significant. 6—what day to meet, have elders, what congregations do.
5. Discuss 1 Corinthians 11:23-34. (1) What commands are included that we should obey? Take the bread and the cup in memory of Jesus. (2) What do we learn about how to take the Lord's Supper? Make the supper a proclamation of Christ's death until He returns. Take the Supper in a worthy manner—suitable for the significance it holds. We should examine ourselves as we eat and drink. We should recognize the body of the Lord. Do not confuse this Supper with a regular meal.

Learning Experiences: (about 30 minutes)

(Note to teacher: If there are more examples given on a point that you think you will have time for, select in advance those you think will be best for your class and be sure those are used. If you have the option of more time, you can use them all and even explore some of the passages more thoroughly.)

1. We began last week studying about the tenth of our ten principles of understanding Scripture: application. **Q:** The first nine principles are primarily to help us do what? **A:** Understand the Scriptures as those did who first received them. **Q:** The tenth principle, application, is primarily, then, to do what? **A:** To help us understand how we should



apply the passage to ourselves. **Q:** What two aspects of “application” did we study in the last class session? **A:** Commands and examples. So if the passage has a command that is for us in the Christian age, we should apply that to ourselves. If that passage has an example about something that shows a general practice of with spiritual significance from the early church, we should take that example as a model for ourselves.

2. Today we look at a third way we may make application of Scripture. Sometimes we use this method to learn (1) what a passage means, but it is also a method of (2) making an application to ourselves. That method is called “necessary inference.” **Q:** What is an inference? **A:** It is a conclusion drawn by reasoning or implication. A common example of inference often used in logic classes is this. **Q:** If all men are mortal and Socrates is a man, what is the necessary inference? **A:** Socrates is mortal. This conclusion is implied by the two statements. If they are correct, then the conclusion must follow. There is no exception. In daily life, we often use the method of inference. Sometimes it will be without exception and sometimes may have some exceptions. If, for example, I put on pants I have worn for sometime and they are hard to button, I will conclude I am gaining weight. A little more formally, it might go like this. If my pants are getting tight, then my waist is getting larger. My pants are getting tight (and there seems to be no other explanation). So, I am gaining weight. Here is another common example. **Q:** If I come home and find my wife’s car in the garage, what do I conclude? **A:** That my wife is home.
3. A “necessary” inference is one that is required by the information we have. If all men are mortal and Socrates is a man, then Socrates mortality is a necessary inference. Actually, an inference may be very strong, if the premises on which it is based are clear and allow no exception, or it may be very weak, if the information allows many exceptions. If I spend more every month than I make, for example, I can certainly conclude that I will be in financial trouble. We might state this more formally as: All who spend more than they make (unless they have other resources) will be in financial trouble. I am spending more than I make (and have no other resources). I will be in financial trouble.  
Here is a little weaker inference. I am hiring a student worker from Oklahoma Christian University so I know she will do well. Based on past experience, the employer concludes: All students from Oklahoma Christian are good workers. This worker is a student from Oklahoma Christian. This student will be a good worker. While this is nearly always the case, there are a few exceptions. The point is that we draw inferences often. Doctors do it when they



make a diagnosis; detectives do it when they seek to solve a case (Sherlock Holmes is a master of this); lawyers do it when they study the law for a case; firemen do it when they decide how to attack a fire; young people do it in choosing whom to date.

4. Now we look at this method in Bible study. Read John 3:2. **Q:** What inference has Nicodemus drawn? **A:** That Jesus is a teacher who has come from God. **Q:** What led him to this inference? **A:** The miracles Jesus did. So Nicodemus reasoned like this: One who has power to do miracles must be a teacher from God. Jesus has the power to do miracles. So, Jesus is a teacher from God. **Q:** Did God intend for people to make this inference from the miracles Jesus did? **A:** Yes. **Q:** Did God intend for us to use this method in understanding Scripture? **A:** Yes. Read John 20:31-31. **Q:** What does John ask us to do from what he wrote? **A:** Infer from Jesus' miracles that He is the Son of God.
5. Here's another Bible case. Read Matthew 22:29-31. We have looked at this verse before but it can help us here. **Q:** What inference does Jesus draw from Exodus 3:6? **A:** That there is life after death and therefore a resurrection from the dead. **Q:** How does He reach this conclusion? **A:** If God speaks of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as alive long after they died, then all are alive in some fashion after their deaths. Exodus 3:6 is not even about the resurrection or life after death. But Jesus can see in it an implication and He draws on that. He infers that if God speaks of those who have died as still living, then there must be life after death. God does speak of these men as still living after they died. So there must be life after death.
6. Another case of inference in the Bible is one Jesus makes. Read Matthew 7:11. **Q:** What conclusion does Jesus draw? **A:** God will give good things to His children. **Q:** How does He reach this conclusion? **A:** If we, being lesser than God, are good to our children, how much more will God, who is greater than we are, will be good to His children. To understand this passage, we must understand something about the method of using inference.
7. Look at Luke 5:22-26. **Q:** What inference do the scribes and Pharisees draw when they hear Jesus say the paralytic's sins are forgiven? **A:** That He is making Himself equal with God. **Q:** Was that a valid conclusion? **A:** Yes. **Q:** What conclusion do they then make from their first inference? **A:** That Jesus is blaspheming. **Q:** Is this a correct conclusion? **A:** Yes, if He is not equal with God; no, if He is equal with God. Jesus says, "That you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and then heals the man. From the miracle, He expects them to infer that He has divine power and thus has authority to forgive sins.
8. Look at Hebrews 7:7. **Q:** Who does the writer say is greater, Abraham or Melchizedek? **A:** Melchizedek. **Q:** On what



does he base this conclusion? **A:** That the greater blesses the lesser. Since Melchizedek blessed Abraham, he infers, he must have been the greater.

9. Now that we have a feel for how inference works and how understanding it will help us in interpreting some Bible texts, let's turn to some passages where we should make applications by inference.
  - a. **Q:** Is there a passage that directly says we should no longer to keep the Sabbath Day? **A:** No. **Q:** So how have we come to that conclusion? **A:** Because of the Scriptures which say the Law of Moses has been taken away. See Colossians 2:14 where the "bond written in ordinances" has been taken away and that would include the ordinance of the Sabbath Day. Without drawing such an inference, we could not conclude that the Sabbath ordinance has been taken away. 2 Corinthians 3:7-11, likewise, calls the covenant engraved in letters on stone the one that is fading away.
  - b. Read 1 Timothy 3:2. **Q:** What may we infer from this passage about women serving as elders? **A:** That since a woman cannot be the husband of one wife, she would not qualify. The reasoning is like this: only husbands may serve as elders; a woman is not a husband; so a woman may not serve as an elder.
  - c. Read Acts 8:34-39. Let's see what necessary inferences may be made from this passage. **Q:** What does Philip preach to the Ethiopian? **A:** The good news about Jesus? **Q:** From what Philip says, what may we infer about the fulfillment of the passage in Isaiah? **A:** That Jesus was the fulfillment of that prophecy. **Q:** From the Ethiopian's question, what may we infer was included in preaching the good news about Jesus? **A:** Baptism. **Q:** What may we infer about the method of baptism from the description of the actions? **A:** Immersion.
  - d. Read Mark 16:16. **Q:** What is a necessary prerequisite to baptism? **A:** Belief. **Q:** What inference may we draw from this about infant baptism? **A:** Only believers may be properly baptized; babies are not believers; babies cannot be properly baptized.
  - e. **Q:** Since all accounts of New Testament conversions in the book of Acts tell that the person was baptized soon after he/she heard the message about Jesus, what inference should we make? **A:** That since all early preachers of the gospel taught baptism and that those responding were baptized immediately, we should do the same today.
  - f. Read Galatians 3:27. **Q:** What is said to happen at baptism? **A:** We are baptized into Christ and so are clothed with him. **Q:** May we infer that those who have not been so baptized are not yet in Christ? **A:** Only those who are baptized into Christ are promised that



they are in Him. Those not baptized are not included in this promise. Those not properly baptized are not in Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 speaks of being baptized into one body.

10. We can, of course, draw incorrect inferences from Scripture. Here are two examples. Read Acts 13:14 and Acts 16:13.  
**Q:** May we conclude from these and similar verses that the Sabbath day was the standard time of meeting for the early Christians? **A:** No. Because these passages were not telling about the day for the Christian assembly but of the time when Paul and others were going to the meetings of Jews for their regular Sabbath assembly. For another example of poor inferences, read Acts 16:31. **Q:** Since only "belief" is mentioned here as what Paul said to do to be saved, may we infer that baptism is not necessary for salvation? **A:** That would not be a fair inference for the next verse tells of more Paul said to them. Also, such an inference would be inconsistent with many other passages about baptism.
11. Our first obligation, then, in studying Scripture is to ask what did it mean to those who first received it (the first nine principles). Then we ask, "How should we apply this Scripture to ourselves?" Is there a command directed to us? Is there an example intended for us to follow? Is there an implication in the passage from which we should draw a conclusion?

Application:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. **Q:** In what letter had Paul written the Corinthians not to associate with the sexually immoral? **A:** An earlier letter which is not preserved. **Q:** What conclusion had the Corinthians drawn from this statement? **A:** That they were not to associate with the sexually immoral who were in the world as well as those in the church. **Q:** Was this Paul's intent? **A:** No. **Q:** How did Paul expect them to know this? **A:** Then they would have to leave the world. That is, since the interpretation you gave this passage is one that would have been impossible for Christian people to follow, you should have known that the inference you had drawn was incorrect. **Q:** What command does Paul now give to clarify the situation? **A:** Do not associate with the immoral who are brothers. Do not even eat with those in the church who are immoral, greedy, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards, or swindlers.
2. **Q:** Had the Corinthians followed this teaching even about associating with the immoral persons in the church? **A:** No. 1 Corinthians 5:1.
3. **Q:** Is this a command for us? **A:** Yes.



Assignment:

1. Use the worksheet to prepare for the written review next week.
2. For next class meeting, study Acts 20:6-12. Make a list of anything we can learn by way of command, example, or inference. Not all of these may be present.



**UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE  
WORKSHEET NO. 9**

1. The tenth principle for understanding Scripture is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The first nine principles are primarily for helping us to understand Scripture as those did who \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The first two ways we apply Scripture are through studying \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The third way we study application is by looking at \_\_\_\_\_.
5. An inference is a conclusion drawn by \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A "necessary" inference is \_\_\_\_\_ by the information available.
7. In John 3:2, what inference has Nicodemus drawn?

What led him to make this inference?

8. What inference does Jesus draw from Exodus 3:6 as recorded in Matthew 22:29-31?

From what did He draw this inference?

9. Here are some examples of inferences we may draw from Scripture. Fill in the blanks about these.
  - a. We infer that we should not keep the Sabbath Day because the "bond written in ordinances" has been \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. We infer that women should not be elders because 1 Timothy 3:2 says they should be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. We infer from Acts 8:34-39 that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. We infer from Mark 16:16 that that \_\_\_\_\_ should precede baptism. If this is true, then we infer that \_\_\_\_\_ could not be baptized properly since they cannot believe.
  - e. Since all accounts of conversions in Acts tell that the person was baptized soon after hearing the message, we infer that people today who hear the message will \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. Since Galatians 3:27 says we are "baptized into Christ," it would follow that those who have not been baptized are \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Two samples of incorrect inference from Scripture would be:
  - a. That the \_\_\_\_\_ Day was the time for Christian meeting.
  - b. That one is saved as soon as he/she \_\_\_\_\_.



STUDY ACTS 20:6-12 FOR THE NEXT CLASS MEETING. MAKE A LIST OF ANYTHING WE CAN LEARN BY WAY OF COMMAND, EXAMPLE, AND INFERENCE. NOT ALL OF THESE MAY BE PRESENT IN THE PASSAGE.

ALSO TRY TO MEMORIZE THE 10 PRINCIPLES FOR NEXT CLASS PERIOD.

Conditions  
Genre  
Context  
Speaker/Audience  
Words  
Syntax  
Figures  
Theology  
Other Passages  
Application

Will the first letters help? CGCSW SFTOA



**WRITTEN REVIEW NO. 8**  
**(To be used with Lesson 9)**

1. The tenth principle of interpretation we have studied is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. One question we ask is whether there are \_\_\_\_\_ we are to obey.
3. Four principles about commands are:
  - a. Christ and the apostles gave Christians \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. When looking at a command, we must ask if God intended it \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. We must also ask if a command has been \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ by other commands or teaching.
  - d. We must be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ commands from Scripture for \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A second question to ask as we seek to apply a passage to us is whether there is an \_\_\_\_\_ for us to follow.
5. Guidelines for the use of examples are:
  - a. God has used examples as a way to \_\_\_\_\_ us His \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. The example must be an \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. The example must be something that was \_\_\_\_\_ to be followed \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. The example must be something of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. One thing we can learn from Scripture by example is:

