

“Rightly Dividing the W.O.R.D. of God”

Understanding a passage of Scripture is like assembling the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle . . .

1. **Remember the big picture:** “Follow Jesus by faith!” This is the consistently basic message from cover to cover (Matthew 5:17, Luke 24:25-45, John 1:44-45 & 5:39)
2. Then **start with a “corner”** from any of the 4 scenes that occur in ALL of Scripture.
 - a) The **W**arped **W**orld of God’s people in sin or experiencing sin (Galatians 3:22-24).
 - b) God’s **H**onorable **O**bjective to worship & enjoy Him in His light (2 Peter 1:16-21).
 - c) God’s **R**edemptive **R**esponse in Christ as Prophet, Priest and King (Heb 1:1-3).
 - d) The **D**elightful **D**uty of God’s people to follow Him by faith (2 Timothy 3:14-17).
3. **Use all the pieces:** words, verses, concepts, etc. (Proverbs 30:5-6, Joshua 1:7-8, etc.)
4. **Let it flow** from one corner to all the others without forcing or leaving out any pieces.

Use the principles in the acronym below as a guide to find at least one corner piece.

Boundaries – At what verse (or even chapter) must we begin and end in order to see all 4 corners that reveal the big picture? E.g.: **Matthew 18:18-20** is too narrow of a focus.

Emotion – What feelings are expressed? E.g.: why the *pleasing aroma* in **Leviticus 1**?

Styl - What literary styles add emphasis? E.g.: a *pun* on “weight” in **1 Samuel 2:12-36**.

Context – What comes before & after? E.g.: **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** & corporate worship.

Repetition – Is a word/phrase/concept repeated? E.g.: *sensory proofs* in **1 John 1:1-3**.

Iniquity – What sin-problem is He addressing? E.g.: Miriam’s leprosy in **Numbers 12**.

Parallel passages – Is there another text that treats the same subject/event more clearly?

Note clarifications. E.g.: the gift of God in **Matthew 7:7-11** is defined in Luke as . . .

Time – What was happening? E.g.: vision in **Ezekiel 1** in light of *Israel’s captivity*.

Troops – Who’s in the story? E.g.: **John 4:4** says “Jesus *had* to go through *Samaria*”.

Terrain – Is a place meaningful? E.g.: Namaan’s baptism in the *Jordan* in **2 Kings 5**.

Unusual – What seems odd or ‘unnecessary’? E.g.: “*Eat unclean animals*” in **Acts 10**.

Result – What’s the result of obeying/disobeying? E.g.: *David discipline* in **1 Kings 1:6**.

Absolutes – ID truths and/or commands that never change. E.g.: God’s oath in **Joshua 1**.

Loaded ideas – ‘Unpack’ any foreign cultural ideas. E.g.: “redeemed” in **Psalms 107**.

4 (put the words, verses, concepts, etc. into the **four** spiritual scenes as appropriate)

Ground the main point (MP): God’s specific call to us in every passage of Scripture is always how to follow Jesus and why to have faith in Jesus. One of those will be a specific fit to the very specific problem revealed in the passage (see the flagpole into its base). The other of the two will be “unfurled” from the first in greater detail.

Lay out the rest of the pieces to see the whole picture. If the MP is about faith, the passage will “unfurl”, revealing several ways to follow Christ. If the MP is about following, the passage will reveal specific reasons to put our faith in Him.

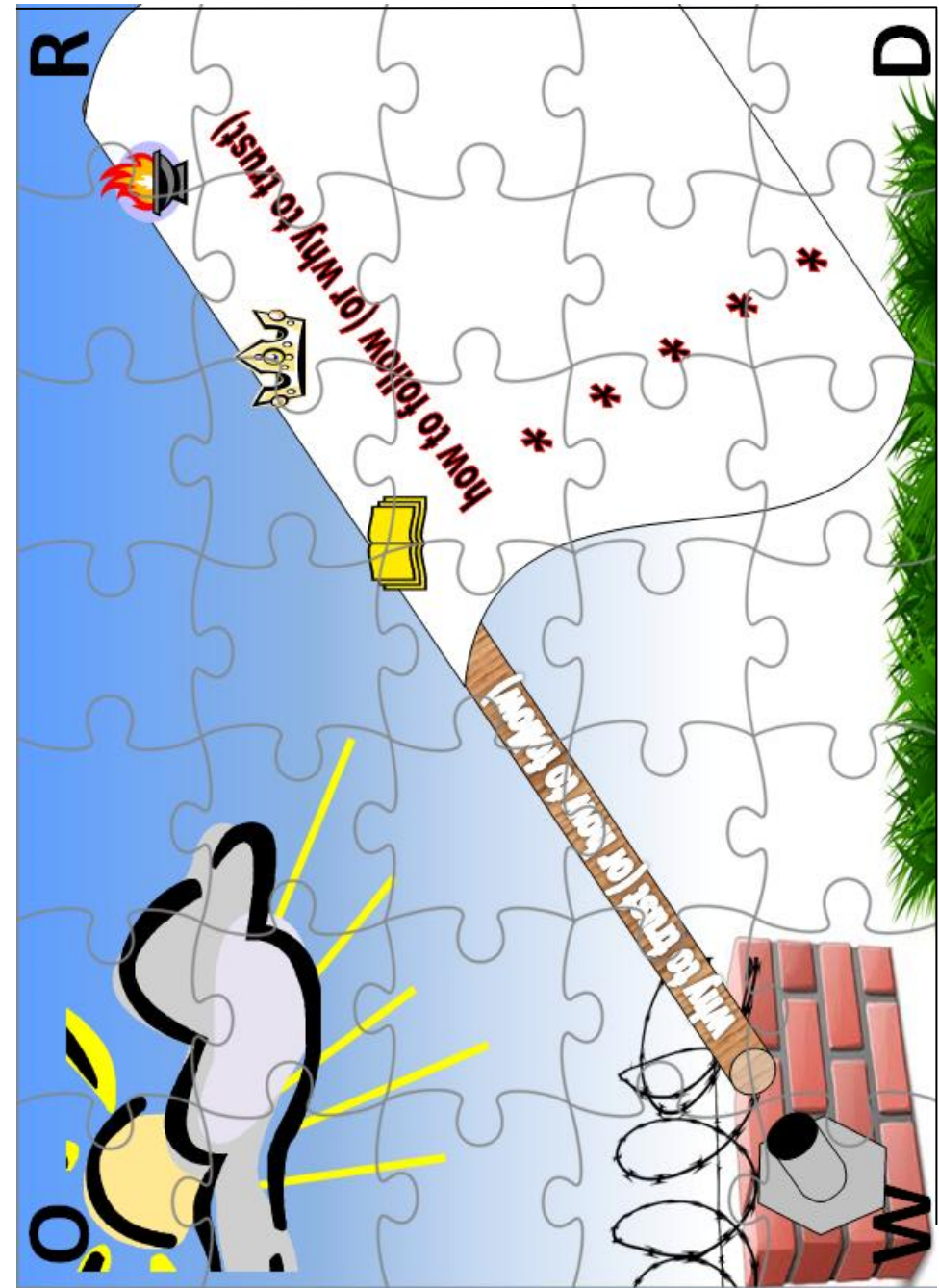
Organize pieces into 2, 3, or 4-5 points to communicate the intent of the passage to others. In my experience, some passages convey “complimentary opposites” in 2 points, most passages seem to convey a balanced picture in 3 points (like a tri-pod offers the most stable base); and other passages convey logical or sequential steps in 4-5 points.

Re-examine the picture. Are pieces forced or left out? Is Jesus clearly the “big picture”?

Yearn to say “Yes” to “Yahweh”. In other words, pray about it and act on what you see!

God’s “Redemptive Response”

“Delightful Duty” of God’s people



God’s “Honorable Objective”

“Warped World” of God’s people