



Bible Study Training

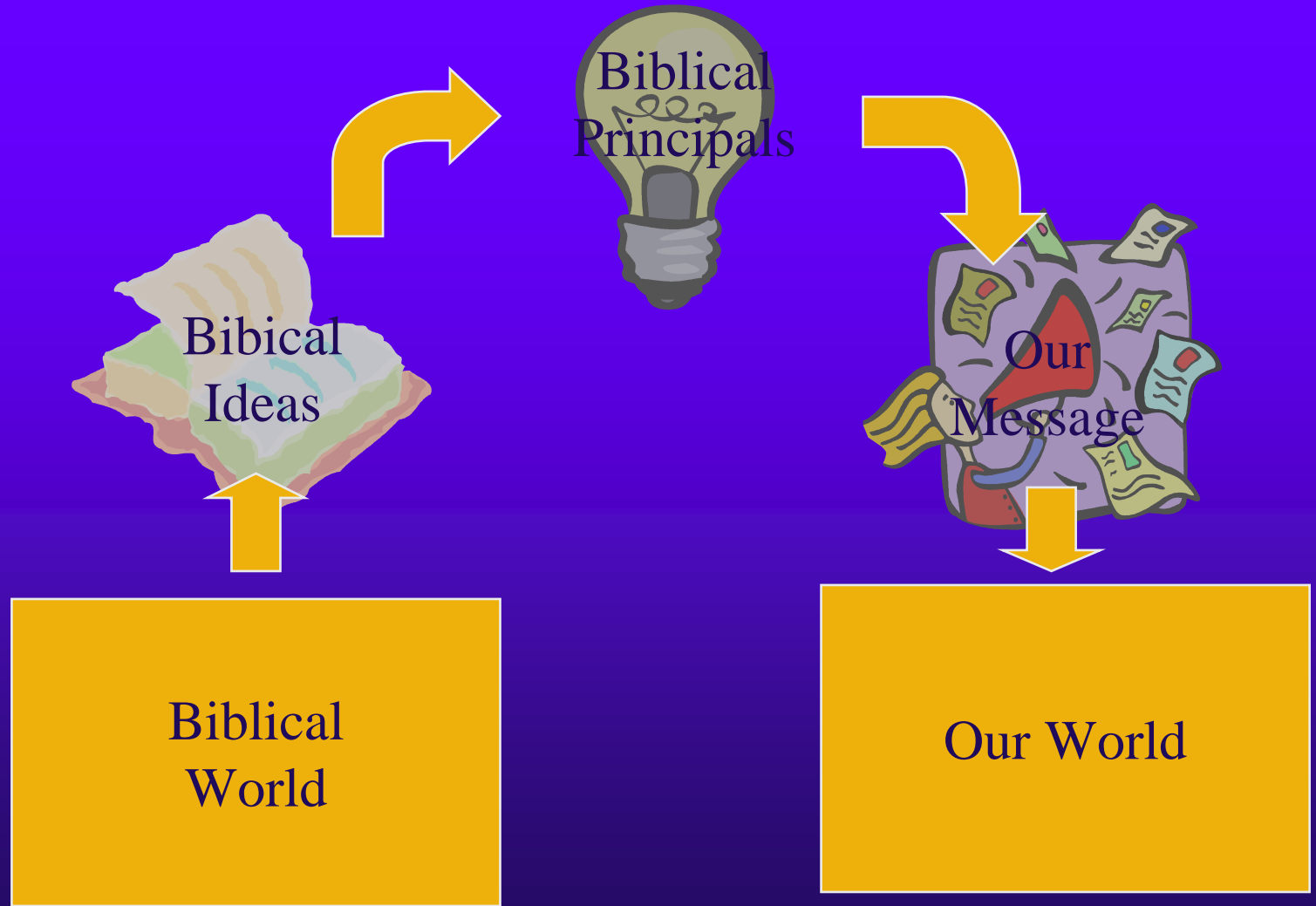
Part 1 – Getting the central idea



Agenda

- ◆ Studying the bible as the Word of God
- ◆ What is an idea?
- ◆ Getting the idea out of:
 - Narrative
 - History
 - Parables
 - Discourse
 - Poetry
- ◆ Exercise

Studying the Bible





Studying the Bible - pitfalls

- ◆ Literalism
- ◆ Being too personal
- ◆ Being irrelevant
- ◆ Getting side-tracked



What is an idea?

**Idea = subject +
complement**



What is an idea?

- ◆ The Subject is always a question.
- ◆ The complement is the answer to the question.

Getting the idea - exercise

◆ Macy is having a one-day sale this Saturday.

– Subject=_____

– Complement=_____

– Idea=_____



Getting the idea-other media

- ◆ Things that help identify the subject:
 - Genre
 - Forms
 - Symbols
 - “Surprises”
 - Context
- ◆ Exercise



More Exercises

◆ Rom 1: 16

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.



More Exercise

◆ John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.



BREAK

- ◆ Any Questions?
- ◆ Practice, practice, practice

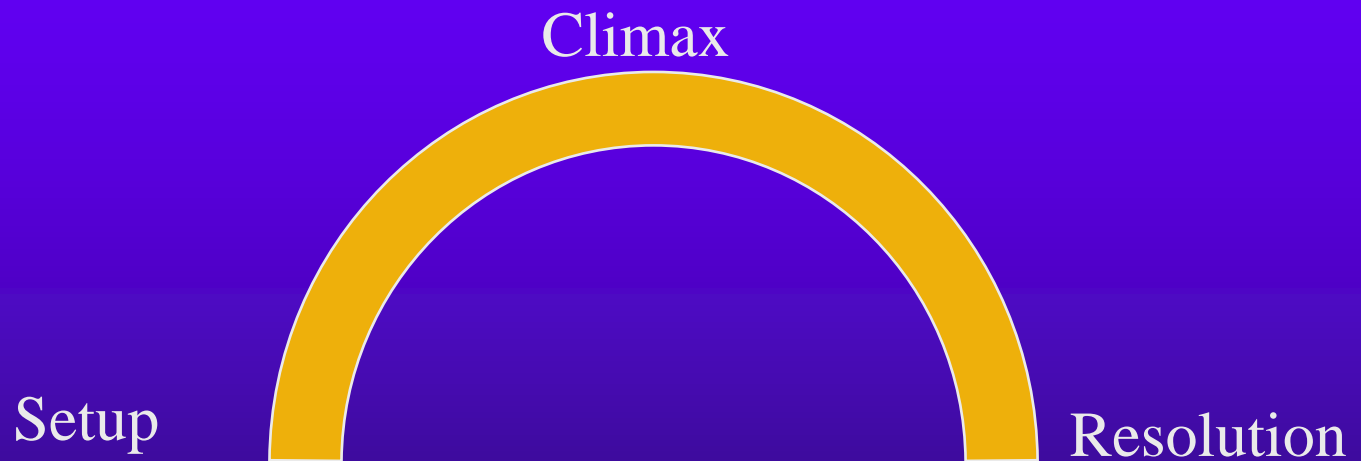


Getting the idea out of a passage

- ◆ One of the most important determinant of the idea is the **GENRE** of the passage.
- ◆ In the Bible, there are primarily 3 genres
 - Narratives (include history, parables)
 - Discourse
 - Poetry
- ◆ Other minor genres (forms)
 - Laws, Covenants...

Narratives

- ◆ Basic form of a narrative



Basic formula of an epic

The setup

- ◆ There was a former equilibrium that was disturbed by a crisis.
- ◆ There is a central character.
- ◆ There is a goal that our hero desires.
- ◆ There is a quest.
- ◆ There are obstacles that prevent our hero from achieving his goal.
- ◆ There are other characters who helps or hinder our hero's quest.

Basic formula of an epic (cont.)

The climax

- ◆ The climax is:
 - The point at which the success or failure of our hero is decided.
 - The point at which our hero faces the biggest obstacle.
 - The point at which the most essential character of our hero is revealed.
- ◆ Look for the **central idea** at the climax.

Basic formula of an epic (cont.)

The resolution

- ◆ The resolution is a new equilibrium.
- ◆ The qualities of the characters in the epics are reflected by the differences between the resolution and the setup.



Exercise

- ◆ Analyze the entire Bible, I.e. the ‘Christian Story’ according to the formula.



Complex narratives

- ◆ Most stories have a more complicated story line.
- ◆ Nevertheless narratives are by nature linear.
- ◆ Therefore a piece of complex narrative can be studied as a sequence of mini-stories making up a big-story.
- ◆ The resolution of one mini-story become the setup of the next mini-story.
- ◆ Each mini-story has a mini-climax which reveals a little more about the characters in the story.



Key questions to ask when studying a narrative

- ◆ Divide up the story into its units.
- ◆ For each unit, ask:
 - Who is the main character?
 - Who are his/her friends?
 - Who are his/her enemies?
 - What is the goal (quest)?
 - What are the obstacles?
 - Where is the climax?
 - What is the status of each character before the story and after the story?
 - What can we learn about the (moral) quality of each of the character?



Key questions to ask when studying a narrative (cont.)

- ◆ After you have studied the units, ask the following question:
 - How do these units relate to each other?
 - How do these units contribute to the big overall story?



Exercise

- ◆ “The Lord of the Rings”



Some notes on studying parables

- ◆ Parables are narratives that often function as a discourse.
- ◆ It is often necessary to map the characters/symbols in the parable to real life people.
- ◆ All the formulae applicable to studying a narrative is applicable to studying a parable.
- ◆ The teaching of a parable comes from the central idea of the narrative.
- ◆ Do NOT over-interpret a parable.



Discourse

- ◆ The purpose of a discourse is to:
 - Explain
 - Argue
 - Prove
- ◆ **Discourse = Communication**



Discourse = communication

- ◆ Who is talking?
- ◆ Who is listening?
 - What are the relationship between the speaker and the audience?
- ◆ What is being said?



What is being said?

- ◆ Discourse analysis.
 - Delimit the passage.
 - Divide the passage into communication units. (sentences/phrases)
 - Ask: “How does one communication unit relates to the others?” (see handout)
 - Draw a chart.
 - The root of the chart is the **central idea** of the discourse.



Exercise

◆ Romans 1:16-17



Poetry

◆ Disclaimer:

- Many features of poetry are “lost in translation”.
- Poetry features linguistics beauty

◆ Features of Poetry

- Meter (mostly lost in translation)
- Balance
- Parallelism/Chiasm



Studying Poetry

- ◆ The purpose of poetry is to affect the emotion of the reader.
- ◆ Note the use of:
 - Symbols
 - Metaphors
 - Parallelism
 - Chiasm
- ◆ The **central idea** of a poem is found at its linguistic (aesthetic) climax.



Studying poetry

- ◆ Some poetry (especially Psalms) have “forms” and function. E.g. lament, praise, psalms of ascend, royal psalms, messianic psalms etc.
- ◆ Some poetry are historical.
- ◆ Know the difference!
 - Do not over historicize a psalm.



Summary

- ◆ The central idea of a narrative is found at its climax.
- ◆ The central idea of a discourse is found at its head communication units.
- ◆ The central idea of a piece of poetry is found at its linguistic climax.



Conclusion

- ◆ Once you get the central idea, the structure and flow of the ideas in the passage will become clear.
- ◆ The central idea is so important that you have make it a discipline to write it down clearly and refer to it often.
- ◆ **IDEA = SUBJECT + COMPLEMENT**
- ◆ Derive you *life application* of the passage on the central idea.



A passage that exercise everything you've learned today

◆ Acts 2

- You delimit the passage.
- Notice that all three genres (narrative, discourse, poetry) are present.
- Remember to write the the central idea of the passage.
- It might help to divide the passage up and write down the central ideas of the divisions first.