

# AT HOME IN THE WORD

## PRACTICE PDF // CONTEXT

### WHY LOOK UP CONTEXT?

Learning the context of a passage of Scripture helps us to better understand the original setting and circumstances of the text, which adds to our understanding of how to interpret and apply it now.

### WHEN DO I LOOK UP CONTEXT?

We suggest exploring the context in depth when you first begin studying a book of the Bible, but to keep your notes handy throughout your study for help in understanding difficult passages.

### HOW DO I LOOK UP CONTEXT?

A study Bible, Bible dictionary, or trusted commentary is a great place to start. Each book of the Bible has introductory material that should answer most of these questions:

- **Who wrote it?**
  - We want to know as much as we can about the author's life. This helps us to understand the intent behind his message.
- **When was it written?**
  - The answer to this question gives us some cultural clues (social structures, gender roles, laws, geography, politics) and helps us ask questions about the author's underlying cultural assumptions.
- **To whom was it written?**
  - Knowing more about the original audience helps us to understand and interpret the passage more accurately.
- **In what style was it written?**
  - The most common genres found in the Bible include historical narrative, poetry, wisdom literature, law, prophecy, gospels, apocalyptic literature and epistles (letters.) Some portions of Scripture will include more than one genre or writing style. For more information on Biblical genres, visit [daytonwomenintheword.com/more](http://daytonwomenintheword.com/more) to download our Quick Guide to Biblical Genres.
- **Why was it written?**
  - Every author writes with a specific purpose in mind. Was it to record events, instruct, rebuke, inspire, warn, encourage? Looking at major themes and repeated ideas will help to answer this question.

Outside these five main questions, we also like to ask:

- **Where does the book fall in the metanarrative (big story) of the Bible?**
  - Choose from the four movements: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration. Sometimes a book of the Bible will cover more than one of these categories.
- **What are some central themes?**
  - Knowing what themes to look for before we begin helps to guide our reading.

## PRACTICE // CONTEXT QUESTIONS

Ask these five questions of whatever passage of Scripture you are studying right now. If you aren't studying a specific book, try asking these questions of the book of Luke.

**Who wrote it?**

**When was it written?**

**To whom was it written?**

**In what style was it written?**

**Why was it written?**

**Where does the book fall in the metanarrative (big story) of the Bible?**

Creation

Fall

Redemption

Restoration

**What are some central themes?**

*This worksheet is **a companion to the Context video** in Dayton Women in the Word's At Home in the Word Video Series. Please watch the video for a more in-depth discussion on context in bible study.*