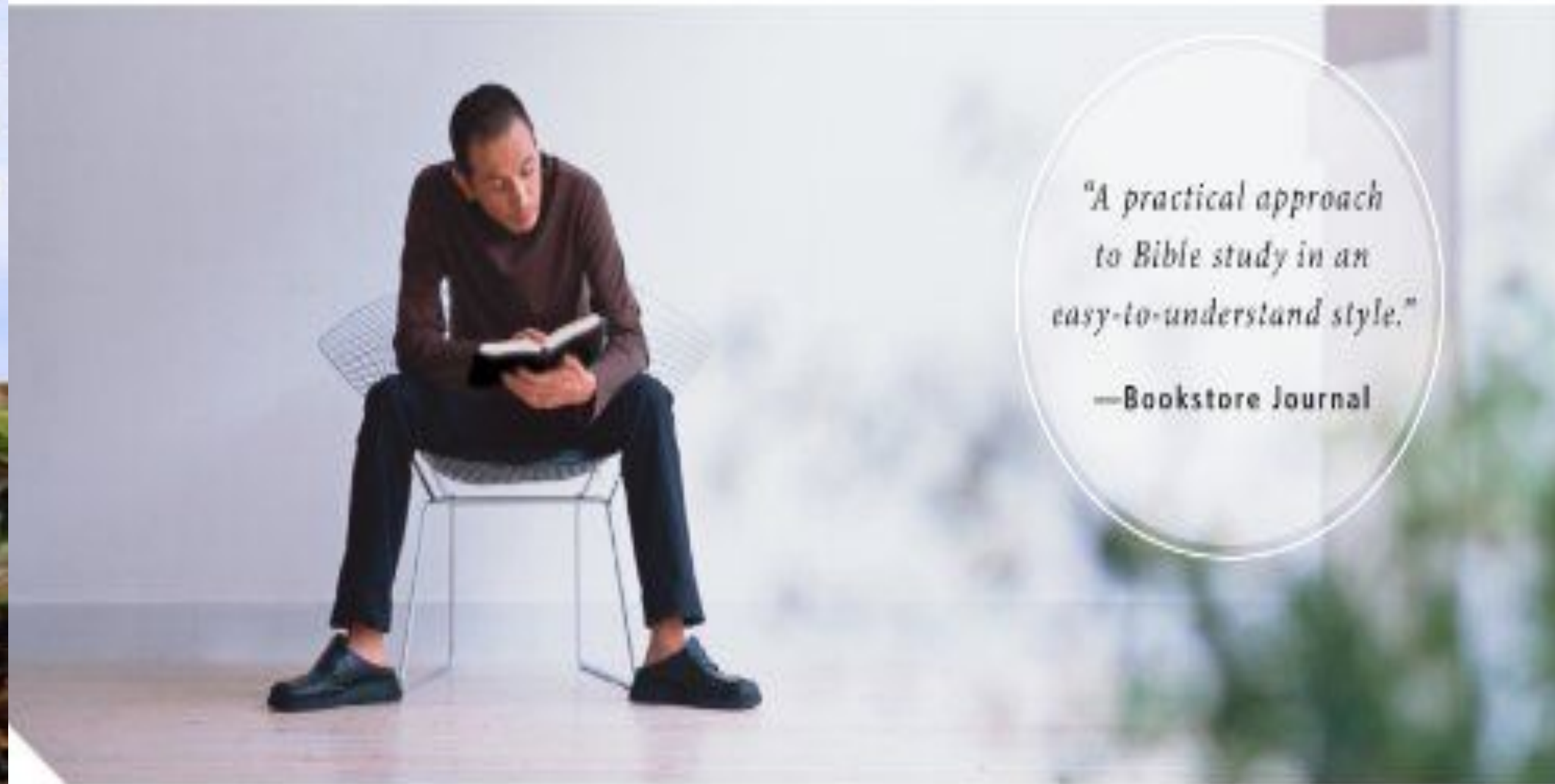




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FOURTH EDITION

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth



*"A practical approach
to Bible study in an
easy-to-understand style."*

—Bookstore Journal

Gordon D. Fee
Douglas Stuart

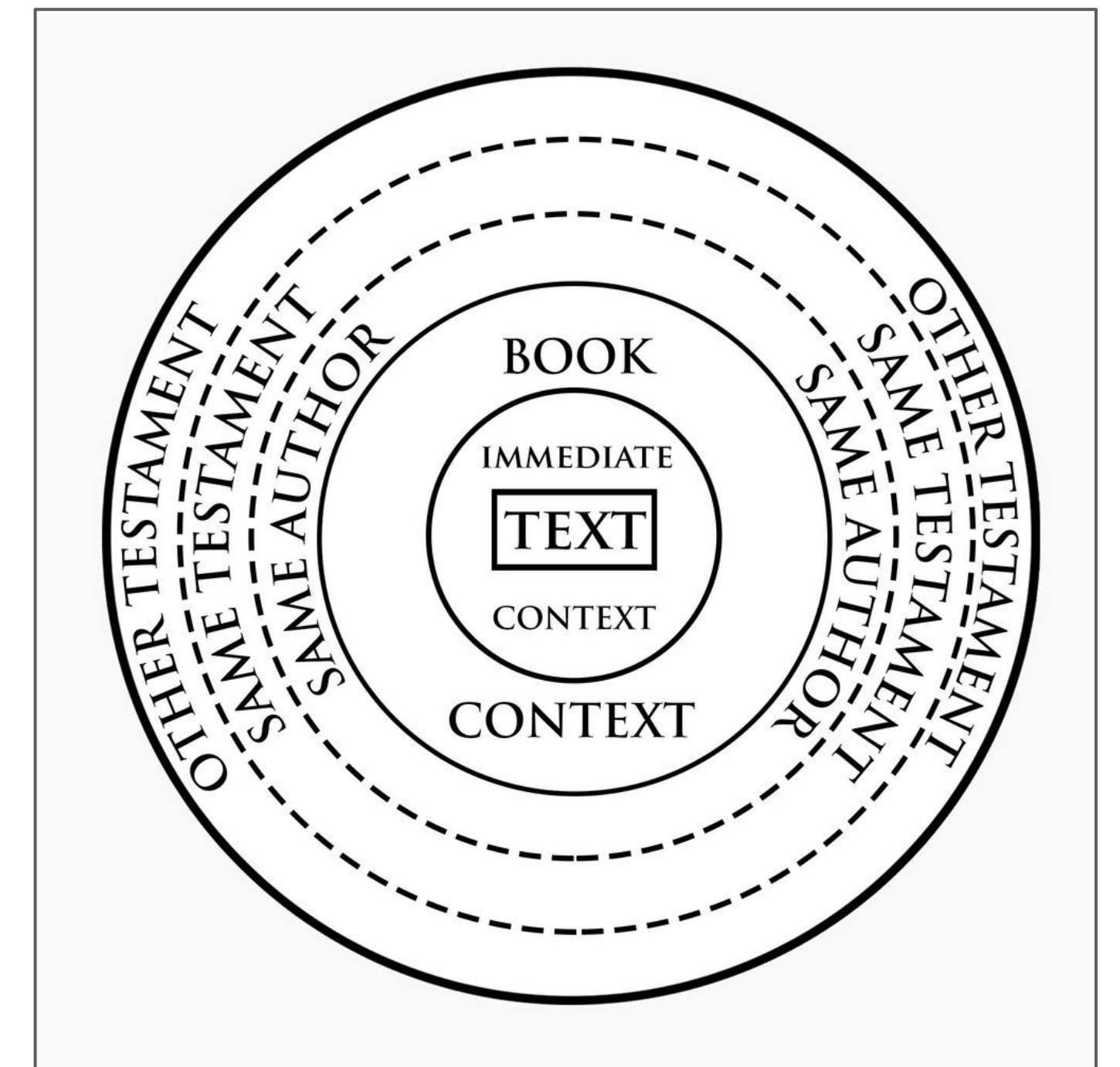
How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth

An 8 week introductory study with
classroom participation

Week 7: Literary Genre: **Parables**

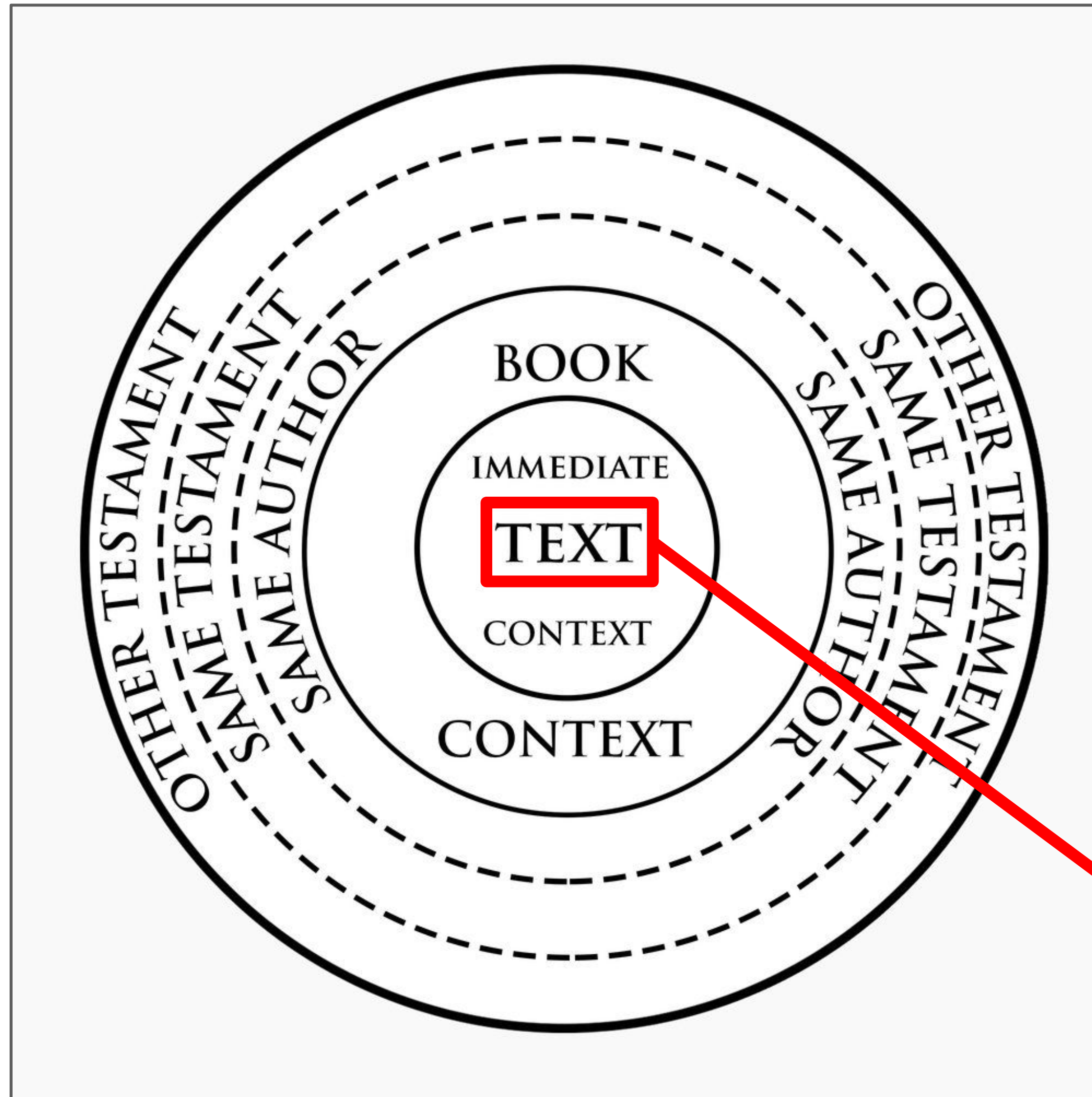
Week 6: *RECAP: Gospels*

- Unique literary genre. Not biographical. Not *chronological* historical narrative.
- Individual authors selected & arranged material for target audiences (Jews/Romans/Gentiles)
- Think horizontally & vertically
- Context: POV, setting, characters, dialogue, sudden plot turns



Prepared by Pastor Ted Rathman and Todd Frehafer
with the grateful assistance of Table Group Leaders

The Concentric Circles of Bible Interpretation



Identify smallest (minor) literary units
Paragraphing is already provided in most translations.

- Epistles and Hebrew Narrative: paragraph
- Poetry: strophe or stanza
- Proverb: overall theme encircling individual proverb
- Prophecy: entire oracle
- Gospel: paragraph (narrative); elsewhere one teaching session, parable theme

Parables - New Testament

1. Stories intended to illicit a response from the hearer as they convey a truth
 - When Jesus told a parable, he was dealing with either/both:
 - a. Question - The question might be spoken or unspoken. Context reveals if question was asked or implied (eg. Luke 10:25-37, “*Who is my neighbor?*” “Parable of the Good Samaritan”)
 - b. Attitude of inquirer or audience (eg. Luke 7:36-50, *Attitude of self-righteous Pharisee vs. humble immoral woman*, “Parable of Two Debtors”)
2. Approximately 40 parables in Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, Luke)
 - Gospel of John contains no recorded parables
3. **Not allegories, nor illustrations of Jesus’s teaching**
 - Unlike allegories, the point to the parable is not in the individual points of reference
 - **The intent of the parable is to call forth a response, often to convict the hearer of the truth of their behavior, and to prompt a response to Jesus’ message**

Five Brief Points about Parables

1. Jesus would speak parables to the crowds

Matt. 13:1-3,10 “That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. 2 And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.

3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying....”

10 “And the *disciples* came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to *them* in parables?”

2. Jesus said the parables convey “the mystery of the Kingdom of God”

Mark 4:10-11a “As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. 11 And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God...”

3. Jesus intentionally used parables to challenge the crowds to meditate upon his words and respond

Mark 4:11b-12 “....but for those who are outside, everything comes in parables, 12 so that while seeing they may see, and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear, and not understand, otherwise they might return and it would be forgiven them.”

Five Brief Points about Parables

4. Jesus called the “Parable of the Soils” a key to understanding all the parables

Mark 4:13 “And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?”

5. Jesus expected the audience to be able to understand the parables (ex. “Parable of The Good Samaritan”, “Parable of the Vineyard Owner”)

Luke 10:36,37 “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?” 37 And the lawyer [v.25] said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.”

Matt. 21:45,46 “45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. 46 When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.”

3 Common Figures of Speech in New Testament

1. **Parable**. Literally, “throwing alongside”. A figure of speech, which presents a short story, typically with a moral lesson at the end. An earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Jesus used parables *alongside* his teaching.

Examples: The Good Samaritan, Workers in the Vineyard, Prodigal Son, Great Banquet

2. **Similitude**. An extended simile. A similarity, a comparison, a likeness employing daily illustrations commonly experienced.

Examples: The Yeast in the Dough (whatever is said of the yeast, or the dough is always true).

3. **Similes and metaphor:**

Simile: the shortest type of a parable is a simile, a simple comparison utilized throughout literature with "like" or "as" being the transitory word. Comparison by resemblance.

Example: Matt. 13:44, “The kingdom of heaven **is like** treasure hidden in a field.”

Metaphor: A metaphor is a direct comparison between two things that does not use “like” or “as.” Comparison by representation.

Example: Matt. 5:13, “You **are** the salt of the earth”

Three General Categories of Parables

1. Didactic (“Teaching”) Parables

- Intended to convey truths about the Kingdom (“here/not yet”), our conduct & response, the grace of God

2. Evangelical

- God’s pursuing love for the lost

3. Prophetic & Judicial

- Watchful warnings for Messiah’s Return & Judgment on Israel

Didactic (“Teaching”) Parables

1. Kingdom Parables

- a. **The Sower (Matt 13: 3- 8)**
- b. The Tares (Matt 13 : 24 – 30)
- c. The Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31-32)
- d. The Leaven (Matt 13:33)
- e. The Hidden Treasure (Matt 13:45)
- f. The Pearl of Great Price (Matt 13: 45)
- g. The Drag Net (Matt 13: 47 – 50)
- h. The Blade, the Ear, and the Full Corn (Mark 4: 26-29)

2. Service & Rewards

- a. The Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt 20: 1 – 16)
- b. The Talents (Matt 25: 14 – 30)
- c. The Pounds (Luke 19: 11 – 27)
- d. The Unprofitable Servant (Luke 17:7 -10)

3. Prayer

- a. The Friend at Midnight (Luke 11: 5 -8)
- b. The Unjust Judge (Luke 18: 1 – 8)

4. Love for Neighbors

- a. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30 – 37)

5. Humility

- a. The Lowest Seat at the Feast (Luke 14: 7 – 11)
- b. The Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18: 9 – 14)

6. Worldly Wealth

- a. The Unjust Steward (Luke 16: 1-9)
- b. The Rich Fool (Lk 12: 16 – 21)
- c. The Great Supper (Lk 14: 15 – 24)

Evangelical Parables // Prophetic & Judicial Parables

Evangelical Parables

1. God's Love for the Lost

- a. The Lost Sheep (Matt 18: 12- 14)
- b. The Lost Coin (Lk 15: 8 – 10)
- c. The Lost Son (Lk 15: 11 – 32)

2. Gratitude of the Redeemed

- a. The Two Debtors (Lk 7: 41- 43)

Prophetic & Judicial Parables

1. Watchfulness for Messiah' Return

- a. The Ten Virgin (Matt 25: 1 -13)
- b. The Faithful & Unfaithful Servant (Matt 24: 45 – 51)
- c. The Watchful Porter (Mk 13: 34 – 37)

2. Judgment on Israel and within the Kingdoms

- a. The Two Sons (Matt 21: 28 – 32)
- b. The Wicked Husbandman (Matt 21: 33 – 34)
- c. The Barren Fig Tree (Lk 13: 6 -9)
- d. The Marriage Feast of the King's Son (Matt 22: 1 – 14)
- e. The Unforgiving Servant (Mat 23 – 25)

Exegetical Tips for Parables

1. Context - What's going on before and after parable?
2. Problem - What is the problem that prompted the parable?
 - a. *Question or Attitude?* When Jesus told a parable, He was dealing with either, and often both at the same time (could be implicit or explicit).
3. Identify points of reference
 - a. Luke 7:40-42: “Parable of Two Debtors”: 1 moneylender, 2 debtors
 - b. Luke 10: 25-37: “Parable Good Samaritan” 1 helpless man, 1 Priest, 1 Levite, 1 Samaritan
 - c. Luke 15:11-32: “Parable of the Prodigal Son”: 1 father, 2 sons
4. Look for the unexpected turn of events
 - a. Moneylender unexpectedly cancelled debts of both men
 - b. The despised Samaritan shows more hospitality than the legalistic Jews
 - c. The father forgives the ungrateful son
5. The meaning is found in the parable's entirety, not in its individual pieces
6. Parables proclaim the kingdom of God is at hand—your response required NOW!

Assignment for Week 8

Read Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (New Testament)

Today's Table Group Discussion - **Parables (NT)**

The Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1-9

Mark 4:1-9

Luke 8:4-8

Week 7

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

- New Cloth on an Old Coat ([Matthew 9:16](#) ; [Mark 2:21](#) ; [Luke 5:36](#) 
- New Wine in Old Wineskins ([Mark 9:17](#) ; [Mark 2:22](#) ; [Luke 5:37-38](#) 
- The Lamp on a Stand ([Matthew 5:14-15](#) ; [Mark 4:21-22](#) ; [Luke 8:16](#) , [11:33](#) 
- The Wise and Foolish Builders ([Matthew 7:24-27](#) ; [Luke 6:47-49](#) 
- The Moneylender forgiving unequal debts ([Luke 7:41-43](#) 
- The Rich Fool Building His Bigger Barns ([Luke 12:16-21](#) 
- The Servants Must Remain Watchful ([Mark 13:35-37](#) ; [Luke 12:35-40](#) 
- The Wise and Foolish Servants ([Matthew 24:45-51](#) ; [Luke 12:42-48](#) 
- The Unfruitful Fig Tree ([Luke 13:6-9](#) 
- The Parable of the Soils ([Matthew 13:3-23](#) ; [Mark 4:1-20](#) ; [Luke 8:4-15](#) 
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- The Weeds Among Good Plants ([Matthew 13:24-43](#) 
- The Growing Seed ([Mark 4:26-29](#) 
- The Mustard Seed ([Matthew 13:31-32](#) ; [Mark 4:30-32](#) ; [Luke 13:18-19](#)
- Yeast ([Matthew 13:31-32](#)
- Hidden Treasure (13:44)
- Valuable Pearl (13:45-46)
- Fishing Net ([Matthew 13:47-50](#)
- Owner of a House ([Matthew 13:52](#)
- Lost Sheep ([Matthew 18:12-14](#)
- The Master and His Servant ([Luke 17:7-10](#)

- The Unmerciful servant ([Matthew 18:23-34](#) 
- The Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:30-37](#) 
- Friend in Need ([Luke 11:5-8](#) 
- Lowest Seat at the Feast ([Luke 14:7-14](#) 
- Invitation to a Great Banquet ([Luke 14:16-24](#) 
- The Cost of Discipleship ([Luke 14:28-33](#) 
- Lost Sheep ([Luke 15:4-7](#) 
- Lost Coin ([Luke 15:8-10](#) 
- The Prodigal Son ([Luke 15:11-32](#) 
- The Shrewd Manager ([Luke 16:1-8](#) 
- The Rich Man and Lazarus ([Luke 16:19-31](#) 
- The Early and Late Workers in the Vineyard ([Matthew 20:1-16](#) 
- The Persistent Widow and Crooked Judge ([Matthew 18:1-8](#) 
- The Pharisee and Tax Collector ([Luke 18:10-14](#) 
- The King's Ten Servants Given Minas ([Luke 19:12-27](#) 
- Two Sons (one obeys, one disobeys) ([Matthew 21:28-32](#) 
- Wicked Tenants ([Matthew 21:33-44](#) ; [Mark 12:1-11](#) ; [Luke 20:9-18](#) 
- Invitation to a Wedding Banquet ([Matthew 22:2-14](#) 
- The Fig Tree and Signs of the Future ([Matthew 24:32-35](#) ; [Mark 13:28-29](#) ; [Luke 21:29-31](#) 
- The Wise and Foolish Virgins ([Matthew 25:1-13](#) 
- The Talents ([Matthew 25:14-30](#) 
- The Sheep and the Goats ([Matthew 25:31-46](#) 
- The Sheep, Shepherd, and Gate ([John 10:1-18](#) 