Step 2: Balanced Interpretation. After carefully gathering all the data you can find in the text, you as a skilled interpreter will articulate the general principles underlying the text. To identify those principles, the skilled interpreter asks three important questions: 1. What problem or issue does the text address? Biblical writers did not just deal with problems unique to their times. They addressed timeless issues like money, power, God, life after death, sex, and family relationships. BLM 8.4b 2. What light did the text shed on those issues for its original readers? Remember that in reading the Bible, you are looking over someone’s shoulder. The words on the page before you were originally intended for another person or persons. You must be careful to discover what the text would have meant to them in their circumstances before you try to apply those principles to your own circumstances. 3. What general response does the author describe or imply for the original audience—and for us today? Step 3: Conscientious Application Now that you have determined (as much as possible) the meaning for the original audience, you must determine what that same text means in your own life. Again, the following questions: What do I have in common with the original audience? What response did the writer seek from the original audience? What response does God expect from me? What am I going to do about it? This is the bottom line. All the work done so far is futile if you fail at this point. The Scripture can have no place in your life until it has an impact on the choices you make in everyday life.