

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 1, Orientation, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 1, Orientation, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Gary Meadors, an Emeritus Professor of Greek and New Testament, introduces his video lecture series on **1 Corinthians**. This initial lecture serves as an **orientation**, addressing the abundance of English Bible translations and the limited time for study. Meadors emphasizes the importance of **using accompanying notes** and recommends consulting multiple **scholarly commentaries** to deepen understanding. He distinguishes between **formal equivalence** and **dynamic (functional) equivalence** in Bible translations, preparing students to critically evaluate different versions. The lecture underscores the necessity of **interpreting scripture within its original context** before applying it to contemporary life.

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 1 Corinthians).



Meadors_1Cor_Session01.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 1, Orientation, Part 1

Briefing Document: Dr. Gary Meadors on 1 Corinthians - Lecture 1

Overview

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented in the first lecture of Dr. Gary Meadors' series on the book of 1 Corinthians. The lecture serves as an orientation for students, emphasizing the importance of proper study habits, the availability of numerous English Bible translations, and the fundamental differences between translation philosophies. Dr. Meadors also outlines the structure of the introductory lectures and his approach to biblical interpretation.

Main Themes and Important Ideas

1. Orientation for Biblical Learning (Online Context)

- **Importance of Note Packages:** Dr. Meadors stresses the necessity of retrieving and using the provided note packages alongside the video lectures. He intends to use these notes like a blackboard, referring to pages and sections.
- Quote: "First of all, by this time, you should have retrieved the note packages, or at least the first couple of them, so that you can have them in front of you as I speak with you." (p. 1)
- Quote: "I will use the note packages like I would use a blackboard. They're only outlines, of course, to a great extent, but I've made them a little fuller so that you'll have the opportunity to see what I'm talking about." (p. 2)
- **Advice for Online Learning:** Recognizing the challenges of online learning, Dr. Meadors encourages students to be active learners, likening it to being a "Berean" who checks out what is being taught. He also aims to anticipate student questions.
- Quote: "I realize that it's not really a lot of fun to sit in front of a computer and listen to a talking head. I'll try to make it as interesting as I can." (p. 2)
- Quote: "In other words, you be a Berean, as the book of Acts says, that you check out the things that we say, that you look for interpretive ideas." (p. 2)

- **Importance of External Resources (Commentaries):** Students are advised to consult commentaries that explain the meaning of the text, reading "above yourself" rather than opting for simplistic homiletical books. He recommends specific commentaries by Charles Talbert and Garland for beginners, and Ciampa & Rosner, Gordon Fee, Fitzmeyer, and Thistleton for more advanced study.
- Quote: "Don't look for some easy homiletical sort of a book on 1 Corinthians. Look for a commentary that actually explains to you the meaning of the text in the book of 1 Corinthians." (p. 3)
- **Research and Critical Engagement with Sources:** Dr. Meadors emphasizes the importance of comparing multiple qualified writers to find common ground and understand differing viewpoints. He stresses that commentaries are for research, not casual reading.
- Quote: "Reading one book that may be easy to read or may impress you as being authoritative is not the way to go. The way to go is to compare a range of qualified writers who are explaining 1 Corinthians to you." (p. 4)
- **Dedicated Study Time and Environment:** Students are encouraged to establish a regular place and time for studying the course materials to enhance focus.
- Quote: "I would suggest also in your study that you think about a place and a time on a weekly basis when you're listening to this course. That helps, and it particularly helps to have a place. You need a private place. You need a quiet place. You need a place where you can focus." (p. 4)
- **Contact Information and Course Coordination:** Dr. Meadors provides his email address (gngmeters@mac.com) and indicates that the lectures are coordinated with the note files.

2. Introduction to 1 Corinthians and the Nature of Text

- **Lecture Series Outline:** The introductory lecture will cover several topics, including "So Many Bibles, So Little Time," how the Bible teaches at three levels, the process of validation in biblical study, and a formal introduction to 1 Corinthians.
- **One Interpretation, Many Applications (with a Caveat):** Dr. Meadors introduces the common saying, "one interpretation, many applications," but cautions against the tendency to misapply it as "one interpretation, *any* application," which leads to subjective interpretations ("what the Bible means to me").

- Quote: "Someone has said that in the Bible, there is one interpretation, and there are many applications. Let me say that again. One interpretation, many applications. Well, the problem with that is this: many times, they take the M off of the word many. One interpretation, any application." (p. 8)
- **Emphasis on Original Meaning:** Dr. Meadors stresses the importance of determining what the Bible meant in its original context to legitimately apply it to contemporary settings.
- Quote: "My task is not to ask what the Bible means to me. My task is to determine what the Bible means. And to make that more stark, if we don't know what it meant in its original context and setting, we have very little hope of answering the question, what does it mean as I bring it into my own context today?" (p. 6)
- **Exposure to Multiple Views:** The lectures will present various scholarly perspectives on the issues raised in 1 Corinthians, acknowledging that there isn't always a single definitive interpretation.
- Quote: "These lectures, as a result, will expose you to numerous views on a variety of issues. There's probably not another book in the New Testament that raises such a series of issues that are forever issues for Christians." (p. 6)
- **Validation as Key to Interpretation:** True biblical interpretation involves not just personal opinion but a process of discipline, research, and reflection to validate understanding based on historical context and scholarly engagement.
- Quote: "So, the meaning of the Bible is not what you think but what you can validate by discipline, research, and reflection." (p. 7)

3. So Many Bibles, So Little Time: English Bible Translations

- **Focus on English Bibles:** While acknowledging the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek), the lecture primarily focuses on the proliferation of English translations. Dr. Meadors apologizes for his monolingualism and uses the English context as his point of comparison.
- **Historical Context of Bible Translation: Old Testament:** Discusses the Septuagint (LXX) as the Greek translation important for the early church and the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls in comparison to the later Masoretic Text.

- **New Testament:** Mentions the vast number of Greek manuscripts and early translations into Latin (Vulgate) and Coptic. Notes the significance of pre-9th-century manuscripts.
- **Early English Translations:** Highlights the efforts of John Wycliffe (translation of the Vulgate into English) and William Tyndale (translation from Greek, facing strong opposition).
- **Post-Tyndale English Bibles:** Briefly mentions the Coverdale, Great Bible, Geneva Bible (important for the Pilgrims), Bishop's Bible, and the influential King James Version (KJV) of 1611. Notes the KJV's controversial reception and its dominance.
- **Modern English Bible Translations and Translation Philosophies:**
 - Formal Equivalence:** Describes this approach as aiming for a "word-for-word" translation ("as literally as possible, as free as necessary"), maintaining the grammatical structure and vocabulary of the original languages as much as possible. Examples include the KJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, and ESV. These are generally seen as revisions of the King James tradition.
 - Quote (Metzger): "as literally as possible, as free as necessary." (p. 19)
 - Emphasis is placed on the reader to do more interpretive work with these translations.
 - Dynamic/Functional Equivalence (Thought-for-Thought):** Explains this approach as prioritizing the meaning and readability in contemporary English, often requiring more interpretation by the translators to render the "thought" of the original. The NIV and NLT are given as examples. This is considered an "interpretive translation" by Dr. Meadors.
 - Quote (New Living Translation Introduction): "a dynamic equivalence translation that is a functional equivalence translation, can also be called a thought-for-thought translation...listening carefully and translating the thought of the original language requires that the text be interpreted accurately and then rendered in understandable idioms." (p. 22)
 - Practical Implications of Translation Differences:** Dr. Meadors highlights the challenges pastors and teachers face when dealing with individuals using different Bible translations, particularly interpretive ones, which might lead to varying understandings of specific verses. He underscores the need to understand translation principles to navigate this reality.

Next Steps

Dr. Meadors indicates that the next lecture will illustrate the differences between formal and dynamic/functional equivalence translations using specific biblical verses. He encourages students to obtain and read the introductions to the NRSV and NLT Bibles in preparation.

Conclusion

Lecture 1 provides a crucial foundation for the study of 1 Corinthians. Dr. Meadors emphasizes the importance of diligent study habits, engagement with scholarly resources, and a nuanced understanding of the various English Bible translations available. By highlighting the differences in translation philosophies, he prepares students to critically evaluate the texts they will be studying and to appreciate the role of interpretation in the process of understanding Scripture. His emphasis on the original meaning and the need for validation sets the stage for a rigorous and informed exploration of 1 Corinthians.

4. Study Guide: Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 1, Orientation, Part 1

Study Guide: Meadors on 1 Corinthians, Lecture 1

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on Dr. Meadors' Lecture 1 on 1 Corinthians.

1. Who is Dr. Gary Meadors, and what is his background relevant to this lecture series?
2. Why does Dr. Meadors recommend that students retrieve the note packages provided for this course?
3. According to Dr. Meadors, what is the value of reading commentaries on 1 Corinthians, and what advice does he give regarding the selection of commentaries?
4. What does Dr. Meadors mean by the statement that "originality is not so much a matter of content but a matter of individual treatment" in the context of biblical scholarship?
5. What distinction does Dr. Meadors make between the question "What does the Bible mean to me?" and the more important question "What does the Bible mean?"
6. What is the Septuagint, and why is it significant for understanding the New Testament?
7. What are the key differences Dr. Meadors highlights regarding the manuscript tradition of the Old Testament compared to the New Testament?
8. Explain the historical significance of the Vulgate and its impact on access to the Bible in the Western world.
9. Describe the two major categories of English Bible translations discussed by Dr. Meadors, and provide an example of each.
10. According to Dr. Meadors, what is the guiding principle behind formal equivalence translations, as articulated by Bruce Metzger?

Answer Key for Quiz

1. Dr. Gary Meadors is an Emeritus Professor of Greek and New Testament from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. He has over 30 years of experience teaching at the graduate level in areas such as Greek, hermeneutics, and New Testament books, providing him with a strong foundation for lecturing on 1 Corinthians.
2. Dr. Meadors recommends retrieving the note packages because they serve as a visual aid, similar to a blackboard in a traditional classroom. He will refer to specific pages, sections, charts, and lists within the notes during his lectures, making it essential for students to follow along and engage with the material.
3. Commentaries are valuable for research and understanding the meaning of the text of 1 Corinthians, going beyond simple or homiletical approaches. Dr. Meadors advises students to "read above yourself" by selecting commentaries that explain the text's meaning and to compare a range of qualified writers to identify common denominators and points of disagreement.
4. Dr. Meadors suggests that in biblical scholarship, finding entirely new content is rare, echoing Solomon's sentiment. Instead, originality often lies in the unique way a scholar approaches and presents existing data and interpretations, influenced by various sources and offering a fresh perspective.
5. Dr. Meadors emphasizes that the primary task of biblical interpretation is to determine the original meaning of the Bible in its historical context, not simply to find personal meaning. Understanding what the Bible meant originally is crucial for legitimately applying its teachings to our contemporary context.
6. The Septuagint (LXX) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, produced in Egypt between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. It is significant because it was the Greek Bible of the first century and the primary Old Testament source used by the early Christian community, as evidenced by its use in the New Testament.
7. The Old Testament manuscript tradition is based on Hebrew and Aramaic texts, with a significant later standardization in the 9th century AD (Masoretic Text), while the Dead Sea Scrolls offer earlier comparisons. The New Testament has a much larger and more varied manuscript tradition, with over 5,000 Greek manuscripts dating from the 2nd to the 16th centuries, presenting a more complex textual history.
8. The Vulgate was a Latin translation of the Bible commissioned by the Bishop of Rome and completed by Jerome around 404 CE. It served as the standard Bible of

the Western Church for over a thousand years, limiting access to those who understood Latin and highlighting the importance of vernacular translations.

9. The two major categories of English Bible translations are formal equivalence (e.g., King James Version, New American Standard Bible, English Standard Version) and dynamic/functional equivalence (e.g., New International Version, New Living Translation). Formal equivalence aims for a more word-for-word translation, while dynamic/functional equivalence focuses on conveying the thought or meaning of the original text in understandable idioms.
10. According to Bruce Metzger, the guiding principle behind formal equivalence translations, as seen in the revision process of the Revised Standard Version, is to "continue in the tradition of the King James Bible, but to introduce such changes as are warranted on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony, and current English usage," adhering to the maxim "as literally as possible, as free as necessary."

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the challenges and importance of translating the Bible into contemporary English, referencing Dr. Meadors' explanation of formal and dynamic/functional equivalence. Consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of each approach for different audiences.
2. Explain Dr. Meadors' emphasis on understanding the original meaning of biblical texts in their historical context before attempting to apply them to modern situations. Provide examples of why this approach is crucial and how it informs the study of 1 Corinthians.
3. Analyze the role of various Bible translations throughout history, from the Septuagint and the Vulgate to the King James Version and modern translations, in shaping the understanding and accessibility of scripture for different communities.
4. Based on Dr. Meadors' lecture, discuss the importance of utilizing multiple resources, particularly commentaries, in the study of the Bible. Explain his rationale for comparing different scholarly perspectives and how this contributes to sound biblical interpretation.

5. Reflect on Dr. Meadors' advice to students on biblical learning, particularly in an online environment. How can students effectively engage with lecture material, prepare for study, and cultivate a Berean-like approach to understanding scripture?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hermeneutics:** The theory and methodology of interpretation, especially the interpretation of biblical texts, wisdom literature, and philosophical texts.
- **Bibliography:** A list of books referred to in a particular work or by a particular author or on a particular subject.
- **Orientation:** An introduction to a new subject, situation, or environment. In this context, it refers to the introductory remarks and foundational principles for studying 1 Corinthians.
- **Berean:** A reference to the people of Berea in Acts 17:11, who were commended for their eagerness to hear the word and for examining the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true.
- **Commentary:** A book or set of books offering an explanation or interpretation of a text, especially of scripture.
- **Original Context:** The historical, cultural, social, and literary setting in which a biblical text was originally written and understood.
- **Validation:** The process of establishing or confirming the truth or accuracy of something. In biblical study, it refers to the process of justifying an interpretation through research and reasoned analysis.
- **Interpretation:** The act of explaining the meaning of something, especially a text. In biblical studies, it involves discerning the original intent of the author and the significance of the text.
- **Application:** The act of putting something into practical use or operation. In biblical studies, it involves understanding how the meaning of a text relates to contemporary life and faith.
- **Septuagint (LXX):** The earliest extant Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures from the original Hebrew. It was widely used by Greek-speaking Jews in the first century and by the early church.

- **Dead Sea Scrolls:** Ancient Jewish religious manuscripts found in the Qumran Caves in the West Bank near the Dead Sea. They date from the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD and include texts from the Hebrew Bible.
- **Manuscript:** A book, document, or piece of music written by hand rather than typed or printed. In biblical studies, it refers to the handwritten copies of the original biblical texts or early translations.
- **Lectionary:** A book containing selections from the Bible arranged in the order in which they are read in church services.
- **Vulgate:** The principal Latin version of the Bible, prepared mainly by St. Jerome in the late 4th century, which became the standard Bible of the Western Church.
- **Vernacular:** The language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region.
- **Formal Equivalence:** A method of Bible translation that attempts to maintain the grammatical structure and word order of the original languages as much as possible (word-for-word translation).
- **Dynamic Equivalence (Functional Equivalence):** A method of Bible translation that focuses on conveying the meaning or thought of the original text in a way that is natural and understandable for contemporary readers, even if it means departing from a strict word-for-word correspondence (thought-for-thought translation).
- **Paraphrase:** A restatement of a text or passage in one's own words, often simplifying or clarifying the original meaning. While related to translation, it takes more liberties with the original text.
- **Liturgy:** The customary public worship performed by a religious group, often involving set forms and rituals.

5. FAQs on Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Session 1, Orientation, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Insights from Dr. Meadors' Introduction to 1 Corinthians

1. Who is Dr. Gary Meadors and what is the purpose of these lectures?

Dr. Gary Meadors is an Emeritus Professor of Greek and New Testament at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. The purpose of these video lectures is for biblical learning, specifically focusing on the book of 1 Corinthians. These initial lectures serve as an orientation to studying the book, covering essential background information and methodological approaches to biblical interpretation.

2. Why is it important to use the provided note packages while listening to the lectures?

The note packages are designed to function like a blackboard would in a traditional classroom setting. They contain outlines, occasional charts, and lists of issues or views related to passages in 1 Corinthians. Dr. Meadors will frequently refer to specific pages and sections within these notes, making them essential for following the lecture and understanding the material being presented. Students are advised to print them out or have them readily accessible on their computers.

3. What advice does Dr. Meadors give to students for effectively learning online, especially when studying the Bible?

Dr. Meadors emphasizes the importance of being prepared and proactive in the learning process. He advises students to retrieve and use the note packages, to treat the learning seriously with focus and research, and to dedicate a consistent time and a private, quiet place for study, if possible. He also encourages students to be "Bereans" by checking the interpretive ideas presented against other resources.

4. Why does Dr. Meadors recommend using multiple commentaries when studying 1 Corinthians? What types of commentaries does he suggest for different levels of students?

Dr. Meadors stresses that "you are what you read" and that a thorough understanding of scripture requires comparing a range of qualified writers. He advises against relying on a single, potentially easy or overly authoritative source. For students new to biblical study, he recommends commentaries by Charles Talbert and Garland as accessible and focused on explaining the text. For more advanced students, he suggests works by Ciampa and Rosner, Gordon Fee, Fitzmeyer (Anchor Bible series), and Anthony Thistleton, noting that these delve into more complex linguistic and hermeneutical issues.

5. What is Dr. Meadors' perspective on biblical interpretation, and how does he define it?

Dr. Meadors emphasizes that the primary task of biblical interpretation is to determine what the Bible *meant* in its original historical and cultural context, rather than focusing solely on what it *means to me* personally. While application to our current context is necessary, it must be legitimately linked to the original meaning. He defines biblical interpretation as a process of validating understanding through discipline, research, and reflection on various interpretive approaches.

6. Why does Dr. Meadors title the first lecture "So Many Bibles, So Little Time"? What historical context does he provide regarding English Bible translations?

The title reflects the challenge of navigating the proliferation of English Bible translations available today. Dr. Meadors provides a historical overview, starting with the Old Testament's origins in Hebrew and Aramaic and its translation into Greek (Septuagint), and the New Testament's Greek manuscript tradition. He then traces the development of English Bibles, highlighting key figures like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, and landmark versions such as the King James Version. This historical context helps students understand the lineage and variety of English Bibles.

7. What are the key differences between "formal equivalence" and "dynamic/functional equivalence" in English Bible translations, as explained by Dr. Meadors?

Dr. Meadors explains that formal equivalence translations (like KJV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, ESV) aim to be as literal as possible to the original languages while still being readable. They follow the principle of "as literally as possible, as free as necessary." Dynamic or functional equivalence translations (like NIV, NLT), also called "thought-for-thought" translations, prioritize conveying the meaning or thought of the original text in understandable English idioms, which inherently involves more interpretation by the translators.

8. Why does understanding the different translation philosophies matter for studying 1 Corinthians and the Bible in general?

Understanding the difference between formal and dynamic equivalence is crucial because the translation choices made can influence the reader's understanding of a passage. When relying on a translation, especially a more dynamically equivalent one, it's important to be aware that the translators have already engaged in a level of interpretation. Dr. Meadors argues that using good commentaries and research helps to bridge any potential gap between a translation and the original meaning, ensuring a more informed and accurate study of God's Word.