

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Lecture 5, Practicing a Process of Validation in Biblical Study

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This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 5, Practicing a Process of Validation in Biblical Study.

Welcome to lecture number 5 in this introduction to 1 Corinthians.

Today, we're going to look at what we call validation. That will become a technical term from the handout that you have today. You should have note pack number 4 for this particular lecture, which is titled Practicing a Process of Validation in Biblical Study.

Now, this is the last of these sort of special introductory lectures. The next lecture that we'll do will actually be a rather comprehensive introduction to 1 Corinthians itself, but I wanted to share with you these three major issues as we get ready to study a book of the English Bible. Since I only have you in this particular setting and in this particular course, rather than in a curriculum of a school, I was interested in sharing with you these items that I think are extremely crucial to making biblical interpretation, particularly as a student of the Bible, of the English Bible in particular.

We've talked about so many Bibles in so little time so that you can have an idea of how you can use the proliferation of translations to your benefit. You can also become aware of Bible translations so that you can help your people as they come to you with a variety of these versions. We've also talked about how the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches in a direct, implied, and creative construct manner. Actually, it's how we draw teaching from the Bible. And that's an extremely important paradigm to understand.

Every Bible verse that you study falls onto one of those pieces of the pyramid. You're either getting a direct meaning, or perhaps it's applying to something in an implied manner, or someone is claiming it within a creative construct. You can confront every text in some way under those three categories.

And you should always know when you're dealing with the Bible as proof for something, where you are within that paradigm. Today is the last of these three special items, and it is this issue that I call validation. There's nothing really very technical here.

It's merely using that word validation to help you imagine what goes on in the study of the Bible. Please notice, if you would, in your notepad number four, at the top, the

first paragraph. I have spelled this out rather completely, and I will read some to you here so that you can hear it and think through it.

Sometimes, when reading, I can emphasize certain aspects, which makes it easier for you to get the point that I'm after. All right, the term validation merely captures the process by which we validate competing interpretations of the biblical text. We've already talked a great deal about the fact that we have one Bible, and yet we have a lot of representations of that Bible, even under the umbrella of the Orthodox theology of the church global.

One Bible, many interpretations. Well, we've been trying to talk about how that can be. And here is another aspect of that. When you do validation, you're surfacing this variety.

To validate views on any given text is merely to surface them from the literature that represents the view. And now that's extremely important. Let me emphasize that.

The literature that represents the view. Sometimes novice students, students who are just beginning the process of study, will find a book, and that one book will conveniently tell you what the five views are on what it means to be born again or what it means not to touch a woman, or what it means to rise from the dead. Well, that one book doesn't hold all five of those views.

That book represents at least four of the views of other people. Now, if that book is a good book, and it does that, it will have a bunch of footnotes. No footnotes, no good.

That's generally the dictum for the kinds of books you buy. No footnotes, no good. So, if you have this one book, and it gives you footnotes to validate its presentation of these views, you realize immediately that you're not hearing from the people.

You're hearing from this one author who is representing these people. You are dabbling in what is known as secondary sources. You're using something that is reporting something else.

That is a secondary source. Now, there can be times when this can be convenient and can be useful. And if you have a particularly good author who's doing it, there is trustworthiness involved.

However, that is not acceptable in the larger process of validation. What you do is you look at those footnotes, and you go retrieve that material so that you can get it straight from the horse's mouth. So, this issue of validation always represents the person who actually holds a view.

They have a vested interest in the view, more than likely. They are going to present their strongest case. You do not want their case presented by somebody who wants to refute their case.

This is not necessarily because another author would be dishonest, but they're just not going to do it the same way that the original author does. And in good research, you must always go to the primary source, not to a secondary source. So, to validate views is merely to surface the literature.

Surface the views. To organize what they say. To compare what each claims to the other.

Because, see, they're using the same verse. How can one person say this about the verse, and another person say that about the verse? You want to learn what they're saying and try to see how they could come up with a different perspective on that passage. And then you organize and categorize these views into a nice grocery list.

And with that grocery list of views, you have their primary reasons for holding that particular view. Now there may be a little bit of overlap as you get five views on something, for example, with the reasons. But you want to see that out of the literature base.

Because that becomes the pool of information upon which you're going to reflect to make a reasoned judgment about the biblical text. Notice the bold print. Validation is merely the process of research that provides the interpreters with the information they need to make reasoned decisions about the meaning of biblical passages.

That's all there is to it. Now, that can be a lot of work. And if you're in a location that's isolated from a good library, if you're in a part of the world where you may not even be able to drive a few miles to get to a good library, I understand how problematic something like this can be.

That makes it even more important, as you study something like the book of 1 Corinthians, to have two to four or five good commentaries that do this kind of work so that you have a good literature base for making judgments about the text. In a sense, my friends, this is what God has called you to do. Now, I'm going to mention something, but I'm not going to be able to unpack it right here.

Many times, people bypass this process. Sometimes, you may be a person listening to me and say, I don't like someone telling me that I've got to reason about what the Bible means. I just need to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to tell me what the Bible means.

Well, I've got bad news for you. That is a misunderstanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's role is not to tell you what the Bible means.

The Holy Spirit's role is to convict you that what the Bible means is important and to motivate you to get out there and do the kind of work that's necessary to surface that meaning. Doing this glorifies God. He created you to think, feel, choose, and do this kind of thing, which reflects that you're created in His image.

And if you're able to be objective and honest, you can see that this is exactly the nature of our Christian experience. We've got variety. We've got arguments over what the passages mean.

And to just use the trump card to shut down discussion by saying, the Holy Spirit told me such and such is a cop-out. The Holy Spirit convicts us that the Scriptures are important and motivates us to pursue that. The witness of the Spirit is that process by which this happens.

Now, we'll talk a little more about that in 1 Corinthians 2. But to claim the Spirit telling you what the Bible means is an absolute dodge of responsibility to pursue the Scriptures. Now, anyone with access to sources, and that is a big question, I realize. That may be a challenge for many of you.

Let me just say on the side: do not underestimate any college that may be within driving distance. You might be surprised by what kind of library they have. Many universities started out sponsored by denominations, and they've long left that denomination, but they didn't throw the library away.

You can surface that library very quickly by just going there and looking. Now, the internet is extremely helpful, and it's getting better all the time. But I have to warn you that the problem with the internet is validating who's telling you something, as to whether they are competent to have an opinion.

That becomes a challenge in and of itself, one that one just has to deal with. I deal with it. I sometimes go out to the internet to find information.

And maybe I'll use Wickedpedia [i.e. Wikipedia], and I use that little pun on purpose, Wickedpedia. You have to be very careful because that's an open forum for people to insert information. Now, maybe it can give you the big picture on something, but you cannot take that as a reliable source.

When I teach graduate courses, I do not allow students to use that kind of source as a validation of anything. You've got to get to real published sources. Now, you can do that through a lot of modern computerized sources, such as Logos.

You may say Logos or Logos. The O will either be ah or oh. And there's a lot of great material that you can get from them.

My advice is not so much to buy their great big package, but to buy a beginning package and then go in and look at the specific things they have available that you don't see immediately in the packages that they provide. But to go and look for commentaries. They have an amazing deposit of items that you can pull into your Logos program.

You might even be able to pull in several of the commentaries that I've mentioned if you have them. Sometimes, you can even buy those books, and you don't have to buy the whole program because they have enough of a search engine that you can use them on your computer anyway. You can check that out.

You're probably smarter about the computer than I am. So, access to sources is at the very foundation of being able to study the Bible in the appropriate way. When you have those, you have the basis for doing what we call validation.

The next level of the interpretive process is to make informed judgments about the meaning and text that you surface from these sources. This aspect requires an understanding of the many aspects of interpretation that are classified as hermeneutics. Now, you don't have to be an expert in this.

If you can read, and if you have the energy and the motivation to find things, you've started the process. Notice this dark phrase, hermeneutics. Remember, that's that word for interpretation.

Hermeneutics is an activity. It's an activity. It is an activity performed from a skill base that is directed by interpretive principles and methods.

You see, validation is nothing but a fancy word to be the umbrella under which the activity of pursuing the Bible takes place. And wow, this can be, yes, it's a lot of work, but it can be a lot of fun. It's a discovery.

You've got a treasure that you're looking into, and you're looking to discover things. The more you read, the more you will discover. That's part and parcel of being a good Bible student.

Everyone who engages the material in these lectures on 1 Corinthians will make judgments about what the teacher presents. You know, I wouldn't want you to always agree with me, and I would always want you to look at the sources that I'm looking at and, beyond that, to see if there are other options. The question is, how do you go about making judgments? Is it merely some subjective process about how

you feel about what the teacher claims or the Bible says, for that matter? If someone tells me, I feel the Bible is saying this, well, I don't care how you feel.

You could have just been run over by a big truck. You wouldn't feel very good, but you could still tell me something about the Bible if you'd studied it. Or do you have a study process, like the Bereans in Acts 17, that probes what the Scripture actually teaches? They put Paul on the mat, and they said, we're going to look into this and see what we think here.

Looking into it would have been a process. In their own time and place and with their skills, they would have done the process of even checking out this person who was called an apostle. So, validation is merely that process whereby you say, here are five views on this text that qualified biblical literature presents, and then you systematically evaluate the claims of each in order to move toward what you think best represents an author's teaching.

If you use good commentaries, you're going to see how this process of validation actually works. There's one good commentary series that I almost always find help from. It's a little bit of an advanced series.

And like I said, read above yourself; don't read below yourself. But it's called the Word Biblical Commentary. They have both the entire Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Word Biblical Commentary is available in almost all major computerized programs for the study of the Bible. And I highly recommend it. It's pricey.

It's a lot less expensive to buy it in a computerized format than to buy the individual volumes. But the Word Biblical Commentary almost always presents to you this process of validation. All right.

Now, if you use these good commentaries like the Word Biblical, you will surface examples. Now, I've surfaced one in the notes for you. It's not in 1 Corinthians, but it's in 1 Timothy 2.12. And I think that's an interesting passage.

I suffered on a woman not to teach or exercise authority over a man is the way the King James reads. That has created no small amount of validation studies over the decades. Now, if you were to look at the commentary on Timothy in the Word Biblical Commentary, it's by William Mounce.

William Mounce has written on Greek grammar. He's done quite a bit with Zondervan in that domain. But he has, I think, a pretty fine commentary on 1 Timothy.

In 1 Timothy 2, I've given you a quotation from that commentary that you can read and see how this works. Now, there is one thing I want to say about this particular example. When Mounce goes through 1 Timothy 2:12 and illustrates to you validation, he's illustrating to you what I would call theological validation.

Theological validation is actually a second step. A first step would have been to surface the views on the phrases of 1 Timothy 2. Just what does it represent? He jumped ahead a little bit into what I call theological validation. But they're both validation.

Let's watch how this works. Notice at the bottom of page 15. The literature is voluminous, that is, on 1 Timothy 2:12. Within the scope of this commentary, it is not possible to enter into the whole discussion.

The differing interpretations, however, will be reviewed as they relate directly to the historical meaning of the text. To do more than this would place too great an emphasis on this one passage and detract from the pastoral epistles corpus as a whole for the best presentations.

Now, he's talking about views. What he's talking about are the resulting views of understanding 1 Timothy 2:12 in terms of the large macro-creative constructs that are talking about women in ministry. One of those macro views is what he calls the complementarian interpretation of the text.

Then he mentions authors, Kostenberger, Piper, Grudem, Moo, Fung, Hurley, Foe. All right, so those are people who hold the complementarian view. See, that's a theological view.

I'm sorry, but I should have surfaced another one, which is on the phrases of the text. And then you could have compared the two, but at least for the moment, this is the one that I have. Then, the second major view on 1 Timothy 2:12 is called the egalitarian interpretation.

And he says, see Gritz, Paul, women and teachers, and so forth. The place of women in the church ministry by Grudem, Perryman, Spencer, Moo, and Payne. Interchange on this.

And so, he's giving you, and he gives it in the footnotes, the literature. All right, now notice what he says next. I will try to stay away from antagonistic terms such as clearly or obviously and ignores.

In other words, when you get involved in literature that's debating a view, they often use that kind of loaded terminology either accidentally or on purpose. And avoid accusing the other position of having an agenda or any other tactic that might

deteriorate into labeling and name-calling. I would not call someone's conclusion his or her assumption.

In other words, what he's saying is this. I'm not sure; it depends on your age; I'm sure it would not relate to my illustration. But many, many, many, many years ago on television, there was a situation show every week about it; it was one of the early police shows.

And I don't even remember its name right offhand. But they had this one guy who said the facts and the facts alone. That's all we want are the facts as they did their investigations of various crimes. They want the facts, and they don't want opinion.

If you go into a court, opinions don't count. Facts are what they're looking for. They want a direct witness, not a secondary witness.

And so, the same thing is true here. Mounce says, I just want to give you the facts. You're going to have to make your minds up. But we're exposing these views.

Notice the next bold print. If one position were truly clear or obvious out of these two major theological domains, then there would not be significantly divergent positions held by respectable scholars. See what he's saying here? This is that probability issue.

In spite of the fact that we have a verse with about seven words that are highly disputed, it divides the evangelical community almost down the middle into two different views about women in ministry. That's pretty major, isn't it? And Mounce is pointing out that if the text was so clear that it would be indisputable, we wouldn't have this issue going on. So, you see, this commentary is confirming and reflecting on everything I've been talking to you about.

In terms of this issue of how the Bible teaches us, how we draw meaning from the scriptures. So, complementarianism and egalitarianism are creative constructs that draw upon direct and implied teaching to create their structures. And then they sort of argue from within their own structures.

Frankly, it hasn't been a very pretty picture. I've been to professional meetings where this gets pretty volatile. So, it's not all that clear, even with a given text, or we wouldn't have the discussion at all.

He goes on, as Schoeller comments, the concept of genuinely objective biblical interpretation is a myth. Now, please understand me. Please understand it in the context of what I've been presenting to you.

The Bible is authoritative and the Bible is to be obeyed. But the Bible is not self-interpreting. Just because you read it and it means that to you means nothing.

You've got to understand what it means to understand what it means. And that's what he means here. Is that to say there is one view, one view only, and everything else is wrong is a position of arrogance, not a position of being informed.

You may decide at the end of the day that out of four or five views, this is the one I hold, and I hold it dearly. But that doesn't give you the opportunity to badmouth everyone else because they disagree with you. If you actually understand what you're doing, you hold it with humility, even though you may hold it with deep conviction.

All interpretation is socially located, individually skewed, and ecclesiastically, that is, by church and theologically conditioned. All biblical interpreters, regardless of where they now stand on the issue of women in ministry, have been deeply influenced by both the sexism and the misogyny of our culture and also the occurrence of 19th-century women's rights and 20th century feminist movements. No labels can escape offending somebody.

And yet since labels are necessary, we use labels in the theological validation domain. So, this example validates the resulting views of the text in 1 Timothy 2:12, and there are a number of them. I'm going to give you another illustration from another text that looks at the text, not just the resulting theological positions.

But that shows you what the word biblical commentary does. Now, when Mounce goes back in, and it's just too big for me to copy and give to you when Mounce goes back into his commentary, and he goes into the text themselves, he keeps the two theological domains, complementarian and egalitarian, in view. When he looks at the details, he brings them back into view.

Why do complementarians understand it this way? Why do egalitarians understand it this way? See, that's all that we call the process of validation. And that's all I want to illustrate. Good commentaries illustrate this process to you. So, when you read this quote carefully, you will see the validation indicates what I've mentioned.

Different views on the text, raising literature that represent those views, and the challenge of logging and working through the views. What you do not see in this brief quote is Mounce working through the phrases of the text, as I've already mentioned to you. Now, Mounce proceeds to lay out the issues in the context of 1 Timothy 2, and the views that result from laying that out he's already mentioned.

I want to emphasize the last three sentences on this page 16. Do not fret about your skills or lack of skill, but begin a lifelong journey of developing your skills by doing this kind of reading. Do not be satisfied with simplistic answers to difficult issues.

Do not be overwhelmed by some powerful personality who's trying to herd you into a certain situation. God has called you to think, to make reason judgments, and sometimes it's best just to say, I need to study this before you start giving a view. You're not ready for that, perhaps, and you need to look at the issues.

You can save yourself a lot of grief if you're just being honest that you're in a process. Never be ashamed of being in a process. Never be ashamed of saying, I do not know.

I need to look at this carefully before I can make a judgment about what this is actually saying. Some people will push you off on that but do not be manipulated by that kind of pressure. And I want to tell you that if you're in ministry or going into ministry, people will constantly be manipulating you to side with them.

Don't you think, Pastor, this is the best understanding of this passage? And you're in the context of being taken out to lunch. Maybe you just golfed 18 holes, or maybe you just did something else together as a couple of friends, and all of a sudden, here comes the manipulation. Don't you think this is the best understanding? Well, maybe you don't.

Now, what are you going to do? Is your friendship in jeopardy? Know if you're a good, honest person and one who is interested in teaching, not just holding a view. You can help that person who's trying to manipulate you by saying, you know, we ought to get together and look at the resources I have in my office about what this means and study it. We can pull our Bibles out and get some concordances and so forth and so on.

Let it be a process. Don't ever shortchange the process. So, as we proceed through the book of 1 Corinthians, this motto of validation, this looking at views, bringing them together, and making judgments, is going to come up over and over.

Now I can't do that with everything in 1 Corinthians. Sometimes I will give you a view. I will usually always sandwich it from the standpoint that there are other options.

But the fact is that it's just too massive. It's so huge. But I will keep you alerted to what's going on and how we're proceeding.

Now let me come to another illustration about validation, and this one works just a little bit better than the Mount's theological illustration. This is an illustration of what the particular verses mean. This illustration comes from 1 Corinthians 14 verses 33.

If I can get that. I should have marked my spot. 1 Corinthians 14:33.

Thin Bible pages. That's how they can get something as big as the Bible into a smaller book. 1 Corinthians 14:33.

Notice I say verse 33b. Now I'm looking at the New International Version, the NIV. I'm also looking at the 2011 edition.

Here's where paragraphing comes in again. For example, instead of breaking the paragraph with 33b in the middle of verse 33, remember there weren't any verses in the original manuscripts. Notice verse 33.

For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, as in all the congregations of the Lord's people. Notice the dash after the first half. God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Dash. As in all the congregations of the Lord's people. Now the question is, and even little f at the bottom of the page is probably pointing this out to you, wherever that f occurs, that there are two ways of looking at this.

33a could close the previous paragraph, and 33b can open the next one. Or 33 closes, and 34 opens. So, the question is, what does all the congregations refer to? What preceded or what follows? See, that's a major, major, major issue.

I should just mention here that punctuation in your Bibles is huge. In my Greek New Testament, I have a whole series of footnotes on punctuation that shows all the versions and how they punctuate verses where you put a comma or a period or a paragraph indentation can skew the whole meaning of a passage. Here, if we put as in all the congregations of the Lord's people with verse 34, it's as if Paul is proclaiming a must.

If we start verse 34 with women should remain silent, then we've got a new thought, and it's not necessarily tied to 33b. So, I included 33b at the top of my illustration here to draw your attention to this. So, but what's the point? Women should remain silent in the churches.

They are not allowed to speak, must be in submission as the law says. If they want to inquire, they should ask their own husbands at home. Now, maybe you've used that passage to your advantage with your spouse.

It may have been to your disadvantage because the last thing you want to do is to squash your wife being a critical thinker and just making her conform to what you

want. So, be very careful with how you use this passage. But this passage is highly, highly disputed.

Why? Well, here's the reason. In 1 Corinthians 11, and we'll look at this later, Paul validates the public worship and participation of women in public worship. He validates them to be participants, not robots.

That's almost indisputable across the board with all the various views on women. Now, in chapter 14, we get this kind of statement. Women are to be silent.

So, it immediately raises the question within the space of three or four chapters: What's going on, Paul? You tell us this here, and now you're telling us this here. It raises red flags. All right.

So here I've given you a model of doing validation. Notice my dark print in bracket comments right at the top of this, right under the illustrated exercise. The first task in validation is to define the problem or the issue being investigated.

This will require adequate pre-research in order to understand and state what the problem is. In other words, you sort of have to research to even know where these issues are. Once you find them, then you come and take them on with more seriousness.

Apparent problem. Here it is. First Corinthians 11 validates women's participation in the public services of the church.

First Corinthians 14 seems to say the direct opposite. Women are to be silent without exception. Consult their husbands at home.

How do you reconcile that? All right. The second task is validation. Now you have the problem stated.

You know what you're dealing with. The second task is to log the various views. Now begins the paper chase.

You go, and you get your best commentaries. You see what they say. You see what they say others say.

You try to find the others so that you have this growing list. See what this is. This is how you write a paper if you're in school.

You have this growing list of representatives of views. Now I have done that, and I have logged these in the next section. Here are the views.

View number one. You can take this at face value. That is, women shut up.

And ignore 1 Corinthians 11. A lot of popular literature does that. It isolates these passages as if they have no relationship.

Now, over in the right column, which I haven't filled out. What would you do? If you surface someone who says that. I've never surfaced a real book.

It's a real commentary that says that. But there's some popular literature that will do that. And there's preaching that does that.

You would lay out the arguments. Why would they say that? About this passage. Okay.

The second view. Chapter 14. Prophecy context.

It is a prophecy context. And it's not talking about authoritative teaching. But prophetic teaching.

In other words, two kinds of teaching are going on. The women are not to prophesy. But it's not shutting them down in terms of authoritative teaching.

Well, there is Hurley and Carson. Our two scholars have laid out some issues about this. And the context of chapter 14.

The third view. Interpolation. Conzelmann, Gordon Fee is a very conservative writer.

And Philip Payne, who has worked on the manuscripts. Claims that that passage was not originally in the Greek manuscripts of 1 Corinthians 14. But that it was in the margins and brought in later.

Now you say that's rather wild. Well, it's not so wild because Philip Payne has actually looked at these manuscripts and done writing to demonstrate that this is a possibility. Gordon Fee is one of the major textual critics on 1 Corinthians.

He has more about textual criticism in his commentary on 1 Corinthians than any other commentary. So, these aren't fly-by-night people. Nor are they liberal scholars.

They're both conservative scholars. But we're not worried about liberal and conservative. We're worried about the facts.

What's presented? And this is one of the views. Chapter 14 is a prophecy context.

And not dealing with authoritative teaching. Now, there's another view. Interpolation.

That has come in. It was not original. Here's a fourth view.

Now this one is by a liberal scholar. Fiorenza. Feminist Pauline patriarchalism.

Now this view is going to be pretty far off the map for me and for others. I'm sure. But not for Fiorenza. She just sees Paul as being male-dominant. And she is a Roman Catholic feminist. But she's a view. That view is published and has to be logged.

All right. Fifth. The statement relates to family codes and not to public assembly. That is a family code issue. It is not a public assembly issue.

Therefore, it wouldn't be a problem for chapter 11. That view is presented by no one less than E. Earl Ellis. E. Earl Ellis is a fine major conservative scholar who has now departed from us, if I remember correctly.

I've been out of touch with his history for just a little while. But he's a major good commentator. He's written articles on this.

And it's in the bibliography. The sixth view. Response to the Corinthian slogan.

I'll talk about this more in our introduction. But one of the things that drives the book of 1 Corinthians is Paul quoting subgroups within Corinth and then responding to them. And some say that this quotation about women being silent is a subgroup that's squelching women not in consort with chapter 11, and Paul takes them on.

That's a major view. It happens to be a view that I find very compelling—a response to Corinthian slogans.

Now, you'd have to know about Corinthians to get in touch with that. Then the last one is Pauline's ironic sarcasm, which may be a little variation on number six. But it has its own author, its own article, and you have to look at it.

So, just by surfacing views, which are represented in the bibliography below, I have listed seven views. That's certainly not all the views. Now, what's my job? Well, my job is to list the pros and cons through the literature that I've surfaced.

And then to do an evaluation, you'll say, I'm sorry, that's too much work. Yes, it is a lot of work. The interpretation of the Bible, my friends, is not a spectator sport.

The interpretation of the Bible is getting into the trenches and digging and bringing this material to the surface and dealing with it. You can't do it overnight. It has to be a lifelong learning process.

And sometimes, when you're in the midst of issues when you're a pastor or a Christian leader of some sort, you have got to take the time and make it a community effort to surface these issues so that you can put the facts on the table, the views on the table, work through them and discuss them and come to a reasoned judgment about what you think is the best answer. So, in a very brief way, I've given you an outline that would start the process of validation of this passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. Now, we will come back to that in other ways later.

But for the time being, this is the issue of validation. It's not some esoteric, secretive thing. It just is the work of surfacing sources, reading the sources, logging what they say, looking for what they hold, not what they're reporting somebody else is saying, and coming up with your list and then chasing the literature so that you can get the reasons pro and con and see how they sort of argue with each other.

Sometimes, they'll even quote each other in these various commentaries, and you can see that process going on. That is biblical interpretation. It's not a spectator sport.

You've got to jump in there and get your hands covered with information so that you can process it. Now, I'm talking about we, particularly, who claim that we are called to Christian leadership. We have to do this work so that we can share it with others.

We need to be workmen, as Paul says. He uses a metaphor of hard work, saying that if we don't do that work, we should be ashamed. Paul says to be a workman who is not ashamed.

To bring this to the process of the Christian community to make judgments about what the Bible teaches. It's just that serious. And yes, it does take time.

But we have our lives. We do the best we can. But I'd like to say I'd rather stand before God at the end of the day and say, Lord, I made the effort than to stand before God embarrassed because I made assumptions rather than doing the kind of work that glorifies God in terms of dealing with the Word of God in a serious way.

I hope you'll get on that train as well. I think I've given you information that can begin to give you a consciousness of what that train is about. Please review these three big principles that we've talked about.

We are through this part of the introduction to 1 Corinthians. The next step will be to take on the book of 1 Corinthians itself. I have a rather elaborate introduction to the

setting of Corinth to the text of 1 Corinthians and things of that nature that we'll start working through in our next lecture.

You should go and retrieve notepad number five. Notepad number five is the introduction to 1 Corinthians. It's rather lengthy.

I'll explain its length to you later. There are a lot of things that will not immediately be evident to you that I'll have to tell you about. There are a lot of quotations from ancient authors about the city of Corinth.

I have put into that introduction things that you can look at yourself, but I won't be explaining to you where you can see what an ancient author said about the city of Corinth. You can see the picture of Corinth and some of its ruins. There's an archaeological piece to this whole thing and a historical reconstruction of the geography and setting of that city.

That will be something you'll be working on as you choose to do so, and we will have that available for you on the BibleLearning site so that you can pursue it. My lecture will focus on a few other things. The size of the packet doesn't necessarily indicate that it's going to take us months to get through the introduction.

You'll want to get that packet out. You'll want to work on it. That's what I would like to suggest to you as we continue.

You draw out the packet of the next presentation. You give it a preview to see what's coming. You read the Biblical text.

You read a commentary. Then, you listen to my presentation, and you will have some context when you come to the presentation so that you do not feel like you're lost. Then you leave the presentation that I give and go back to that material, and it'll make a lot more sense.

It's the process. The coming and the going. Listening to a lecture may not be one time.

You may feel that you need to listen more than once. That's perfectly alright. I want you to know with what the BibleLearning site has done for you.

It's brought together some of the best information on the planet out of Biblical scholarship and given it to you free from what I understand. Wow! That's amazing. Some people pay thousands and thousands of dollars to have access to the professors that you have access through this medium.

Make the best use of it. Even do it as a group. Two or three of you could listen to the same presentation.

You can turn it off and on. You can shut us up anytime you like. Talk about things and then go back to it.

You can even email me questions if you like. So, take the journey. Get on the train.

Let's enjoy this together. Thank you, and have a good day.

This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 5, Practicing a Process of Validation in Biblical Study.