How to: Exegesis of Relevant Passages

1. Find the relevant passages.
    a. Ideally read the whole Bible
    b. Start with where you are
        i. What verses do you already know deal with this topic?
        ii. What verses are cited by those who have already addressed this topic?
    c. Use Tools
        Concordances, Topical Indexes, Chain References, Study Bibles, Bible Dictionaries, Bible Encyclopedias, etc. to find the passages they list
    d. Read those passages and assess if they are directly relevant, only tangentially relevant, or irrelevant to your particular theological question.
    e. Be comprehensive but focused on the passages that are most relevant and address your topic most directly
2. Find the original intended meaning
    a. Examine the Historical Context, occasion and purpose of each passage and the book that contains it
    b. Examine the Literary Context and flow of thought in which the passage occurs
    c. Examine the words and grammar of the passage (read carefully and understand exactly what was said, and how it was likely understood by the original readers)
    d. Examine the historical/cultural references and allusions
3. Find any underlying theological principles
    a. Understand and state what is being taught in general terms
    b. Distinguish the principle and its specific applications
    c. Distinguish those applications that are culturally specific from the theological principles that are universal
    d. Distinguish whether the passage is descriptive or prescriptive
    e. Distinguish what is central core to the passage and what is peripheral/incidental
    f. Place everything in the big picture theological progression – Where did this occur in the progressive revelation of God's truth? Was it in the Old Testament? Was it in the New Testament? Was it anticipating Jesus? Was it flowing out from and applying what Jesus accomplished? Was it written to national Israel or to the worldwide church? How does this help you understand its meaning and significance?
    g. Place everything in the big picture theological context – How does it relate to other passages on the same topic?

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4. Validate the interpretation
    a. Is the interpretation the one that best fits the original contexts?
    b. Is the interpretation the one that best fits the words that the author choose to use?
    c. Does it best fit the author's overall purpose in the book?
    d. Does it best fits their historical and cultural frame of reference?
    e. Does it best fit in all the relevant contexts (historical, literary, theological)?
    f. Does the interpretation contradict the teaching of any other Scripture passages?
    g. Does it best fit the historical grammatical meaning of the words on the page?
    h. Extensive/Clear passages have priority in explaining less clear/controversial passages.
    i. Doctrinal passages have priority in explaining the theology of poetic and narrative passages.
    j. Those passages where the theological issue is the central message have priority in explaining those passages where it is incidental.
5. Evaluate the relative weight of the passages based on the following issues:
    a. Extensiveness – does the passage cover the topic in depth?
    b. Clarity – is the teaching on this topic clear and certainly understood?
    c. Logical Fit – how clearly does the teaching of the passage fit with others?
    d. Directness of Relevance – does the passage directly address the topic or only incidentally?
6. Communicate your findings

    This can be in the format you think best communicates.
    The Term project instructions suggest that some form of table or chart is worth considering as an appropriate format.

Review the Term Project Instruction document to ensure that all the requirements are met.
Review the Grading Rubric for this assignment given near the end of the Term Project Instruction document for the criteria by which this assignment will be graded