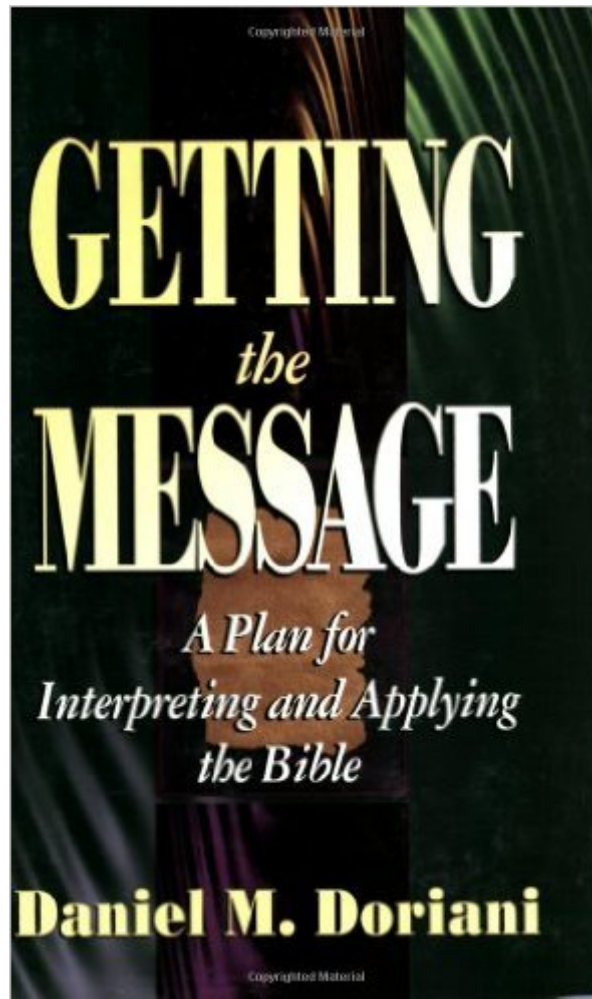


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# Getting The Message: A Plan For Interpreting And Applying The Bible



## Synopsis

For all those who fear that the Bible is a mysterious labyrinth through which they cannot find their way, Doriani provides wonderful guidance. Written with craft and wit, this highly readable book combines great biblical insight with marvelous practical wisdom.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have been on something of a quest to find the right book to use in an adult Sunday School class on biblical interpretation and application. While this book still isn't quite perfect, it stands head and shoulders above the other dozen or so books I have read on the topic in the past year. If I could assign it a more exact numerical rating, it would probably be about 4.7 out of 5. The book is divided into 13 chapters, each ending with 2-4 exercises to allow the reader to practice the material covered in the chapter. The book is organized around an acronym, CAPTOR, which stands for Context, Analysis, Problems, Themes, Obligations, and Reflection. I'm not a big fan of mnemonic acronyms because I often remember the acronym and not what it is intended to stand for, and because adherence to an acronym sometimes necessitates choosing terms that don't exactly fit (for instance, Doriani admits that application would have been a better label than Obligations for that particular section of the book). However, many people find them far more helpful than I do, so I won't deduct any points for that. Context is explained as both the literary and historical context. The book examines how one goes about understanding and applying each and directs readers to tools that might be helpful (e.g. bible dictionaries). The section on analysis is divided into two chapters, one on

analyzing narrative and the other on analyzing discourse (Doriani's catch all term for poetry, prophetic oracles, wisdom literature, the epistles of the new testament and so on). Initially I suspected that his attempt to abstract all non-narrative into a general category would fail, but he handles it surprisingly well. The few pages on understanding Hebrew poetry need to be greatly expanded. The author does provide several footnote references to Kugel's book for those wishing further study of that topic. One of the appendices also offers some genre specific advice for analysis. One suspects that the chapter "Solving Problems" exists primarily to get a P into the acronym. Some good advice is offered there, but realistically the step of solving problems, which the author defines as "any term, concept, custom, or teaching that eludes our understanding" fits either into the context phase or the analysis phase depending on what sort of problem it is. The themes chapter is good, but in my opinion spends too much time on the idea of approaching the bible with a theme in mind, e.g. "What does the bible say about marriage?" and not enough time on how to recognise the themes that are inherent in the bible (covenantal documents, the prophets as prosecutors of covenantal disobedience, &c.). This defect is remedied somewhat in the final chapter where he discusses the redemptive-historical method in the context of reflection. The section on obligations is the best in the book. The author observes that too often, bible teachers leave their students with nothing but abstractions. He discusses how to derive an application from narrative, how to apply the commands of Scripture that no longer have direct relevance (e.g. parapets around roof tops and goring oxen), and how to derive an application from a text that is strictly theological (e.g. large sections of Paul's epistles). In the reflection section, he attempts to bring together the previous five steps and discuss the different ways one can faithfully present the same text. That is, how does one distill one's insights about a text into a coherent message that best fits what one's listeners need to hear. Two approaches he suggests are the redemptive historical method (that is, how does this text fit into God's overall plan of redemption) and what he calls the fallen condition focus (FCF) (how does this text address the problems that are inherent in living in a fallen world?). The imperfections in this book are mostly due to omissions of things that I think are useful. Doriani refers to many works in his endnotes that will fill in these gaps if the reader cares to pursue them. Also, the book is aimed at teachers and preachers rather than individuals. While that isn't a defect, it will mean that I have to do a bit of extra work to use it with a class of laymen. The other problems are minor, and have more to do with the publisher than the author. For some reason, P&R chooses to use endnotes rather than footnotes - this is very disruptive when you wish to pursue one of the notes. Also, P&R never puts a bibliography in their books anymore - if you want to find the particulars on a book the author refers to, you have to dig through the endnotes to find the first

reference to it. Lastly, P&R's bindings are not very good and tend to show wear very easily and very quickly. This book deserves a hardcover edition.

Doriani has assembled this book with great concern for those who have not had formal Seminary or Bible college training, but who have a strong desire to be involved in the teaching ministry at the local church. I believe--as a formally trained Biblical interpreter--that this book needs to be in the hands of all those in this category, as well as in the hands of those formally trained! Doriani has carefully communicated all the important "steps" of Biblical interpretation in a manner that is understandable and clear for lay men and women. Don't know Hebrew or Greek but desire to teach the Bible correctly? Buy this book now.

This book is a great read and easy to understand. The book is organized wonderfully with summaries and sections so that the information is easily accessible at a later time. In addition, the CAPTOR method is easy to remember. This book is a must for any minister serious about teaching the word of God. Moreover, this is a great book for those that want to learn how to study the Bible for themselves. If you are sick and tired of shallow Bible studies and sermons this book will give you the tools you need to deepen your knowledge of the Bible and therefore your relationship with Jesus. RLT

This book teaches you how to interpret the Bible by providing you with helpful information about the how to observe what you are reading, the different literary styles of the Bible and many ways to digest the meaning of scripture and apply it to your life. Anyone teaching the Bible should have this book

While a biblical scholar, Dr. Doriani writes to all in a way that you will find useful and easy to understand. I truly believe he writes with the sensitivity of someone who really wants you to understand; he will not speak over your head. His ability to help you visualize, embrace and apply concepts is remarkable. This is true of all he writes, and I would add from experience, that he is also a very good professor... You can easily get a free sample of his style by listening to one of his sermons. Just Google him, they're easy to find.

I bought this for a Hermeneutics class in seminary. It has a lot of practical advice mixed with some theoretical assumptions. The assumptions are all the standard orthodox assumptions about

Scripture you would expect from an orthodox Protestant.. The methodology is solid and exhaustive. It covers all the bases. I will use it to teach any future interpretation/hermeneutics classes I teach at my church. The methodology is simple enough to where you could scale it to as much or little detail as you would like, so you can teach the CAPTOR method in a day or for a whole semester.

I was required to do the C.A.P.T.O.R. plan with one of my college classes that used this book as a resource. It was wonderful to actually get the book and read it for myself. A little complicated in places but a good read either way.

Doriani does an outstanding job describing "the Message," as laid out as it is supposed to be described. I am speaking, of course, Biblically. The application of the Bible is clear, concise, and definitely relevantly applicable after this read.

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