

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 204

Grammar and Bible Study with Steve Runge

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On this episode of the podcast we once again devote time to acquainting listeners with strategies and tools for more productive Bible study. Dr. Heiser talks to Dr. Steve Runge, a colleague at Logos Bible Software and an important name in the study of Greek grammar. Dr. Runge's focus is discourse, a linguistic term for studying the biblical text above the word level. If you don't know Greek, don't fear! Dr. Runge's methods apply to English as well—and he has been instrumental in creating tools for English-only Bible students that are firmly grounded in original language study. Listen and learn how to become a better student of the biblical text. The videos below feature Dr. Runge teaching some of the concepts we discuss and work through in this episode.

You already know [discourse grammar](#) but didn't realize it (several videos)

Logos Bible Software [datasets](#) for the Greek New Testament (the dataset adds symbols to your English reverse interlinear)

Dr. Runge's [commentaries for English readers](#) that derive from his grammar study

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 204: Grammar and Bible Study with Steve Runge. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. How are you, sir?

MH: Pretty good, pretty good. We're going to geek out a little bit today, but I think it will be useful, even for people who aren't geeks!

TS: I am not going to lie that grammar is really not fun for me. My kids are just now getting to the point where they're going to start studying it in school. Give me all the math homework...

MH: You get to help them with that!

TS: Give me all the science homework, but when it comes to English, grammar... I check out. It's the worst.

MH: That's where I checked in. I'm the exact opposite!

TS: Boy, God bless that there's people like you, 'cuz when it comes to grammar... whew! I'm out.

MH: I didn't want to be confused by any numbers. Exact opposite.

TS: I hear ya. Well, I'm excited about this one because, as always, any time you get into the nitty-gritty with textual criticism, grammar, the Bible, and what you do, I'm all about it. And I think your audience is, too.

MH: Yeah, this'll be one of those where we just try to help people take a closer look at what they're reading.

We're happy to introduce Steve Runge to our podcast. This is going to be one of our episodes that really focuses on tools and techniques for more effective Bible study. We do this periodically, and this seemed like a good time to do it. Steve is right down the hall from me. He works at Faithlife/Logos Bible Software. I'm going let him introduce himself. He can do a better job of that than I can. And then we'll get into what we want to talk about today. So, Steve, who are you?

SR: [laughs] That's a really good question! My background is actually as a general contractor/construction. I was one of those kids... I remember I was given a picnic table growing up (I was probably third grade or something) and I disassembled it because I actually wanted to build a tree fort and repurpose the lumber. But I got to see how things worked. I was always interested in what's going on under the hood. Not mechanical stuff so much, but just asking why. My dad was a research scientist and he really fostered that in me. I would ask him a question and he would answer my question with another question. "Well, what do you know to be true? What principles are involved here?" I can tell you, if the internet and Discovery Channel were around, I would have spent a lot less time with my dad growing up. But he ended up basically just teaching me how to do research and how to think about things. But I also had a great love of comedy. Steve Martin, language use, telling a good joke...

As I got into seminary, I realized that a lot of those skills and a lot of the interests that I had would really help me, not just to tell a better joke, but actually to preach a better sermon and do a better Bible study. I went to Trinity Western University and got a Master's in Biblical languages. I did that part-time while working almost full-time in construction. I crammed a two-year degree into seven. Then I did another repeat of that. I got a Doctor of Literature in Biblical Languages from the University of Stellenbosch—another basically two to three-year degree that I was able to cram into seven. Basically, what that allowed me to do was develop a

specialization with one foot in Biblical Studies and one foot in Linguistics. So I don't fit really well in either place. The linguist folks look at me as a Biblical Studies person and the Biblical Studies people look at me as a linguist. So it's really kind of an odd place to be, but it's been really fruitful in terms of pursuing this question of what's going on under the hood with language, and how can that, then, help us study the Bible better?

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MH: You're not going to say, but I'm just going to interject it here. Steve has quietly (maybe not so quietly in some circles) established a reputation as sort of an up-and-coming grammarian. You're a little older to be up-and-coming, but you're up-and-coming in terms of your appearance on the scene, and you're getting a lot of attention from the "old guard" and the people who have perpetuated the old guard. Steve's work has really penetrated into the Academy, for those who care about language analysis and biblical exegesis. He's not a mystery name to people who are in Greek grammar. Let's just put it that way.

SR: It's strange thinking of myself as a Greek grammarian.

MH: [laughing] You might be an enemy to some!

SR: Exactly. No, it's been strange to come out of construction and become a Greek grammarian. That's what I always aspired to be. But I think of myself more of trying to be like the Bill Nye of Greek grammar—to make it fun. I even have a lab coat. So when I do podcasts or video casts online, I'll typically wear that lab coat just to make it fun and interesting. It should be! Grammar should be cool, just like science should with Bill Nye.

MH: He's not lying. He does have the lab coat. We've seen him in the office. Of course, you're going to be on Faithlife TV with some of your stuff, and on the website, too, and videos to market different things. But that's true—he does have a lab coat. It's not a rumor! [laughs]

SR: The thing about language... Growing up, if I had to rank classes that I either was least interested in or thought would be least valuable when I graduated, English (especially English grammar) would rank up as one of those things. It kind of felt like... A lot of it dealt with correction and what I was doing incorrectly, and it just reminded me so much of my mom, to some extent [laughing]. But I'm communicating things. So much of grammar or our exposure to grammar is about how to do things correctly, and it's for the sake of doing them correctly. What I was more interested in was, why does it work? And why does it work that way? And why is it that when I say it this way, it can make people laugh? Or it ends up offending somebody by accident or something else... It sounds like I'm saying much the same thing. Why do things work the way they do, and how can I understand language better? That's really what my quest was about. It was specifically focused toward applying these ideas in biblical studies, but again, just telling a better joke, understanding why it is I'm laughing at a redneck guy that's

using these terms I've never heard before that make me laugh... Why do I laugh? Why do those terms work the way they do?

It turns out that linguists have essentially found that God has wired us to process language a certain way. There are idiosyncrasies between different languages, but there are also some pretty standard universals, in terms of how information can be structured and how that affects our processing and how our expectations play against different things. So by understanding some of those basic ground rules and principles, that can give us a framework, then, for being able to understand what's going on, not only in English, but some of the devices that biblical writers used to structure the New Testament writing to direct our attention to something, to connect things they may have thought we'd miss, or just to say, "Hey, this is super-important! Pay attention!"

MH: Inside the building, when Steve started down this path... I can remember you showing up after one of the construction jobs at my desk and trying to essentially sell this idea that a) this is important and b) we can actually translate this (pun intended) to people who don't have Greek or Hebrew. If they understood how their own language works, we can build some bridge to how... The same thing that they're familiar with in English (even though they don't really think about it)... We can build a bridge to those things in Greek and Hebrew and give them a different way, rather than just "this is a present active indicative"—just pure parsing or morphology. We can give them a different way to think about what the text is saying, even if it's only their English Bible. And so I can remember going to Bob and Dale (at the time) and saying, "We probably ought to do this. This is really worth going down this road." They bought the pitch, and the rest is sort of history. Steve has had a long history of creating things for the company (for the software) that help people do this. What we want to do today is have him walk us through some of the way that you can or should be thinking about what you're reading. We can talk about discourse (because that's usually the label that a lot of this goes under—this linguistic label: "discourse"... We can talk about what the term means, but more importantly, we want to talk about how a lot of this is really a matter of close reading, and then thinking about what's actually going on. Not just words you're looking at, but sort of at a bit of a higher level, how do these things work and why do they work in a language? These are things that we can apply to English, but we can obviously do it with Greek and Hebrew. As the linguists like to say, it's "cross-linguistic." There are certain things that just cross the lines of languages. Every language is trying to accomplish similar purposes and there are different ways of doing that.

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So what we're going to talk about here is, I hope, going to be an assistance or aid to Bible study, even at the bottom level, and that is, "Hey, when I'm reading, I need to be thinking about certain questions." Or "I need to ask intelligent questions about what I'm reading." But even beyond that, maybe getting into some tools that will take you beyond things like Strong's numbers—these simple things. People who are serious about Bible study graduate from just reading to

Strong's Concordance or maybe a study Bible or this or that commentary. This is another one of those things that you can graduate to that will help you get more out of what you're doing.

"Discourse..." What does the term mean? Why shouldn't it scare us? [laughs]

SR: Discourse Studies is a popular area in Biblical Studies. It seems like everyone wants to be involved in it. But fundamentally, Discourse Studies is about looking at language above the sentence level. In most grammar you're looking at things within a sentence or within a clause. But there are some things that operate above the clause level. For instance, "therefore"... A lot of times the word "therefore" will be kind of introducing a whole paragraph or making a reference from one big chunk of text to what precedes. So we can talk about levels within a discourse—the sentence or clause level being the lowest, but you can theoretically move your way on up. But the further up you go, the fuzzier it gets, because it has more to do with how I've chosen and how I've interpreted the text and built my own mental representation of it. Because if I read through... We're going to be looking at Ephesians 2 today. As I read through Ephesians 2, when I leave the room, I don't have all the words committed to memory. I've got a friend that does that, but I might have pieces of it. But when I'm reading a verse right at the moment, I may remember most of the words, but the further I get away from that, there's this kind of shifting that happens, where it goes from a word-for-word kind of memory of things to more like the gist of what it's about. And then it gets more and more generic. And that's why with memory, short-term memory is far better than long-term memory. That affects, then, how we read and how we're building a representation of what we've read for meditation or for preparing for a sermon or whatever it would be.

MH: So as we read, we're building this picture of, "Oh, here's what he's talking about" in our heads. We have this mental representation of this stuff that our eyes are moving over... this is what it means. But then the writers will actually drop or use little things in the text as we read that will make us think about the bigger picture stuff or draw our attention to some specific point in it. That's intentional.

SR: Right. From a discourse or linguistic standpoint, we would look at grammar as a way of signaling the writer's intention. So if you come from an evangelical background and you have a doctrinal belief in your church about verbal plenary inspiration (meaning, a word-for-word full inspiration of the text), this idea of looking at how the writers have signaled things and how they've chosen to shape and structure and organize things... Because the grammatical choices they've made are actually not for their sake, but for our sake. They're making these decisions to guide and direct us as we build that mental representation. We're to separate things off into a new chunk and know when to join it together. As an example, if you have little kids in your life (whether it's your children or grandchildren or nieces/nephews), a lot of times they'll come running in when

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they're excited and say, "Daddy, Daddy, guess what? This happened, and this happened, and this happened, and this happened!" You have all of these sentences joined with "and." It can make you feel like your brain is going to explode because it's all this data. And the reason why is because "and" tells you to join two things together because they're related. We have this expectation that we need to break things into bites, basically, just like when we're eating. If you try to stuff down a whole hamburger, unless you're a hot-dog, like you're at Coney Island or something... but even then, they chew things up. [laughter] We have to do the same kind of thing as we're reading. And so the reason why that feels like just such an information overload is because the kids are kind of breaking a rule. It doesn't mean it's unintelligible, but it has this potentially unintended effect of making it sound like this is one humongous piece that you need to digest all at once because they haven't given you any signals as to where to break it up into smaller chunks.

MH: Right, where to stop. Yeah.

SR: Adult English... this what Mrs. Williams was trying to teach me to do. You use temporal adverbs—things like "then, next, after that" or you can use numbers like "first, second, third." All of those are signals to say, "new chunk." It doesn't mean it's completely unrelated to what precedes, but it would be like taking a sheet of paper and cutting it up with scissors into smaller strips. They still all go back and form this one coherent discourse, then. My story could be made up of several scenes or several different parts of it, but then those parts—if it's a really coherent discourse—can get build up just like Legos into bigger and bigger and bigger pieces. And pretty soon, you've completed the Death Star by doing each of the different parts of the Lego thing following directions. It's the same kind of thing with language.

MH: For the sake of listeners, what we're saying is that this kind of construction—this kind of signaling (which I think is a really good word)... You just have to sort of be trained. If it's English, you know what the words are already. You're going to see them, but you have to sort of train yourself to stop and think about, "What does this word suggest?" Like "next" is this linear sequence and it's temporal—there was something that preceded and there's something that's going to come after. So to sort of stop and think a little more intelligently about what this word or these words actually are trying to accomplish and mean—to kind of slow down and become a more intelligent reader. But Greek will do the same thing. Of course, the disconnect in all of this is whether our English translations do a good job of communicating these sorts of things in the process of giving a Greek or Hebrew text to us in English. Do they do a good job of that or not? It's a difficult task.

SR: It's almost an impossible task, because I'll let you in on a little secret: Greek is not English. It's like they have a different word for everything, to use a Steve Martin line. Each of the different translations has a strength. So, say, the NIV is

trying to provide a readable product that sounds like natural English. The NASB is trying to preserve as much of the kind of structuring devices that you have in Greek, and that's why NASB as you read it can kind of sound a little wooden and not sound like it's very natural. Each of the different translations have a strength and they were designed with a purpose. But Bible translation, no matter how you cut it, always involves making choices. It's kind of like you can only take so many things in the life raft with you, so the translators are constantly having to decide that. The great thing about something like Logos Bible Software and some of these datasets... Like the one I worked on and that Mike helped get approved back in 2006. The kinds of devices we're going to be talking about today can be overlaid on any Bible translation, virtually, in Logos. It can be laid on the Greek text, especially for people who have learned Greek. But even people who have studied advanced Greek won't have been exposed to a lot of these things, or they've been exposed to it with the purpose of translating it, but they still couldn't tell you why the writer did this or what this signals, as opposed to some other thing. So we're going to actually be talking a fair amount about English, in terms of beginning there, because you know a lot more about how discourse works, just as an English speaker. And then we're going to come over and apply those principles, then, to the text of Ephesians 2.

MH: Well, let's jump in. Give us either some examples or go right into Ephesians 2—however you want to do it. What are the verses in Ephesians 2, so people can either stop and look it up or remember and go back?

SR: Let's see... Ephesians 2:1-10. Turn in your Bibles if you've got that, because in the Greek text, verses 1-7 basically are essentially kind of a giant run-on sentence. It doesn't mean that a Greek speaker would have understood it that way, but Paul has used devices to make this one large, complex thought—kind of like the Lego building of the Death Star. We're going to look at different pieces of it. You can kind of pre-assemble this piece, and then pre-assemble this piece, but he wants to get all of these background ideas out so he can make one point at the end. That's essentially where he's pounding the pulpit. If we're interested in doing teaching or understanding where he's going, understanding these things can help us really be in step with Paul as we understand these devices.

MH: Yeah, to emphasize what he would have emphasized. And for the same reasons, or maybe to be able to capture how he led up to this and what he was trying to get people to think while he was on the way.

SR: It's not going to solve every theological question. I've heard people say, "Dr. Runge, how does this work? Give us a definitive answer!" It's like, well, I can eliminate options and eliminate possibilities based on the way it's phrased, but there's still flexibility for interpretation. So if you're looking for a silver bullet, I'm going to disappoint you. I can tell you that. But this will be something that will help sharpen our understanding.

The first idea I want to talk about is backgrounding. Way back in high school, you probably... Maybe if you love English and are one of *those* people [laughter], remember the term "participle?" It's basically the kind of noun/verb hybrid. It generally ends in *-ing*, like "walking" and "singing." Participles are mostly verbs, but they're not like full-fledged verbs. They don't stand on the same par as "I walked." If I say "walking" versus "I walked"... walking is kind of left hanging, and that's why we have the phrase... Maybe it's one of the things you got yelled at about: "dangling participles." You've left this participle dangling. You haven't connected it to a main clause, and that's because participles' purpose in life is to take something that could have been a separate main thought, like "I walked," and to attach it to some other main idea. So going back to that Lego idea again, let's say you have one of those big Lego blocks or some big assembly. I can use participles and make something more complex. A lot of times you'll hear an announcer: "Dribbling up the court, taking the pick from so-and-so, he runs and SCORES!" You had the dribbling and passing. Those are not the main action. They're kind of background pieces that lead up to it. And by using a participle the way we would process that, certainly without even thinking about it... Those *-ing* verbs are telling us "these are not the droids you're looking for." This is not that main action. But the important thing is, it's something that could have been. It could have been a main action. "He dribbled up the court, he passed the ball, and then took the layup and scored." All of those could have been main actions, but the announcer (or the biblical writer in Ephesians—Paul) chose to use participles, and that has effects/implications.

So what we're going to see is that most of verses 1-5 are these backgrounded actions. You don't actually get to the main action until the last bit of verse 5.

MH: What are some of the participles, then? Give us some examples, because if you're looking at it in English I can almost guarantee... I don't have a visual filter here turned on or anything, but you could almost guarantee that some of these participles are going to be translated like they're just normal verbs.

25:00 **SR:** I'm going to go ahead and just read it in a literal version that's not going to match up with anything you can read, but it would be:

You being dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live.

And then you have the next thought down in verse 4:

But God, being great in love, who is rich in mercy...

And then you finally have the main idea, which is:

...made us alive with Christ.

MH: So all those other things are descriptive. They're participles. And the one that's not is "made us alive."

SR: Right. So that's your big idea. Where are you going to pound the pulpit? "He's made us ALIVE in Christ!" Verses 1-4 and even the first half of 5... Actually the beginning of verse 5 is "being dead in your trespasses." So you have kind of three backgrounded actions there. One, us being dead (up in verse 1). And then we're going to look at some other dependent elements. You have verse 4, where you have "but God, being rich in mercy," and then it gets into some description about that, and then at the beginning of verse 5 it switches back to us, which is "being dead in our trespasses." What Paul has done there is that he's told us not once, but twice, that we're dead. And he's talking to believers here. So this isn't about telling them what their status is now; it's about reminding them where they were and then in verse 4 you have this "but God" and you have a contrasting picture of us being dead in our trespasses and God being rich in mercy because of this great love he has. So we've got those two things contrasted with each other. Kind of in the back of our head and on the table, or on the desk top, so to speak... That's what we're thinking about ourselves, that's how we're thinking about God, before he finally comes down to the one big idea which he has, which is that God has made us alive together with Christ.

MH: So would you say something like this... I'm not trying to provoke any specific debate here. But if someone comes up to you and says, "Steve, I think the main point of the first five verses of Ephesians 2 is that Paul really wants us to focus on our deadness." That would be a misstatement. It's not to deny our deadness, but that's really not where Paul wants our thinking to orient. Correct?

SR: At least it's not consistent with what he has done, in terms of his grammatical choices. I can't know what's in Paul's head. I mean, sure, if I did I could be writing books all over the place. [laughter] Wouldn't we love that? But the point is that we can say that someone typically uses participles to do these kinds of things. This is scholar-speak, I'll grant that, but they're typically used for this. They're used here in a way that's consistent with this. Basically, the way he's framed this is to basically do almost like a drum-roll kind of a big build-up. If someone was listening to this, or if I was telling you a story and saying, "I'm going to the store, parking my car, walking in store, looking around behind me to make sure no one was coming, going into the entrance, heading back to the dairy aisle..." It feels like a story that's kind of not gone anywhere, or you're waiting for, "When all of a sudden..." It can be used to do a build-up.

MH: Yeah, it builds expectation.

SR: Nothing has happened yet from a formal standpoint. Even though I've been doing all those actions, there hasn't been a main action, grammatically speaking. And so you're waiting for that shoe to drop. What is it? What's this going to be? And it's not just participles that can do that. It's a common strategy, though, of

this hanging everything else on one thing in order to draw attention to the one thing.

MH: That makes sense. We've all read enough fiction where that's familiar to us. But here we have a nonfiction letter and the same kinds of things are there, even though our senses really aren't tuned to it.

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SR: The great thing is you can kind of practice this by listening to someone who speaks well or by listening to commercials. Things like participles that create a dependent relationship on whatever the main action is... It does two things: one is it clusters... You take that participial action, like being dead and God being great in his love... Those two things could have been independent main clauses, and they weren't. By joining them to the "being made alive together with Christ" in verse 5, one, it makes a complex action, but two, it makes that main action stand out all the more. It draws attention to it. So we can't really know what the motivation is. Is the motivation to background that action or is it to cluster it? You do one and you get the other for free. That's just how language works in general, whether it's English or Greek or Hebrew. You'll find languages having this kind of strategy. But there are other ways of doing that same kind of connecting using subordinate conjunctions—another big word. But it's words like "since" or "because" or "although." If I were to say something like "Because you invited me on the show today..." and I stopped, even if you didn't know the grammatical principle, you could say, "Yeah? Where's the rest of it?"

MH: [laughs] Right!

SR: Or, "Although I value you as a friend..." Again... "Yeah?????" I know this is intuitive, but I'm just saying you know a ton about discourse studies and grammar. Even if you can't use the words, you can sense those kinds of things because you're a user of the language. Another device would be a relative pronoun—the "who" or "whoever." We actually have one of those in Ephesians 2:4. In verse 4 you have:

But God, because of his great love for us, who is rich in mercy...

This "who is rich in mercy" is technically a relative clause. "Who" is a relative pronoun there. A lot of times relative pronouns are used to clarify which widget I'm talking about. "I want you to grab the book, which is on the table" or "the book that's on the table," as opposed to the book that's on the TV or on the floor. Well, we're not trying to figure out which God we're talking about in Ephesians 2:4. "Oh! It's the God who's rich in mercy, not that other one who's not rich in mercy!" It's not used to disambiguate, it's used to provide thematic information—to shape how we think about God in this particular context, as opposed to maybe thinking about God as judge or creator or as the Father.

MH: Yeah, it would be easy to think of God as judge because of the "trespasses and sins" reference.

SR: Exactly. But he's shifting here, and you have "God, because of his great love for us," which is a participle and "who, being rich in mercy"... that's the context. And you have this really cool comparison or juxtaposition there between where we used to be... regardless of where we are now. Remember, this is Paul talking primarily to believers, and basically what he's doing is taking this in the "Way Back Machine," back to where we were before Christ to remind us of that, and then going up to heaven to remind us of who God is and his great love—his great mercy. So we're essentially going back and replaying that home video of us to Christ and coming to know who he is, of being made alive together with Christ, we're reliving it in all of its glory, even if that sense of thankfulness and that sense of the sin being washed away has kind of faded over time. By going back and using the participles—using these backgrounded actions—it's basically taking us in the Way Back where you can kind of relive it, just like looking at old photos. It's a way of reminding. "Oh, I remember when I used to... Oh, man, I can't remember. I used to wear... I had hair like that, seriously?" Seeing those photos evokes the memories. In the same kind of way, Paul is going back and referencing these things that hopefully people have walked away from and not gone back to. But it's to build this greater appreciation when he comes around to the main idea of being made alive together with Christ.

MH: It's kind of interesting. I'm looking at ESV, and it says:

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked...

SR: Relative pronoun there, yep.

MH: Right.

...following the course of this world...

And "following" actually... based upon what we're hearing, you'd be like, "Oh, I wonder if that's a participle." It's actually not. [laughs] And the following one:

...following the prince of the power of the air...

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... is also not. So you have... What we would like people to do (serious Bible students who want to graduate beyond not only reading and beyond Strong's numbers) when you get into grammar, these are not participles. If you have a tool like an interlinear or something, then you'll realize these are both prepositions. And so your translation sometimes... "misleading" is too harsh of a term.

SR: Something got left behind.

MH: Right. It makes the preposition sound like an action in the way it's rendered. So what we would ideally want is for people to penetrate past the English and get to some of these awful grammatical terms that probably make them shudder because of their English class. But when you see one, then how should I think about it and how shouldn't I think about it? What does it accomplish and what doesn't it accomplish? You're trying to start thinking about these kinds of questions when it comes to the Greek and not the English. But you can do it, as you're illustrating. You can do this with English, too.

SR: Right. Just the repetition... Regardless of how it's been translated. Not completely regardless, but... Another translation has "according to the course of this world" instead of "following the course of this world." So "according to" kind of creates a sense of walking along some kind of line. But just notice the repetition you have, whether it's "according to" or "following." You have "following this," and then "following this." Let's just slow down and look at that restatement. Or is it a restatement, because you have two parallel statements? They're not joined by "and" or "but." And typically, when you have that kind of repetition, you're making a second pass. You're looping back over it to kind of peel off another layer. So you have "according to the course of this world" and then the second peeling off the other layer is "according to the ruler of the authority of the air." And then you have another kind of restatement—a right dislocation. Basically, it's this extra expression that's not narrowing down which authority of the air or ruler of the authority of the air we're talking about. But ESV says "the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." That's referring back to whoever the prince of the power of the air is. Normally, those kinds of alias expressions like that... We use names or that kind of extra description to narrow down who we are talking about. When I worked in construction, I rarely knew anyone's last name because we went by first names. There happened to be four Steve's that worked at the same job site. I was Steve the Framer, there was Steve the Electrician, there was Steve the Plumber. That extra expression was there to clarify which Steve we were talking about. But here... This is probably right up your alley, Mike. Who is the prince of the power of the air, in your opinion?

MH: Right. I don't know if you want to get into it.

SR: No, I was just saying...

MH: Yeah, I could identify him. We'll just say "that's Satan." But the "spirit that works in the sons of disobedience" raises a question, "Does Satan do that? Why would he be described that way?"

SR: Basically, it's shaping how we think about that individual, rather than narrowing down which it is. So this reminds me, my doctorate was actually on referring expressions in Hebrew narrative. So I have a doctorate in Name-

Calling, basically. [laughter] How can this help me? Well, my mom used to say, "Will the person who left the peanut butter out on the counter please come down and put it away?" She knew who left the peanut butter out. I knew who left the peanut butter out. She could have said, "Steve, come put away the peanut butter!" But she didn't.

MH: She needs to label you first!

SR: She told me how to think about myself, or at least how *she* was thinking about me. I was the peanut butter leaver-outer, and ostensibly that's something that I didn't want to be, so I should come down and put it away and then repent of my evil ways, right? You've got the same kind of thing going on here. "The prince of the power of the air"... assuming it's Satan, but again, it's looking at who he was. What was his role? He was the one at work in the sons of disobedience, but it's looking at *now*, where the previous sentence is looking at where they used to be. "You used to be doing these kinds of things."

40:00

MH: I'll tell you what this makes me think of, because you don't have a connective here. It is name-calling. The second part builds on the first part. The spirit line qualifies the prince line. But I'll get questions in email like, "Hey, it looks to me (and I want to know if you agree) that we've got two different characters here!" And no, we don't, because if we did, we'd have a connective. People will want to argue for certain points of their demonology or whatever-ology and they think that because the thought entered their head about the text, it's just as legitimate as any other thought. But it's not. If the writer wanted you to think of them as two disparate or distinct entities, there's an easy way to do that! But he doesn't.

SR: Right. And the comma that you find there in most translations is a really good way of doing that. It doesn't mean you don't have a comma-delineated list, like "I want you to bring apples, oranges, pears, and those kinds of things." But when you have this amount of overlap between the two, it's difficult... Potentially, there is a separate thing/person, but it's essentially ruled out because of the amount of semantic overlap. But ultimately, we talked about chaining things together to make one big, complex idea. We basically have one idea in these first couple of verses. It's "You were dead in the trespasses and sins..." Now, it's a participle. But verse 2 begins with "in which." That's a relative pronoun there ("which" is). So what verse 2 is doing is describing which trespasses and sins he's talking about. Again, it's not saying, "Oh, it's these, not those! Now I get it!" It's making us think about those in a different way. They're the ones you used to walk in, the ones that you used to follow according to the world—in fact, the ones that the prince of the power of the air was leading you in and is now leading the sons of disobedience in. And then you have another chaining in verse 3—another one of those relative pronouns: "whom." "Among whom" is connecting back to the sons of disobedience. Among those folks that you used to... "You used to run with them; that was your crowd!" Paul now throws himself in and

says "among whom *we all* once lived in the passions..." So it's not just a "You guys did this!" He's placing himself there and saying that we all did this. This is what we were characterized by. We once lived in the passion of our flesh. What does that look like? Another participle in verse 3: "carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind."

Again, it's not like you're going to end up with a completely different translation or a completely different idea, but all of this has to do with structuring. Verses 1-3 are one unit from a grammatical standpoint and, ultimately, just describing what sins and trespasses were like that you were dead in. Again, just like going back through a photo album, you're like, "Oh, right, yeah..." Ultimately, it's to build toward thankfulness and a commitment to stay away from those things because... what is it? "Distance makes the heart grow fonder" sort of thing. Or is it time? I don't remember which.

MH: Absence.

SR: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." You have those things and you look back: "I remember in college, that was..." You actually go back and look at the pictures and see the kinds of things you were doing and it's like, "No, I don't want to go back to that." But you can kind of have this sense that, "It wasn't really that bad. It was actually kind of fun waking up on the floor and not knowing how I got there!" That was funny, but when you look at it from a spiritual standpoint, it places a whole different light on things.

We've looked at backgrounding (specifically with participles), but more generally strategies for taking what could have been independent series-type things and make them into one complex thought. So verses 1-3 are that one big thought. But then you have... Greek has the ability to change the word order, basically a lot like Yoda. Yoda could almost be speaking Greek in some respects, because he's using the same kinds of things. "And much trouble you are!" He'll front things for two reasons. One would be for emphasis. "Much trouble you are," where "much trouble," then, is part of the predicate—part of what he's saying—but it happens to be the most important part. So you're not just going to be in trouble, but in much trouble.

45:00 **MH:** So he starts with that in front.

SR: Not in every sentence. Go look for YouTube clips of Yoda speaking and listen to them. It's not that his speech has a completely different word order. He uses normal English order a bunch of the time, until he doesn't. And when he doesn't, it's because there's a reason to do it. And again, that's very much like Greek. One of the reasons is for emphasis' sake—to basically make that word stand out because it's the most important in the sentence.

Another reason is just simply to mark a switch—like "Meanwhile, back at the ranch..." That's what we have in verse 4. "But God..." And now in English, since we're required to have a subject at the beginning of the sentence, it's harder. We can't change word order that much. In English, if we want to emphasize something, we'll use what's called an "it-cleft construction." "It was the butler who did it." In that kind of sentence, it's assumed that someone did something, and the question is, "Who is it?" And it's the butler, not someone else. With this switch (what I call in my Greek grammar book a "frame of reference"), the point is just to switch to something else. We typically just do that with kind of a secondary intonation. Primary intonation for what's most important for emphasis, secondary intonation like, "but God...", not "but *God*," unless we're doing it overly dramatically. "By grace you've been saved" (down in verse 5) is another one of those examples of emphasis. It's by grace, not by something else. When we come down to verse 8, we're going to have it again. "By grace you've been saved," not by something else. But here in verse 4, it's just switching from "you who were dead in your sins" to "but God." Again, it's switching to this other parallel scene. Not that we leave that one behind, but we're just going to set it aside like you're making a recipe and they say, "Please combine these ingredients and then set it aside for a moment" and then you go over to your protein and you start slicing that up and browning or whatever it is you're supposed to do. Because ultimately, we're going to pull this whole thing together into one recipe. So we just set aside the vegetables, and now we're going over to the meat course about God.

...being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses...

That's describing which God he's talking about. And again, that's not to help us figure out, "Oh, it's *that* God, not some other one." But it's to shape how we think about God, just as my mom would have me think about myself as the guy who left the peanut butter out on the counter. And because this has been going on for so long and it's such a complex thought, look at the next line in verse 5. It says, "even while we were dead in our trespasses" (in ESV). That's almost a verbatim repetition. In Greek, it is a verbatim repetition of where we began up in verse 1, which is being dead in your trespasses.

MH: In case you forgot that point after he piled all that other stuff into it, he brings it back.

SR: And what that's doing there is just like if you're watching a TV show. *West Wing* was kind of the show that really pioneered this. "Previously, on *The West Wing*" and they show you little 5-second clips of the previous episode. So it's enough to remind you, "Oh yeah, I remember that was going on." But it's also kind of a way of signaling that you're going back and picking that up where that left off, because otherwise why would they mention in? It helps get you back into

something after you've been out of it for whatever reason. With the TV shows, it's because it's been a week that's gone by, or if you're on Netflix two minutes have gone by (or two seconds) because you're binge-watching! But here, it's more like that proverbial week going by on TV. You can call it "resumptive repetition." It's going back and looping back to remind you, "That's right, he was talking about that!" Because we're just about ready to have all of that stuff come together for the main course, which is "made us alive together with Christ."

MH: What's going through my head is *Iron Chef*. Of necessity, they have to do that all the time. They'll introduce one thing, and then they'll go off in all these different directions, and then they've got to come back to this.

50:00

SR: And you can say, "Okay, why does this matter?" Just like with a recipe, I could take each of these different pieces and make it into a course, but it's not going to taste the same as if each of these ingredients, because of the caramelizing of the onions and how the chemicals work together... As a whole, the synthesis of the whole does something that's more than just the sum of the parts. Paul could have given us... We could contrast this with Paul just simply giving us a list.

You were dead in your trespasses and sins. You used to walk in them, following the course of this world... and following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit...

Or just say then, "He was the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience. You used to walk among them, and we did to when we were in the flesh."

You carried out the desires of the body and the mind. You were by nature children of wrath...

All of those things sound like they're equally important because they're all main clauses. God is rich in mercy... We can just move through all of those and make them all main clauses.

MH: Yeah, if they were all in a bullet-pointed list, you couldn't really distinguish if one was preparatory or more important. You know what I mean. Nothing would stand out. They're all in the same list.

SR: You wouldn't have any background... exactly.

MH: Right. They'd all be like... symmetrical. How do I know what's most important here, or even where it's going?

SR: Again, we can talk about, "Oh, this is a perfect active participle" and have all the grammatical jargon and throw that on there, but I've run into students and even professors who couldn't answer the question, "So what?" Why would he have done this, and how does saying it this way as opposed to some other way make a difference? Here, the Lego idea works really well, to me at least. He's building this complex Lego thing and, yeah, he may be building it one bit at a time, because that's how we process language. Just like the little kid that says, "This happened, and then this happened, and then this happened, and then this happened." That's this undifferentiated firehose chain of information. What Paul is doing is he's structuring it in bits and preassembling bits to then connect into the next bit, which is "here's where we used to be" and then "meanwhile, back at the ranch at the same time, God is characterized by *this*" and then connecting those two bits together is "even when we were dead in our trespasses." That's where the previous bit was put together with the "God" bit. Then you finally have this "We've been made alive together with Christ." And then you have this kind of parenthetical thought: "by grace you've been saved." Most Bible translations have an em-dash there, basically, which means "hold that thought." Like it's been inserted.

MH: ESV has that.

SR: Yeah. It's because you can do that in Greek and it's not a problem. Other translations will sometimes have parentheses. The point is, that's kind of an interruption to make the point, but he's going to come back to it, which he does in verse 8. But to really capture... Remember, we said verses 1-7 are all one big complex idea. We've hit our first big idea in verse 5, which is "made alive together with Christ." In Greek, these main clauses/verbs all have the same preposition—the same positional word ("with") stuck on the front of them, prefixed to the front. So it would be something in English like, "with alive." So we translate it as "made alive together" because "with alive" doesn't make any sense.

MH: It doesn't make any sense in English, yeah.

SR: But you end up missing this repetition of the "with" because then you have "seated with," or "with seated," as Yoda might say, and "with raised" in verse 6. So you have these three statements: "we've been made alive with," "we've been raised up with," and "we've been seated with." And the same person in each of those three is Jesus. So instead of this being something that God has simply done for us, where I'm the center of attention because God loves me and has a wonderful plan for my life... No! It's about inclusion into God's larger plan. It's not because I've done anything grand. In fact, it's because I've done these horrible things, but God, thankfully, is rich in mercy and because of his great love for us he did these things. "Even while I was dead in my trespasses."

55:00

MH: This is interesting. So if you had an interlinear, or even better, something like... I hate to keep referring back to the software, but something in which you can present an aligned view of this. If you could actually look at it in Greek, you would see the line of "withs" (this preposition) and, of course, Christ being attached to all of them. If you just had a way of looking at the text that way, that would be very striking. It would be very noticeable. Like, "That must mean something because he's repeating this pattern."

SR: Right. And a lot of times, if you're doing a Bible word study, you'll run into a *hapax legomenon* (another fancy grammar word), meaning it's a word that only occurs once in the New Testament or Old Testament. It's this kind of anomaly. So as you do a word study, you try to find out how this word is used in other contexts, and you're like, "It's not." Well, part of the reason is because Paul made stuff up! He coined words, not because they'd be unintelligible like Dr. Seuss and just making words up, but it's to create this "with, with, with" pattern that he essentially coined things. It works in Greek. There's creativity. My middle school kids coin words all the time. It's stuff that I don't know what it means, but based on the context I can kind of figure it out.

But here you have the repetition building this together. Even though they're all main clauses, and they do stand on their own, it's a compound clause. Just like that kid that came in the room: "This happened, and then this happened, and then this happened," it's joined together to make one big thought with verse 7 being the purpose—the reason why—the "in order that" statement in verse 7. Or "so that," according to the ESV.

Why did he do this? I think in verses 5-6, God hasn't made me just simply alive and simply raised me and simply put me in the heavenly places. It's about being joined with Christ, and this is about Christ being honored and Christ receiving the glory and Christ's position. I just get to ride on his coattails. I'm only there because of God's rich mercy, not because of anything I've done. It's because of what Christ has done that I essentially get to be with him and move with him through this process—being made alive, being raised, and then finally, being joined together with him. Why? Verse 7.

In order that he might show in the ages to come, the surpassing riches of grace in his kindness upon us in Christ Jesus.

It's ultimately about God's plan. Not God wanting to be nice to me or love me or wanting me to feel better about myself and my life, or to have an escape from my problems. It's about God's plan. And yeah, there may be these other derivative benefits, but ultimately, Paul is reminding us what the big picture is about here.

MH: So now we're at verse 8, which is the one everybody knows. [laughs] That's the one we all have memorized.

SR: Just a challenge for the listeners: How many of you can tell me a memory verse that doesn't begin with "For?" [laughter] Just think about that! So many of them!

MH: Yeah, I am thinking about it.

SR: John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9...

MH: Galatians 2:20, yeah.

SR: Verse after verse after verse begins with "for." This is another one of those signal words.

MH: All the ones that are on t-shirts... they all begin with "for!" [laughing]

SR: This Greek word is almost always translated "for." Sometimes it's left untranslated, but this Greek word *gar* is most often translated "for." It's the one that's in front of almost every major memory verse. It signals that what comes after this is there to strengthen or support what immediately precedes. In English, we don't really use "for" in that way anymore. If you go back and you're reading Jane Austen or older works, you'll run into that quite frequently. "I'm going to the market, for I am out of milk. Alas!" It's providing a reason—the motivation—for doing that. In modern—and I'll say American—English (because we've destroyed the language in ways that make the British upset), we would more naturally do this kind of signaling of a reason using a rhetorical question, like "why, in what way, how?" And so if I'm preaching or teaching and I come across a *gar*, I'll typically just throw in a rhetorical question, like "why?" Then I can actually just read the verse. "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith." That's why. Or "how." It's not always going to be the same question word, but those rhetorical questions are a more familiar way for a modern audience of flagging and signaling this is here a reason. It's a basis for something. It's providing support.

1:00:00

So ultimately, this isn't going off and making some additional statement to those three "with" statements. It's actually bolstering it and not really advancing the discourse. We talked about what discourse is, and all of those participial clauses and the dependent clauses that are backgrounding and providing a scene. It's more like packing your bags and getting ready to go, but you really haven't gone anywhere. Then you finally come to your main actions, which are being made alive with Christ, being raised with him, and then being seated with him. So those would be your three stages or steps forward. And then we come to this "for" statement in Ephesians 2:8 that actually kind of continues through verse 10. And that would be kind of like going into a cul-de-sac. You're still actually moving forward, but you're not actually making progress toward your goal. It's a sidebar filling out information, telling you why we're doing this. Or maybe it's pulling over to the side of the road to explain something before you actually get back on the

road and keep going. In verse 11, where you have the "therefore"... "Therefore" (the Greek word *dio*) is the way of signaling that we're getting back on our journey again and we're making progress toward that goal, and that's where you actually have this exhortation or call to action. "So remember, you used to be like this, but you don't want to be like that anymore."

But let's go back up to verse 8. Why has God done this?

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith...

And then you have another thought joined to this:

And this not of yourselves, it's the gift of God...

We run into this "not this, but this"—what we formally call a "counterpoint set." It's *not* this, but it's this other thing.

MH: It answers a different rhetorical question. So in 7 we get this purpose:

In order that in the coming ages he might show...

...how much mercy he had, or the riches of his grace. And then why? "For" answers a question. What's the reason?

For by grace you have been saved...

And then here it's not a "why?" it's a "how?" He's denying, "It's not of your own doing. It's the gift of God." So it answers two different questions.

SR: It's a second piece of support. It's the second reason you've been saved. It's by grace (your faith), and it's not of yourselves, it's a gift of God. When I was growing up... I don't mean to pick on my mom. [laughter]

MH: Moms are good fodder.

SR: I loved reading, and Mom would say, "Steve, take out the garbage." And I'd say, "Okay!" And then you keep reading your book. And then it's like, "Steve, take out the garbage!" It's not a "could you?" it's now a command: take out the garbage. I'm like, "Yeah, okay." And then I knew that I was beyond time—beyond delayed. I should have done that earlier. That's when I hear, "Steve, stop sitting on the couch, get up, and take out the garbage!" She was telling me what not to do. Basically, it creates this rhetorical void saying, "Well gosh, Mom, what should I be doing?" When, in fact, I knew exactly what she wanted me to be doing. But it's what's called a "foil." It's a basis of comparison against which something that follows it is made to stand out stronger and kind of have more punch.

1:05:00

He could have simply said, "and this is a gift of God" and left out that it's not from you and not from works. And it would have communicated the same basic content, right? But it wouldn't have had the same effect. By having those counterpoints both before and after, like bookends—those two negative statements... Again, those negative statements create this question of, "Well, what is it, then?" And when you follow it again it just kind of underscores that "it's not from this thing." And those are there in translation, but a lot of times this is such a familiar device that we don't slow down and think about what would have happened if he had simply said it positively and left the negative things out. That can be a way, if you're reading along in your translation, to say, "What would that sound like, and what would be the difference of just doing the positive without the negative?" Or just simply saying, "it's not of yourselves" and not saying what the positive was. There's a little bit less information, but it changes how you'd think about it and process it.

MH: And again, what would really be helpful is if we had some system or some tool (whatever word is appropriate) that would help alert us to slow down because we're at this point. You're going to ask this interpretive question, think this thought, think about what it would look like if it was this and not that. That's what we have to train ourselves to do—to read closely and think about what's here and why is *that* here and not something else. If we just disciplined ourselves to do that or had a tool to do that, we would really become much better readers, better thinkers, better interpreters, ultimately, because we're asking the right questions. I've found (this is just me now) that one of the big hurdles... I get this in distance ed. teaching a lot, but you get it in Q&A or whatever. "What's your advice for better Bible study?" And really, one of the big hurdles is just slowing down and asking good questions. Just asking good questions that we're just not trained to do.

SR: And learning what that looks like is tough. Where do you go to get a class on how to ask good questions?

MH: Or how to read more closely.

SR: "Slow down when you're reading!" Okay, I can slow down and say it word by word. They're saying more than that, but it's because people are trying to grasp and describe what it is that you need to do. It's essentially moving beyond just the intuitive processing of what's there to kind of look under the hood and say, "Why did they do this?" The easiest way for me to think about that is, "What would have happened"... Like there's a special way of doing something or signaling something to make it stand out, and there's the neutral, boring, drab way. We can do that with intonation. Try being excited and then talk like Ben Stein. The whole reason Ben Stein is funny is because it's the anti-... Nothing stands out.

MH: Or visually it's Bill Belichick—that poster with ten pictures of Belichick and they're all the same—happy, sad.

SR: The many faces of Bill Belichick... [laughter] The many faces of Spock. I've been asking for that t-shirt for my birthday for a while. But anyhow, the resource that I started working on when I started with Faithlife is called the *Lexham Discourse Greek New Testament Data Set*. So we talked about participles and the way they have the effect of backgrounding. So all the places where you have, regardless of how it's translated, one of these participial clauses in Greek, those have been represented, both in the Greek text with this data set turned on, or in your English translation in a 50% grayscale, so it looks like it's grayed-out. It doesn't stand out as well. So what we've tried to do is to provide a visual way for you so when you're reading along in your Bible, you have that visual filter turned on. You're going to look at that and say, "Why is that gray instead of black?" Or if it's Jesus speaking in red letters, it's going to be this grayed-out text. It's to help you slow down and go, "Oh, this has been backgrounded! Why would they have backgrounded this, and what does this connect over to?" Or the, "not that, but this"—those counterpoint point sets. I was trying to come up with some way to be low profile but make it stand out. We put "X's" on the counterpoints and then checks on either side to the point so you can see that these two things (the X's and the checks) go together, with the check being the thing that they're drawing attention to. And so it lets you connect those two pieces and say, "Ah, there's a relationship here!"

MH: Yeah, what Steve's talking about is to make these things evident to either somebody reading an interlinear or reading their Greek New Testament, or just reading their English translation. We had to come up with a set of icons, essentially, or symbols. In some cases, we're actually playing with the color—the gray scaling—to alert readers that there's something here for you to think about. At least in the software, you can hover over those things and get a brief explanation and whatnot. It was really a challenge.

1:10:00

But before we talk more about that, why don't you mop up with verse 10 here. We have another "for" statement.

SR: Metaphorically speaking, we could kind of summarize and say verses 1-5a are kind of this "packing your bags" and getting all of the stuff gathered up to get ready to move our way through the discourse. The first step of that movement through the discourse would be the main idea in verse 5b, which is "being made alive together with Christ." The next step is "being raised together," and the third step is "seated together. Why? You have the purpose there in verse 7: "in order that he might show in the ages to come the surpassing riches of his grace." Why? A reason is given in verse 8: "for it is by grace you have been saved through faith." The second reason in verse 8b: "this is not of yourselves, it's a gift of God." Verse 9 is that cycling back through that same thought, but providing a parallel: "not of works"—still having the positive correlate that it's still a gift... "Not

of works" (purpose) "in order that you don't boast." Then in verse 10 you have another reason. Why has God done this? What's his motivation or his goal and objective? The reason in verse 10 is: "For we are his creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works." And then you have another relative clause there in the next part of verse 10: "which God prepared beforehand." So this is describing the works. Again, it's not saying, "It's *these* good works, not these other ones." But you get this picture that God has redeemed us. He has seated us with Christ, raised us with Christ, so that we could walk in these good works. It's not specific good works, as opposed to these other ones, it's the ones that were created beforehand. So it's more like God saved us so that he could get us on the path to do what he made us—what he foreordained for us—to do in the first place... that we'd walk in them. So it's kind of this picture of God taking us off this old path—this sinful path—and putting us on a new one that he's prepared for us and cleared off for us. We just walk in them.

MH: Yeah, he had something in mind. This is like, God created us and he did all this stuff because he wanted his creations to not waste the life they'd been given. That's kind of a neat summary there.

SR: He really does love us and have a wonderful plan for our lives if we just get a clue and walk in it, instead of going off on the other stuff. That's kind of the metaphor here. Then the "therefore" in verse 11 is signaling... We've had a couple of these reason statements. Ultimately, verses 7-10 are hanging on those three big ideas of verses 5-6 (those three "with" statements). And then verses 1-5a are hanging off the front end of those things. So what you really have is just one complex idea. It's three parts, in terms of those big ideas, but verses 1-10 make a really tight unit. So if we're teaching this or trying to do a Bible study, we really want to make sure that we get all of the pieces. You may have to slow to down to make sure you recognize how the pieces fit together.

MH: I think this is a good example because you have familiar stuff in here, but look at all the other things around it, plus as familiar as it is, we've just spent a good chunk of time talking about how you could think about this familiar thing in so many different ways. This is a good example of a familiar passage. People who are listening have probably heard this preached 5-10 times [laughs] if they're adults and have been believers.

SR: Well, and you memorize parts of it, too.

MH: Yeah, and you memorize parts of it. There's a lot to notice here. Unless you have some means to have your attention drawn to certain things—that you're alerted that there's something really worth thinking about here—you're kind of going to blow right over it.

So before we wrap up, I do want to go back to the thing that you've been trying to create in the building and have really spent years on. I remember the old days

when it was in its infancy and "how do we make this useful to somebody who doesn't do Greek or Hebrew" and just with the English Bible and whatnot. We've probably done (on the history of the podcast) maybe four or five of these kinds of episodes, where they're really about tools or about Bible study or techniques or something like that. This is another one of those, like I announced in the beginning. I often get asked the question, "What's your advice for doing better Bible study—for getting more out of my Bible?" Hey, this is one of them—to have tools that will not just be something that you can sort of pull out and use for a few seconds and reference something. But this is the kind of tool that will actually change the way you read—just alert you to things. So let's talk just for a couple minutes more about how this works and how people might be able to get it if they're interested in a good Bible study tool.

SR: The challenge with language, especially if you're a native speaker... You may have heard people say that native speakers have the hardest time explaining language to someone that's learning a language because the native speaker doesn't know why... "We just do it that way. That's the way it is." We had the examples of me just saying, "Because I'm on the show..." or "Although..." Partly, intonation is another way of signaling that something more is coming, but to slow down and start thinking about how language as signals... Content words (nouns and verbs), we're not so much talking about here. We're talking about conjunctions and verb forms and all that stuff that just made your eyes glaze over in high school. It made my eyes glaze over, too! I can tell you. Mrs. Williams would be having a cow if she knew I was a grammarian and encouraging people to think more carefully about how they speak and why! But I can tell you, it's completely transformed how I think about scripture, and I've had stories from an ESL teacher that has used this resource to help students slow down. It explains why we do things. For instance, think about a coach saying, "Listen up!" Sometimes it's because the players weren't really listening, but sometimes they were listening and it's just to tell them something important is about to come. Or you're telling this story to your friends and you say, "We were going along, and you'll never guess what happened!" The "never guess what happened"... you're not asking them to answer. What you're doing is you're signaling that what you're about to tell them is really important or unexpected and you want them to know that. You could have just gone ahead and told them whatever it was, but you want to make sure that they're listening. Sometimes a good storyteller will quiet their voice.

The resource that Mike was talking about... There's an introduction in the glossary where I use examples from regular English. I don't think I talk about my mom so much there, but I do in another book. [laughter]. But again, you do this all the time. You do this every day. It's simply a matter of slowing down and 1) recognizing it, 2) getting a sense for why you did that, and then the great thing is you can be practicing, not just when you're reading your Bible, but when you're listening to radio programs and to advertisements on TV. "Order before midnight tonight... But wait! There's *more!*" The "but wait, there's more" is a way of

connecting the two things together, but it's slowing down. What's going to be the less important or less surprising—what's already been before, or what comes after the "but wait, there's more?" Generally, that's where they tell you, "Order in the next 30 minutes and we'll *double* your order!" All of that is there to signal, and the signaling is to get you to get your wallet out and get on the phone and order, or get online and order whatever it is. They're using those signals to communicate to you to shape how you think and what you want to do. The biblical writers are doing the very same thing, but it's not going to cost you money. It's going to be to help you slow down. Like we saw with verses 1-5, it's to get you to think about where you used to be so you don't forget about that. He's not trying to get you to dwell there and think, "I'm a horrible person and I do worm theology." It's to put it in the context (especially for older believers to remember) that this is where you came from. This is where we came from (verse 5). It's so that we can appreciate what it is that God has done for us and how great his love for us is.

Other things... there's the idea called a "meta comment." This is where you stop saying what you were saying and make a comment about what you're about to say. So all of Paul's statements about "I don't want you to be uninformed" or "don't you remember that?" He could have just told you what he wanted you to remember, but instead he stopped and told you that "I'm going to be reminding you about something." Those kinds of statements... If you're involved in Biblical Studies and informed criticism, there's a whole wing of study about labeling these things. And the labels are kind of cool. "It's a disclosure formula." But why would someone want to use a disclosure formula? Again, this is where Discourse Studies can come in and say that it's to get your attention—to tell you that what's about to follow is surprising or important, so pay attention. It's like a speed bump.

MH: I like the signaling metaphor. What the writers are doing in the text is they're signaling things to you all the time to take your attention in certain directions—forward, backward, whatever. This is how we need to start thinking about what we're reading in this thing we call the Bible. There's something intelligent going on. [laughs]

SR: You bet. And it's not written like Ben Stein speaks. It's got texture and depth, and the writers are very motivated to affect our hearing and to affect our behavior, and so they've pulled out all the stops to do that. It's just a matter of us moving beyond that familiarity and slowing down. You could even have all of these devices going on, but if they're familiar verses, you're just re-reading the familiar. It's like [monotone], "Yeah, for it is by grace you have been saved through faith... it's by grace and it's a gift of God, not of yourselves." That's actually formally marked in English as being for emphasis. It is a gift of God. It's an it-cleft construction—that's everything you do. But because it's so familiar, you can still just kind of gloss over it. But the Mobile Ed course, as well, is kind of teaching through this stuff. If you're not afraid of Greek or if you've had Greek and you kind of viewed it as this hazing thing... "Oh, I was so glad when I got

out!" But you feel guilty, like, "I wish I could use it more." This resource was specifically designed for what I'll call the "rusty pastor"—the rusty Greek person who took Greek somewhere back in the woodpile, somewhere back there are pieces of it. This resource can really help you get some of those skills back. Or if you've been learning Greek, like Mike's "Learn to Use" series [Logos Mobile Ed]... If you've learned to use something like that, this would be a great next step to be digging in deeper. You don't have to understand all the words or forms, it's just looking at these grammatical markers and getting a sense for how they work. If you don't remember what all the symbols mean, that's great. You just hover over it and you get a pop-up glossary that describes those things and you can move through the text. It doesn't tell you what to think about the text, it just says, "Writers use the meta comment here. Meta comments are typically used for this kind of thing." And then it's up to you to say, "Why would Paul have used this here" or "Why would Jesus have used the 'truly, truly, I say to you?'" That's another meta comment. It doesn't mean before he was speaking falsely. "Falsely, falsely, I was saying, but truly, truly, I say now!" No! It's like that coach getting your attention. But it's just one of those kind of King James-y things and you just read overtop of it. But it's one of those signals.

1:25:00

MH: Yeah. Well, what we'll do is I will give Trey some links to some specific things that you've mentioned, and probably mix in a few videos that you've done to illustrate some of these things. Again, the purpose of the episode and having Steve on... Because this is Steve's bread and butter. He's just lived here for years. I don't think that's going to be a surprise to anybody. This is really what... I like to think of myself as essentially, Providentially, prepared to do certain kinds of things—to sort of live somewhere and camp out somewhere and make a contribution to biblical studies, always with the lay person in mind. Steve is the same way. This is where he has been prepared by the Lord. You get a little glimpse of his biographical sketch and the way he was brought up and taught to think. This is the outcome of it, and it has a lot of application to just helping people, whether you've had the biblical language or not. Just to be able to think about the text in a different way, and in a meaningful way develop the "mental muscles" in your mind that you have to just ask good questions and think about in more careful ways what it is you're reading or what it is you're hearing over the pulpit. It's a good practice, it's a good discipline. It's going to have payoff if you devote enough time to it. It'll take you to the next level in your Bible study.

SR: Wait, there's more! You'll actually learn how to tell a better story and better jokes!

MH: [laughing] There you go! Or at least you'll never be able to listen to commercials the same way again.

SR: Or listen to sermons, because the pastors do this stuff all the time. They don't know why. But anyhow...

MH: Well, thanks for spending part of your afternoon with us.

SR: Thanks for having me on!

MH: I think this'll be useful to people who take advantage of it. And even for people who don't, at least you learned the lesson that there's a lot to think about, even in a really familiar passage. Like I said, there's a lot going on there. The writers are actually doing something intelligent! It's not passive; it's not some kind of a mental brain download in which the writers weren't engaged at all. It's intelligent, it's deliberate, it's designed for the reader or the hearer. They're not just doing it for themselves, but it's for the people who are going to be listening to it or reading their words. So thanks for spending the time with us.

SR: Thank you.

TS: All right, Mike. As always, another great episode. Hopefully our audience is getting the tools that they need to better dive deeper into the Bible/scripture.

MH: Yeah! The goal here is not to have people be dependent on the podcast. Obviously, we want people to listen to the podcast over and over and over again and tell their friends, but ultimately, we want people to be able to do study on their own. So that's why we do episodes like this one.

TS: Absolutely—teaching people how to fish. Maybe that's what we shoulda... that's a good name for a podcast, actually, so anybody out there who wants to start another podcast... "Teach People How to Fish." [laughter] Just give me props, please.

MH: There you go.

TS: All right, Mike. That was a great conversation. Next week we're going to have an interview with Mr. Burnett again. David Burnett will be back on the show. We'll be looking forward to that. Again, we want to thank Steve Runge for coming on the show. And we want to thank everybody else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.