

Read Me First

A Message from the Author on Using This Webpage

InterVarsity Press provides this webpage for the benefit of anyone using the book by Richard J. Erickson, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Exegesis: Taking the Fear Out of Critical Method* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

First, a Little History

In twenty-some years of teaching the course in exegetical method represented by this book, I have created various hands-on exercises reinforcing the basic course instruction. During the early years of those two decades, I spent most of the weekly class time presenting lectures, which left little opportunity for students to try out the methods and techniques that I had so laboriously described. One year it dawned on me that I could just as well ask the students to read the lectures in advance of the class meetings. Doing that would free up class time for working in groups on “real life” problems in biblical exegesis.

The following eleven PDF files posted on this webpage represent a selection of those real-life, in-class exercises. At first, as I prepared the manuscript for the book itself, I envisioned including exercises as a part of each chapter. But it quickly became obvious that doing so would extend the size of the book to well beyond the guidelines the publishers had set for me. I then considered putting them on a CD, to be sold with the book, which left editor Dan Reid profoundly unexcited. It was Dan in fact who came up with the idea of making them available on a webpage dedicated to the book and linked to InterVarsity Press's website. And that is what we have done.

Who May Use These Resources?

Anyone who likes may use these resources, but they are primarily meant to supplement use of the book, whether it serves as a textbook selected by an instructor or as a self-guided tour for small groups or individuals studying the subject on their own.

I have designed the exercises, like the book, to be accessible not only to those who can read New Testament Greek but also to those who have not (yet!) studied Greek. The one point where this “bilingual” approach does not work terribly well is in the exercises for chapter two. There we deal with textual criticism of the Greek New Testament and (briefly) with issues of Greek grammar. Still, even there, the English “translations” provided throughout make it possible for any reader to follow along.

The book and, therefore, these exercises are divided into ten chapters representing the ten weeks of the academic quarter. There is no reason why the material could not be extended to cover the twelve to fifteen weeks of a semester. Some chapters cover subjects that easily deserve more than one week's attention! Opinions about *which* chapters qualify for expansion will vary, of course, from instructor to instructor.

Some Technical Stuff

The files are posted in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. In order to read them users must have installed the free downloadable Acrobat Reader. The reason for putting them in this format is the stability they have as PDF files; “helpful” users cannot revise them. Those who wish to download a file for use in another setting are welcome to do so, provided proper credit is given to the source; the material remains copyrighted.

Users who want to read the Greek texts cited in the exercises will need to download (and install!) the free font “SPIonic,” available on the website of the Society of Biblical Literature. The URL is the following:

http://www.sbl-site.org/Resources/Resources_BiblicalFonts.aspx

Scroll down through the various fonts available, until SPIonic appears. Be sure to choose the version appropriate to your computer’s platform and to download the “Read Me” file that comes with it.

Suggestions Welcome

Some users may have recommendations to make about improving, correcting or expanding (or shrinking!) this collection of resources. Constructive suggestions are welcome! Click on the link provided in this webpage for sending your comments. You will be asked to identify yourself as you do.