

JUNK IN THE TRUNK

A QUEST FOR CONTEXT

The trunk was old. Age did not eliminate its usefulness as I packed the items I would need into it for my long journey ahead. I was excited and nervous as I checked and rechecked my list.

Finally the hour arrived to begin my journey. The trunk was old. To be clear, the entire car was old, but accommodating as I securely stowed my aged box and headed out. At the airport I checked my treasure box and prayed it would make it to India in one piece and at the same as myself.

After nearly an entire day in flight, I arrived in Jaipur, India aching to experience the sight of a lifetime. Through jet lagged eyes I beheld it. The trunk was old. Even in its age it was resplendent and as vibrant as a tropical flower. The painted elephants at the festival were more than I dreamed they would be. Forever weaving their beauty into the fabric of my forever-memories.

Today, tokens of that journey are kept safe in my aged travel box. A photo of the elephants in their painted glory, my passport to remind me of my travels, even the hood ornament from my old car...a faithful friend in my life's adventures. To some, these items may be considered clutter...junk to be thrown away. To me, they represent a life well lived.



After reading this brief story, if I ask you to describe the trunk you can correctly say, "It is old." That statement, while true, would not be complete. If I ask you what a trunk is, your response would probably be, "In what context?" After all, it can be a storage box, a storage compartment usually at the back of a car, part of a tree, a synonym for torso or even attached to an elephant -- all distinctly different things.

Although I have simplified my point into a short story, hopefully you can see what I am trying to show you. Context is key to understanding a text, whether it is a short fictional story, or God's Holy Word. Seeking to understand truth in context truly is a quest. It is an active search. Sometimes it takes study, sometimes it just takes reading more than you intended.

Try this! Like in Episode 74 of the More Than a Song podcast, read Romans 5-8 and take a statement OUT OF CONTEXT. As in my example below write the out-of-context statement and then write the word TRUTH and describe what Scripture is really saying. Your study efforts will reap greater understanding of the text AND give you confidence when explaining what you've learned to others!

Out of context...

*"Because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin."
Romans 7:25 NLT*

Truth [in context]...

*"God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving His Son as a sacrifice for our sins."
Romans 8:3 NLT*