

How to Study the Bible (Hermeneutics) **Part 5 - Applying the Word**

*22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
- James 1:22*

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Approaching Application

Gospel-Centered Application

- The gospel frees us from the demand of doing
 - We don't grow beyond the gospel, we grow in the gospel
 - We grow in our understanding of who we are in Christ and how this new identity shapes the way we think and act
- The gospel compels and empowers us to do the Word
 - The more we understand this new identity, the more we should walk in this new identity
 - The gospel doesn't remove the need for obedience, it changes our motivation for obedience – relationship precedes obedience

Personally-Focused Application

- When we read the Word, we should not primarily look for a ways to critique or correct others, but for ways in which God wants us to grow
 - The Bible is meant to be a mirror (James 1:23-25)
 - There will certainly be applications that we should share with others, but let's be careful to first address the log in our own eye (Matthew 7:3-5)

Communally-Practiced Application

- The Word of God should be read, studied, and applied in community
 - Much of the New Testament is addressed to the plural you (y'all)
 - As a community, we should encourage and exhort one another to be doers of the Word (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Practical Guidelines for Application

Basic Questions

- Is there a command for me to follow?
- Is there a sin for me to avoid?

Getting Specific

- What? – Instructional Specificity
 - What is the significance of the meaning of this text in my life? What is God calling me to believe, think, and/or do in this text?
 - Be sure to consider the main idea of the passage as you consider what the application of the passage is.
- Where? – Situational Specificity
 - Where should I be applying this text in my life right now?
 - Consider relationships, resources, sins/temptations, and circumstances that are relevant to you.
- Why? – Motivation
 - We should seek to be motivated by grace instead of guilt or greed.
 - Being gospel-centered in our interpretation and application can help make grace our primary motivator.
- How? – Enablement
 - The ability to carry out the work of God comes by depending on the power that He provides (1 Corinthians 15:10, Philippians 2:12-13).
 - As we think through application, let's be careful to be Spirit-reliant instead of self-reliant

Recommended Resources

- Overview of Hermeneutics: *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Fee and Stuart; *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics* by Graeme Goldsworthy; *Before You Open Your Bible* by Matt Smethurst
- Introductions to the OT: *An Introduction to the Old Testament* by Longman and Dillard; *Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* by Miles Van Pelt
- Introductions to the NT: *An Introduction to the New Testament* by Carson and Moo; *A Survey of the New Testament* by Gundry