



Cutting It Straight

Lesson 8: STEP 3 – Application

Key Verse: James 1:25

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

Application

In Bible study, we begin with observation asking the question, “What do I see?” Then, we move on to interpretation asking the question, “What does it mean?” In the final step, we get to application and ask the question, “What must I do?”

There are two common errors when applying God’s Word, and Christians can make one of these two common errors. The first error is not giving enough attention to application. This person thinks that interpretation is enough, and that Bible study is complete because they know what the passage means. The second error is giving too much attention to application. This person tends to move toward application without having fully interpreted the passage. However, application without interpretation leaves the believer open to applying the Bible improperly.¹

After the hard work of observation and interpretation, the duty of the Christian is to apply the Word of God to their own lives. Why do all the hard work and not get the most out of it? As we have studied, observation and interpretation are very important, but just as important is the final step of application.

Five _____ to Application

1. Action #1: _____ the Word

James 1:21 says, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.” We must humbly receive God’s Word with a teachable spirit. It is the Word of God that protects us from the power and

¹ Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 1991), 279.

dominion of sin in our lives. Therefore, we must long for the pure milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2) and receive it so that by it we may grow in holiness.

2. Action #2: _____

Psalm 1:1–2, “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.” God’s Word is to be weaved into the fabric of our daily lives. This happens by putting God’s Word in us, not just having it sit on a coffee table or a bookshelf. The way we get God’s Word in us is to meditate upon it. Howard Hendricks says, “True meditation is pondering the truth with a view to letting it help and readjust our lives.”² After observation and interpretation, we should meditate on what God has shown us in His Word with a view of letting it help and readjust our lives.

3. Action #3: Allow the Word to _____ and _____

Many people see conviction as a bad thing, but God tells us that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to convict (John 16:8). The way the Holy Spirit convicts us is through His Word. It was conviction that led us to repentance (2 Cor. 7:7–10), but that conviction must continue as we grow in our faith (Heb. 11:1).

God also uses His Word to correct us. Second Timothy 3:16–17 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” Not only does the Bible teach us, but it also points out sin in our lives and positively corrects us, builds us up, and points us in the right direction. We must willingly submit to correction and allow our hearts to be changed by God’s Word.

4. Action #4: _____

We should pray and ask God to change us. Jesus said in John 15:7, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” As the Word of God convicts us of our sin and corrects us by pointing us in the right direction, we must pray and ask God to change our heart. When we pray, what we are saying is, “God, I can’t change myself, but I rely on

² Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 325.

and trust in you to change me.” We must pray about what we have just read, received, and meditated on, and ask for God to help us apply it to our lives so that we can be more like Christ.

5. Action #5: _____

James 1:22 says, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” It is not enough to observe the text, interpret the text, and pray about the text, but we must also put it into practice. This is progressive sanctification, and we have a part to play in this. Philippians 2:12 says, “work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” James tells us of the blessing that comes when we study God’s Word and apply it to our lives. James 1:25 says, “But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.” May we apply God’s Word to our lives and live in obedience to our Master.

Helpful Reminders for Application

1. Remember that Scripture is for application, not just for information.
2. Avoid application that is not practically feasible.
3. Look for specific application to your life.