

Apply God's Word!

Use Practical Tools for Maturing in Worship and Obedience

Bible Study 6—Jonathan Moore

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.

—Psalm 1:1-3

I. Is Application Important?

- Yes. It applies knowledge to the heart—it marks the finish of the whole activity of Bible study (James 1:22-25).
- Yes. Bible study ultimately aims at worship and heart/life change (Rom 12:1-2).

II. Hindrances to Bible application

1. Afraid of getting it wrong
2. Haven't been shown how
3. It takes time

III. Is everything applicable?

2 Timothy 3:16-17: *All Scripture* is...profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

IV. Governing principles for application

1. Needs to accurately reflect the text
2. Needs to be concrete
3. Needs to address our hearts/lives
4. Should result in worship and obedience

V. Steps for moving from meaning to living

- A. Draw the principle from the text—exegesis (what does it say/mean?)
 - B. Ask, “Why did God give this revelation?”
 - C. Note similarities and differences between the original audience’s situations and our own. When circumstances are very similar between the original audience and today the principle carries over fully intact.
 - D. What universal human (sinful) condition is addressed?
 - E. Create a personal application grid
 - F. Concrete SMART application
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Noting the Similarities/Differences

- What traits do modern people share with the original audience?
- How can we identify with biblical audience as they heard God’s Word and responded (or failed to respond) in their situation?

Stating the Universal Human Condition

Is it correcting, rebuking, instructing, or training righteousness.

- One word
- Negative
 - Not “selfishness” or “pride”; be specific
 - How is it identified?
 - How is it addressed?
 - What ideas, feelings, attitude, or actions should it affect?
 - Do I live in obedience to this truth? Do I intend to?

- Grace
 - What way does God give the grace to treat the problem?
 - What obstacles keep me from responding as I should?
 - What could help me respond as God wants me to respond?

Developing a Personal Application Grid

- List your life-roles down the left side of the matrix (husband, father, employee, discipler, church-member, etc.)
- List your weekly life-situations across the top of the matrix (eating, driving, shopping, reading, etc.)
- Think through how the principle and the Universal (sinful) Human Condition would apply to those roles/situations and list it in the grid. You may see that an application of "faithfulness to God" can involve setting a good example to your children of not being a glutton at the dinner table.
- Consider these 8 areas of personal application as part of your chart:
 1. Relationships (for example, with family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, fellow believers).
 2. Conflicts (in marriage, with children, at work).
 3. Personal burdens (sickness, family pressures, death, loss).
 4. Difficult situations (stress, debt, hindrances).
 5. Character weaknesses (dishonesty, lack of integrity, anger).
 6. Lack of resources (in time, energy, money, materials, information).
 7. Responsibilities (work demands, church programs, volunteer efforts, home projects).
 8. Opportunities (learning, working, serving, witnessing, etc.).

Establish SMART, Concrete Applications?

The main principle of your study should be crisp, clear, and concise.

Your application should be concrete and SMART:

- **Specific**—“You should be a better Christian this year” is not a good application. Using God’s Word as a standard it is measurable. By God’s grace it is attainable. Because you can try again next year, it is repeatable. “This year” sets a time limit on it. All of these are good, but the problem is that it is not specific. You could preach a sermon from any text in the Bible and come to that application. How specifically should you improve in your Christian walk?
- **Measurable**—Applications like, “I need to love more this week,” are difficult to quantify. Is there any way you can know whether you have indeed loved more this week? If so, make that measurement the application so that you can progress or improvement in that area.
- **Action Plan**—analyze your life’s current state and ask how/why you are currently falling short of obedience to God in this area and consider how prayer, watchfulness, and a strategy can help produce growth in holiness
- **Realistic** (repeatable)—“I’m not going to sin this month,” is an admirable goal, but it is not attainable (cf. Matthew 6 and 1 John 1). Make sure your applications are within reach.
- **Time-bound**—Adding a phrase like “this week,” or “this year,” gives us an opportunity to measure and repeat our application of the Scripture. A commitment to a timeframe helps focus our eyes on actually applying the principle in our everyday lives (on or before the “due date”). This is intended to prevent us from being overtaken by the day-to-day mundane issues, trials, or temptations that invariably arise in our lives.

John MacArthur’s questions to assist in applying the Bible:

1. Are there examples to follow?
2. Are there commands to obey?
3. Are there errors to avoid?
4. Are there sins to forsake?
5. Are there promises to claim?
6. Are there new thoughts about God?
7. Are there principles to live by?