

Application – Figuring Out What The Text Means Today

How to Study the Bible Like a Pro – Week 7

Introduction

- Key question
 1. In week one I referenced a verse from Deut. 22:5, “A woman must not wear men’s clothing.” How would you apply that verse today?
 - a. Does it apply to today?
 - b. How would you define men’s clothing?
 - c. How should your answer affect what you wear (or any woman you know if you’re a man)?
 2. Last week we looked at 1 Peter 3:1-7. Peter says that a wife needs to submit to her husband and a husband needs to be considerate of his wife and treat her with respect and as a co-heir. How would you apply that to your relationship (that is, if you’re married)?
 3. The week before, in 1 Peter 2:18-21, we discussed the role of slaves and masters. Since none of us are slaves, is there anything you or I can apply from those verses (or are they “wasted”)?
 4. Most of us have no problem applying Mt. 28:19-20 (the Great Commission) to our lives, when Jesus says to the disciples, “Go and make disciples of all nations,” but why do we not apply Matthew 10:5-14 similarly?

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts-- no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.”

- Application in reality
 - The idea or theory of application seems easy in the _____ but it’s infinitely more difficult in the _____
 - Which verses still apply? Which ones don’t?
 - How do you apply something that was spoken to someone else two thousand years ago? And even if you can, should you?
 - If you’re not in a similar situation (or an analogous one), is there even anything to apply?
 - How does _____ factor in (or should it)?
 - How can you use the Bible to address issues that weren’t issues in biblical times (artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, aids, globalization, technology, etc.)?
 - Should you apply just the verse you’re looking at, or should you apply the broader context of the concept?
 - For example, in Matthew 21 verse 22 Jesus said, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” Do you opt for just applying Matthew 21 or do you include other qualifications for prayer from other

verses like, “according to His will” (1 John 5:11-14) or “if you remain in me and my words remain in you” (John 15:7) etc.?

- These are the kinds of questions we’re going to answer today
- The more critical reason why application matters
 - Application is the bridge between _____ and _____
 - It answers the “_ what?” question (i.e. what difference does knowing this make)
 - Then the “_____ what?” question (i.e. what I need to do in response to knowing what something means)

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do.” James 1:22-25

“Observation plus interpretation without application is abortion.” Howard Hendricks

- A few quick reminders – the most important things to remember from this course
 1. Studying the Bible like a pro requires three things (process, principles and practice)
 2. Interpretation = what the text meant (to the original audience)
 3. Application = what the text _____ today (for you or others)
 4. The goal in accurate interpretation isn’t to be a certain knower but a responsible interpreter. Certainty is an illusion. _____ is a reality.
 5. The hermeneutical spiral should always remind you to be _____
 6. There are four steps to studying the Bible like a pro (ORIA)
 - Observation (“What do I see?”)
 - Research (“What could this mean?”)
 - Interpretation (“What did it mean?”)
 - Application (“What does this mean for me?”)
 7. The Bible is an _____ document, not a systematic theology
 8. _____ reigns as king in interpretation
 9. Genre can significantly influence the meaning of a text
 10. We all have scotomas (blind spots) that make it hard for us to both see and observe
 11. _____ is the enemy of observation
 12. The best kept secret of the pros is _____
 13. Without doing _____, you reduce your chances of making a good responsible interpretive decision about a text
 14. Interpretation is ultimately a process you use to make decisions about what something _____
 15. You always want to check your interpretative choices to make sure you’re being _____ with the text and not infusing your own meaning into the text (exegesis vs. eisegesis)

I. Own the Ground Rules of Application

1. _____ reigns as king over application as well as interpretation
 - a. Since the Bible is an occasional document, responsible application means you can’t apply a text without understanding the occasion (the context) that drove the author to write what they did

“Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head – it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as

well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head." 1 Cor. 11:4-6

2. Application is always related to the _____ in the text since we're not the direct recipients of any specific text
 - a. Since we're not traveling with Moses in the desert or in Colossae when Paul addressed the church in Colossians, etc. we're not the direct recipients of the text
 - b. However, since the Bible was given to us to help us become more like God and to do what He's called us to do, our job is to do the hard work of discovering the principle of the text and then applying that to our lives.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Tim. 3:16-17

- c. This is also true of example

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Mark 1:35

- d. Note: just because something isn't authoritative doesn't mean it's not a good idea to apply (it just means it's not authoritative)

3. _____ interpretation is the control over your application
 - a. Application must always be _____ linked to the responsible interpretation of the passage or text in question (i.e. you can't just derive an application that has no root in the correct interpretation of a text)

"And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God." 1. Cor. 2:1

4. While there is _____ correct interpretation, there may be _____ applications

5. The _____ trumps over the specific.
 - a. The context of the entire Bible overrules one verse or passage
 - b. This is why I keep reminding you to construct your own systematic theology (i.e. to stitch together different verses on a topic and make decisions as to what they all mean together).

6. The _____ covenant trumps over the _____ covenant
 - a. The commands and promises given to Israel don't directly apply to us unless they're restated in the New Testament (e.g. Deut. 22:5 and wearing men's clothing)
 - b. However, there are principles and ideas contained within the Old Testament that can and should be applied (e.g. blessings and curses in Deut. 28 that we looked at several weeks ago)
 - c. A good test question to ask is, "Is this text applicable only to Israel or to anyone who follows God?"

7. _____ allow us to apply the truths of Scripture to analogous situations today that weren't envisioned by the authors of the biblical texts thousands of years ago

"As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead." 1 Peter 4:2-4

II. Master the 3-Step Process for Applying the Bible to Your Life Today

1. What's the principle in this text?

- a. As mentioned above, the principle must be grounded in your honest interpretation of the text
- b. You want to look for the _____ principle first (i.e the timeless truth)

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chron. 7:14

- c. Look for similar or analogous situations

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free." Eph. 6:5-8

2. How does this apply to me (or others)? This is about relevancy.

- a. What areas of my life does this apply?
 - i. Work, personal, family, community, home, church, citizen, etc.
- b. Is there an _____ for me to follow?

"You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me." 2 Tim. 1:15-17

- c. Is there a sin issue I need to confront in my own life? Remember to factor in both sins of commission and omission

"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Col. 3:9-10

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Col. 3:13-14

- d. Is there a _____ I need to own (or a belief I need to change)?

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Eph. 4:11-13

- e. Is there a character issue I need to add or address?

"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to

perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
2 Peter 1:5-8

- f. Is there an _____ issue I need to address?

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing,” Phil. 2:14

- g. Is there a promise I ought to claim?

“When I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”
Phil. 4:15b-19

- h. Is there a prayer I ought to repeat?

“Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request.” 1 Chron. 4:10

- i. Is there a command I need to obey?

“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”
Joshua 1:7-9

- j. Is there a _____ I need to meet?

“If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.” 1 Tim. 4:6

3. How will I make this a reality in my life? This is about action

- a. What _____ action do I need to undertake?

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5:23-24

- b. What specific _____ will make this a reality in my life?
c. Is this a verse I need to memorize?

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Rom. 12:2

III. Observe the Whole Process in Real Time – 1 Peter 3:8-17

“Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For

*“Whoever would love life and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.
They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”

Making It Real

1. Where do you tend to make application mistakes?
2. Which of the ground rules of application do you tend to wrestle with? Why?
3. Review your work on 1 Peter (chapters two and three). What do you need to apply from your study over the past few weeks?
4. Pick one of those applications and come up with a short implementation plan. How will you turn that application into a reality in your life.
5. Pick your next book of the Bible (or topic) that you want to study. What is it? _____
6. Which commentary will you purchase?
7. Study that book using the ORIA process and principles you learned in this course
8. With whom will you share what you learned from this session in the next 48-72 hours?

Who: _____ When: _____

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” 2 Tim. 2:15