

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

ALL ABOUT THE BIBLE

How We Got the Bible – Application

2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21, James 1:22-25, Matthew 13:3-9 & 18-23

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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

2 Peter 1:19-21

“¹⁹We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” – 2 Peter 1:19-21 (NIV)

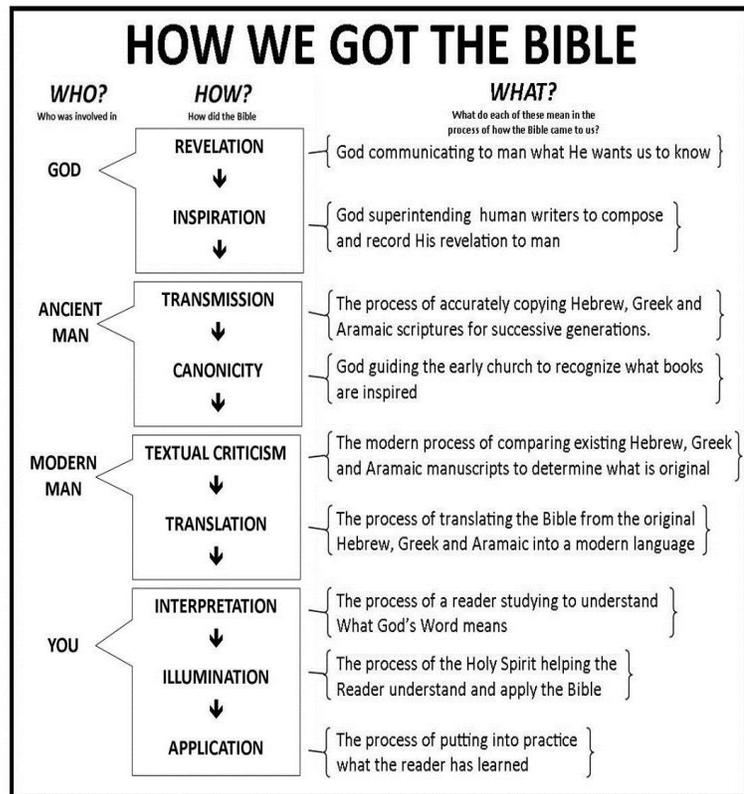
Our key text for our study has been 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *“¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)* The first part of our study really concerned itself with the first phase of our key text... that time span between *“All Scripture”* being *“God-breathed”* and it becoming *“useful”* or *“profitable”* for us. In other words, how did it get from God to us so that it can impact our life. We discussed such things as revelation, inspiration, transmission, canonicity, textual criticism and even translation all in regard to God Word getting from God to us (man) so that it might become “useful” or “profitable” for our lives. Our last three topics of study in the process of how God’s Word came to us deal with the second half of our key text and *“All Scripture... (being) useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* When we begin to talk about interpretation, illumination and even application and us beginning to really understand and apply God’s Word in our personal lives we are now beginning to trek into that *“Scripture”* that is *“God-breathed”* actually becoming *“useful”* or *“profitable”* for *“teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant (man or woman) of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* It is not enough for us to know the mechanics of how we got God’s Word if it does not translate into us realizing, internalizing, and living out what God’s Word, that He gave us, says.

FOR REVIEW

So up to this point in our study we have looked at God's **revelation** and **inspiration**, and we have examined how ancient man **transmitted** what God revealed and inspired him to write down for us, and then we took a look at how those writing were compiled and collected and determined to be the Word of God, and were recognize as the **canon** of scripture, the Bible. We have also examined the science of **textual-criticism** and **translation** and the process by which we are able to determine what the original manuscripts of the Bible said and get them translated into our language... one that we can read and understand. Then our study of took something of a turn toward the more practical aspect of how the Bible came to us as we discussed the matter of

interpretation... the process of the reader, you and I, studying to understand what God's Word actually mean. We looked at some important principles of interpretation and then discussed some important helps and tools to use. We discovered how important it is that we rightly handle and interpret God's Word, and what happens when we don't carefully follow the principles of interpretation and pull Scripture out of context and try to make the Bible say things it doesn't actually say. While interpretation is our part in rightly handling God's Word and getting at the meaning of Scripture, it is difficult to separate proper interpretation of God's Word from the role the Holy Spirit plays in our understanding Scripture. That is the subject of **illumination**, the process of the Holy Spirit helping the reader to understand and apply the Bible. In our study of illumination we re-emphasized the truth that the Bible is God's Word and therefore cannot be rightly understood apart from Him and His aid. The Holy Spirit's role in understanding the Word of God is paramount to the process of rightly discerning and understanding the Bible.

The entire process of the God's Word coming to us is dependent upon God's hand in the process, revealing, inspiring, guarding the transmission and Scripture gathering and collecting process, protecting through the textual critics and translators, and certainly our understanding of God's Word through interpretation, illumination and application. This study will deal with what is arguably the most important topic we have discussed, **application**. We say it is arguably the most important topic in the process of God's Word coming to us because without God's Word actually affecting and changing our lives the point of the process is... well somewhat pointless. Why would God go to all the trouble of revealing Himself to us and protecting and nurturing that process to just bring us a piece of literature that is no more than casual reading. Someone has wisely written;



**It's not enough to OWN the Bible, you have to OPEN it
 It's not enough to OPEN the Bible, you have to READ it
 It's not enough to READ the Bible, you have to APPLY it
 It's not enough to APPLY the Bible, you have to LIVE it**

Your reaction: *What do you think about the above statement (quote, ditty)? What do you think it is saying? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?*

Here is another quote about the Bible from the great preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Listen closely as I read this quote slowly and think about what Spurgeon is saying;

“There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. . . . Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God’s Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. From such folly deliver us, O Lord. . . .”— **Charles H. Spurgeon**

Your reaction: *What do you think about the above statement (quote, ditty)? What do you think it is saying? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?*

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY APPLICATION?

It has often been said that **“a passage has one interpretation but many applications.”** In other words, there is only one true meaning...God’s! God doesn’t “speak out the both sides of His mouth” and mean two different things at once. For example **Ephesians 4:25** says, **“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth...”** (KJV). The one and only interpretation you can give those words and that verse is pretty straight forward... “don’t tell a lie!” But what it is applied to your personal life God may be speaking and applying His Word in a variety of ways. He may be saying don’t lie on your taxes, or be honest with your spouse, or tell your boss the truth, etc.

He is a good working definition for application as it applies to our study:

“Application is the process of putting into practice what the reader has learned.”

Applying the Bible is the duty of all Christians. If we don’t apply it, the Bible becomes nothing more to us than a dry, tedious tome (book), an impractical collection of old manuscripts. That is why the Bible itself calls for its application in our lives. Here are three good Biblical passage that help us to see the mandate of Scripture for applying God’s Word to our lives.

3 Good Passages of Biblical Mandate for Application of the Bible: (not exhaustive)

1. **Philippians 4:9** – *“⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”* This Scriptural mandate for applying God’s Word in our lives also give us a good Biblical definition of application... “putting God Word into practice.” In this passage Paul also is telling us that when we apply the Bible, God Himself will be with us. **Based on this verse what would you say Paul’s definition of the application of God’s Word is?***[put it into practice]*
2. **James 1:22-25** – *“²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ 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.”* This is a powerful passage of Scripture that reinforces the importance of the application of God’s Word in our live in a straightforward manner... If all we do is hear God’s Word, read it, listen to it we are deceiving ourselves. We must do it. Here we find James’, the half-brother of Jesus, definition of Biblical application. Very simply, James’ definition of Biblical application is, “Doing what it says!” **Based on this passage what would you say James’ definition of the application of God’s Word is?***[do what it says]*
3. **Titus 1:1** – *“¹ Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness.”* This is the Apostle Paul’s introductory words in his letter to his fellow labor and missionary companion, Titus. In these opening remarks Paul not only gives us a view of how he sees himself before God (*as a servant and apostle (messenger) of God and Jesus Christ*) and his purposes (to further of faith of God’s elect, His followers), but he again give us a good definition of Biblical application. He says essentially that Biblical application is truth that leads to how we live... godliness. **Based on this verse what would you say Paul’s definition of the application of God’s Word is?***[truth that leads to godliness... or truth that changes how we live]*

Observation: Do notice that in each of these verses the application of God’s Word in your life carries with it great blessing? Why do you think that is true?

NOTE: Of the three definition that emerge from those three verses which to you like the best, which one most speaks to you and how you view applying the Bible? Why? (allow time for response)

WHAT ARE SOME KEYS TO APPLYING THE BIBLE TO MY LIFE?

The importance of Biblical application in our lives is evident from not only the given definition of it and the Biblical mandate we find in Scripture, but even from the simple truth that if we read but fail to apply it, it becomes little more than just any other book or piece of literate we may pick up and chose to casually read. God’s Word, by its very nature and orientation, is worth “Divinely” more... literally. We must apply it... live out it’s precepts, teaching and truths, but how? What are they keys to applying the Bible in one’s life?

2 Key Steps To Applying God’s Word to Our Lives:

1. **Read it** - The first step toward applying God’s Word in our lives is reading it. There are hundreds of Bible reading plans available on the web and through various Christian ministries that we can use to familiarize ourselves with God’s Word. **What is our goal in**

reading God's Word? In other words, what should be my aim in reading the Bible (everyday)? Is it to obey a requirement of Christianity and the church? Is it to make God love me more because I spend time in His Word? (You couldn't make God love you any more than He already does) Is it so as not to embarrass myself when asked if I read my Bible today? Is it just a "check-off" of my Christian to-do list? A check on my Sunday School report or offering envelope? What is my goal in reading God's Word? I'm glad you asked. These should be your goal... your aim in reading God's Word. Put another way, as you approach the reading of God's Word think about these aims.

Our goal in reading God's Word is:

- (1) **To get to know God**
- (2) **To learn His ways**
- (3) **To understand His purpose for this world**
- (4) **To learn His purposes for us individually.**

In reading the Bible, we will learn about God's interactions with humanity throughout history, His plan of redemption, His promises, and His character. We will see what the Christian life looks like. The knowledge of God we glean from Scripture serves as an invaluable foundation for applying the Bible's principles for life.

2. **Hide it** - Our next key in applying God's Word in our life is what the psalmist refers to as "hiding" God's Word in our hearts. As the Psalmist says in **Psalm 119:11, "I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you."** The way we "hide" God's Word in our hearts is by studying, memorizing, and meditating on what we have first read.

4 Steps to Hiding God's Word in My Heart: These four steps—read, study, memorize, and meditate—make it possible to successfully apply the Scriptures to our lives

- (1) **Step 1 = Study:** While studying certainly involves reading, reading is not the same as studying. To study God's Word means that we prayerfully devote time and attention to acquiring advanced knowledge on a particular person, subject, theme, passage, or book of the Bible. A multitude of study resources is available online, as well as in biblical commentaries or published Bible studies that enable us to feast on the "meat" of God's Word. Listen to what writer of Hebrews has to say on the subject in **Hebrews 5:12-14, "¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."** We can familiarize ourselves with these resources, then choose a topic, a passage, or a book that piques our interests, and delve in. Get involved in a good Bible study class (Sunday School, Mid-week Bible Study, Thursday Bible Study, etc.). This is a good place to start to peak your interest and skills in good Bible study.
- (2) **Step 2 = Memorize:** It is impossible to apply what we cannot remember. If we are going to "hide" the Word in our hearts, we have to first get it in there by means of memorization. Memorizing Scripture produces within us a well from which we may continually drink, especially at times when we are not able to read our Bibles. In the same

way that we store up money and other earthly possessions for future use, we should “lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul...” As **Deuteronomy 11:18** says, ***“18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.”*** Create a plan for the Scripture verses you would like to memorize each week.

How to Memorize Scripture: Here are some things I have learned that I want to share with you as suggestions:

1. Each morning write your verses for the day on a 3 x 5 index card - I recommend that you date the card at the top and number the verses. Carry it with you during the day. Then you can memorize your verses whenever you have a few spare minutes, for example, when you are on lunch break, taking a walk, sitting in the car going to town (when you’re not driving), or waiting in the doctor’s office, etc. Depending on the type of work you do, you can even memorize while you work, but be careful not to steal time from your employer.

2. Carry some of the most recent cards with you - so you can easily review the latest verses you have memorized.

3. Read the verses aloud to yourself as you are studying them - It helps to write them, read them, and say them.

4. Use memory systems - This is a very broad subject, and I cannot discuss every system that has been used in the past, but here are several that I have used:

a. Use a “repeat word” memory system. An example of “repeat word” is to repeat each word in a verse and add a word each time. For example: Romans 5:8 “But... But God... But God demonstrates... But God demonstrates His... But God demonstrates His own ... But God demonstrates His own love... But God demonstrates His own love for ... But God demonstrates His own love for us... But God demonstrates His own love for us in... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for... But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. – Romans 5:8

b. Memorize verses in pairs as I mentioned above. This helps you link the verses together when you recite them.

c. Take notice of beginning words. For instance, verses 11–14 of Romans 2 each start with *for*. So if you remember that these 2 pairs of verses begin with *for*, you have something that links these verses together.

d. Notice key words and phrases that repeat themselves in multiple verses. Romans 1:23 talks about changing the glory of God and verse 25 talks about changing the truth of God. So verse 25 repeats a thought that was mentioned in the previous pair of verses.

e. Form mental pictures in your mind. This is helpful when you have a list to

memorize such as in Romans 1:29–31. You can form a story in your mind and link the items together to help you remember each item in the correct order.

f. Use repetition – They say if you repeat something 20 times it become ingrained in your mind (I’ve heard few times and more times for ingraining). But the principle is to simply repeat it over and over for a significant number of times to ingrain it in you.

**The important thing is to find what works for you in memorizing Scripture.*

6. Use a Bible memory program on your computer - You may find the Scripture Memory System software helpful. Also if you have a smart phone (iPhone) or iPad there are some good apps available (some are free) that are especially designed to help you memorize Scripture.

7. Review, review, review! - Never forget the importance of reviewing what you have memorized. Try to find someone else you can recite your passages to.

8. Stay encouraged and motivated - Please don’t get discouraged if you can’t keep up with the schedule I suggested. It is better to memorize less and retain it, than to memorize too fast and lose it all, and in the end completely give up.

- (3) **Step 3 = Meditate:** Writer and philosopher **Edmund Burke** once said, “To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting.” We cannot afford to “eat” God’s Word without “digesting” it. In the parable of the four soils (**Matthew 13:3-9; cf. 18-23**), Jesus tells of a sower who goes out to sow seed in his field, only to find that some seeds – the Word of God (**Matthew 13:19**) – had fallen on “rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away” (**13:5-6**). This, Jesus says, is the person in whom the Word is sown but does not take root (**13:20-21**).

Psalm 1:2 says that the man who meditates on God’s Word is blessed. **Donald S. Whitney**, in his classic work *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, writes, “The tree of your spiritual life thrives best with meditation because it helps you absorb the water of God’s Word (**Ephesians 5:26**). Merely hearing or reading the Bible, for example, can be like a short rainfall on hard ground. Regardless of the amount or intensity of the rain, most runs off and little sinks in. Meditation opens the soil of the soul and lets the water of God’s Word percolate in deeply. The result is an extraordinary fruitfulness and spiritual prosperity” (pp. 49-50). If we desire for the Word to “take root” in our lives so that we produce a harvest that pleases God (**Matthew 13:23**), we must ponder, reflect, and meditate on what we read and study in the Bible.

How To Meditate: As we meditate you are essentially “thinking one” or “dwelling on” Scripture. When meditating it is good to ask ourselves some questions:

- 1. What does this passage teach me about God?**
- 2. What does this passage teach me about the church?**
- 3. What does this passage teach me about the world?**
- 4. What does this passage teach me about myself? About my own desires and motives?**
- 5. Does this passage require that I take action? If so, what action should I take?**
- 6. What do I need to confess and/or repent of?**

7. What have I learned from this passage that will help me to focus on God and strive for His glory

- (4) **Step 4 = Apply:** The degree to which we study, memorize, and meditate on God's Word is the degree to which we understand how it applies to our lives. But understanding *how* the Word applies is not enough; we must actually apply it. Remember James 1:22 says, *"²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."* "Application" implies action, and obedient action is the final step in causing God's Word to come to life in our lives. The application of Scripture enforces and further enlightens our study, and it also serves to sharpen our discernment, helping us to better distinguish between good and evil, or as the writer of Hebrews put it in Hebrews 5:14, *"¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."*

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS ON THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S WORD

Left to our own vices, the task of trying to interpret and understand, much less apply God's Word to our lives, is indeed daunting and sometimes extremely overwhelming. Just this study alone reminds us of the complexities of God's Word as it came down to us, much less the task of understanding and applying a text that came to us through at least 1,500 years of writing and at least 40 different authors and exist as 4 or 5 different types of literary writing. I'm overwhelmed! As a final word, it is important to note that we are not alone in trying to understand and apply God's Word to our lives. Let me leave you with this reminder as you seek now to take this magnificent book that has been given to you by God, Himself, as His Word, His revelation to you, and apply it to your life... and live it.

4 Important Reminders of Our Help(er) in Applying God's Word to Our Life:

1. **Remember that God has filled us with His Spirit who is our "Helper"** - John 14:16-17 says, *"¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be ^[a] in you."*
2. **The Holy Spirit speaks to us, leading and guiding us into all truth** - As John 16:13 put it, *"¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."*
3. **As believers we are to "walk by the Spirit" for He is a very present help in our time of need** - Paul calls us in Galatians 5:16 to, *"¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."* And the Psalmist reminds us in Psalm 46:1, *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*
4. **The Spirit will faithfully guide us into the will of God, always causing us to do what is right** - I love Ezekiel 36:26-28, *"²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God."* And Paul said in Philippians 2:13, *"¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."*

Observation: *Who better to teach how to live according to all that is written in the Bible than the One who inspired the Bible to begin with—the Holy Spirit Himself? Therefore, let us do our part by hiding the Word in our hearts and obeying the Holy Spirit as He draws that Word out of us.*

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