

REVELATION



INSPIRATION



ANIMATION



COLLECTION



TRANSLATION



ILLUMINATION



INTERPRETATION



APPLICATION

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COMMUNICATION

THE WRITTEN WORD

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, November 15, 2009

Beyond 'Hearing' to 'Doing'

"A man once told me, 'You know, Brother Hendricks, I've been through the Bible twelve times.' 'That's wonderful. But the real question is, how many times has the Bible been through him?'" -- Howard Hendricks!

In our last study, we considered the first stage in the practical aspect of our handling God's word--that is, our interpretation of it. Today, we begin our consideration the second aspect of this practical dimension--that is, our application of it.

I. THE RELATIONSHIP OF APPLICATION TO INTERPRETATION.

- A. Application is the 'translation' of the fruits of proper biblical interpretation into obedient, real-life action to the glory of God. It has in view God's ultimate plan of conforming us to the image of Christ (Ephesians 4:13); so that we prove, by the way we live and think, "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2). It is how we actually experience the 'putting-off' of the old man, and the 'putting-on' of the new man "which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24; see also Colossians 3:5-17).
- B. Even though people insist otherwise, there are not 'many ways' to interpret a passage of Scripture. Properly speaking, there is only one true interpretation of a passage of Scripture--that is, the one that represents the meaning intended by the author. But from that one true and faithful interpretation, there can be many proper applications in the various situations of daily life.
- C. As the second aspect of the practical use of the Bible, it necessarily *depends* on the first; because application that is not based on proper interpretation is reckless. If we don't take the time to properly understand what the Bible teaches us, we will not be truly obeying the Bible and will easily go astray into error. But the first aspect necessarily *demand*s the second; because even proper interpretation without faithful application is spiritually disastrous. Foolishness, as our Lord explained it, is not a matter of failing to know spiritual truth; but of rather of knowing it properly and not putting it into action (Matthew 7:24-27).

II. THE BIBLICAL NECESSITY OF APPLICATION.

- A. We cannot truly be disciples of Jesus Christ, or say that we truly own Him as our Lord, without a faithful application of Scripture to daily life (Luke 6:46-49).
- B. It is self-deceiving to faithfully read and study the Bible without applying what it says to our lives. It's like looking into a mirror, and walking away without doing what needs to be done (James 1:22-25).
- C. It is actually, positively sinful before God to know what He calls us to do, but not do it (James 4:17).
- D. By contrast, faithful application of biblical truth into daily life is the pathway to God's blessing (Joshua 1:8).

E. Through the process of the faithful application of Scripture to life, we are increasingly conforming to “the things which are proper for sound doctrine”, and thus “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (Titus 2:1-10).

III. ‘QUESTIONS’ TO ASK IN APPLICATION.²

When reading a passage of Scripture (that you have properly interpreted!); it might be helpful to ask these questions of the passage:

1. “Is there an example for me to follow?”
2. “Is there a sin that I need to repent of?”
3. “Is there a promise that I should claim?”
4. “Is there a pattern for prayer that I should imitate?”
5. “Is there a command that I am to obey?”
6. “Is there a condition that I must meet?”
7. “Is there a verse that I need to commit to memory?”
8. “Is there a theological error that I need to avoid?”
9. “Is there an unwanted challenge that I need to face?”
10. “Is there a truth about God that I need to praise?”

¹Howard G. Hendricks, and William D. Hendricks, *Living By The Book* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), p. 284.

²Most of these are adapted from *Living By the Book*, pp. 304-7.