

REVELATION



INSPIRATION



ANIMATION



COLLECTION



TRANSLATION



ILLUMINATION



INTERPRETATION



APPLICATION

3

COMMUNICATION

THE WRITTEN WORD

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, November 29, 2009

The Bible's Pattern for Life-Change

If you've been frustrated by the fact that, though you're often exposed to the instruction of the Bible, you still fail to see practical changes in particular areas of life, the method described in this lesson can help you put God's word into action.

I. GROWTH IN CHRIST INVOLVES THE HARD WORK OF BRINGING OUR LIVES INTO CONFORMITY WITH GOD'S WORD.

- A. The Bible makes it clear that life-style changes is normative for the growing believer (Ephesians 4:22-24). And the word of God is held up as the standard for that change (Luke 6:46-49; 2 Timothy 3:14-15; James 1:22-25).
- B. The conformity of our lives to the teaching of Scripture takes work:
 - 1. It requires study to accurately understand what the Bible says.
 - 2. It requires self-denial, because our flesh fights against such change.
 - 3. It requires persistence in breaking old habits and beginning new ones.
 - 4. It requires the enabling help of the Holy Spirit.
- C. But we can have great confidence that God wants us to succeed in this great endeavor (Philippians 1:6).

II. THE BIBLE ITSELF GIVES US A PATTERN TO FOLLOW IN CONFORMING SPECIFIC AREAS OF LIFE TO ITS INSTRUCTION.

- A. The Preparatory Task: Define the problem.
 - 1. God may use several different means of communicating to you that something in your life needs to change:
 - a. Your own daily reading of Scripture may reveal a needed change.
 - b. Your experience of downfalls and shortcomings may reveal a needed area of growth.
 - c. A loving brother or sister in Christ may confront you about some thing in your life that needs to change.
 - d. You may hear something in a sermon or through a Bible lesson that an area of your life needs to change.
 - 2. Describe, to the best of your ability and as clearly as possible, the thing that needs to be changed in your life.
- B. The Four-Step Method: Follow 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to develop a plan.
 - 1. The Doctrine Step: Gather biblical information about your problem through a study Bible, a concordance, or a topical reference guide. Record all that the Bible says about this problem, and piece it together into a 'doctrinal study' of that problem. Be sure to use Scripture references.
 - 2. The Reproof Step: State specifically the ways that you are failing to measure up to what the Bible says in this area. (This can be hard!)
 - 3. The Correction Step: State what specific changes need to be made for your practice to conform to what the Bible says. Try to express what your life would look like if you were obeying the Scripture in this area of your life.
 - 4. The Training Step: State the specific steps you will now take to make the above changes. Always, when possible, make note of specific commands that the Bible gives for this step.

See the next page for an example of an easy "format" to follow in working out these four biblical steps for life-change . . .

Suppose you're at work and under a great deal of stress. Someone you depend on at work is repeatedly dropping the ball; but you say nothing. Resentment builds up. Finally, they inconvenience you once again; and you explode inappropriately in anger. This person is very surprised--especially knowing that you're a Christian.

Problem stated: I allow my anger and resentment toward other people at work to build up in me until I blow up inappropriately.

Doctrine:

1. Anger puts me in danger of judgment (Matt. 5:22).
2. Do not take revenge; leave room for God's wrath (Rom. 12:19).
3. Angry outbursts are a product of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).
4. Anger leaves me defenseless (Prov. 25:28).
5. Anger affects my prayer life (1 Tim. 2:8).
6. Be slow to anger. It doesn't accomplish the righteousness of God (James 1:19-20).
7. I can be angry without sinning; but anger must not last more than one day (Eph. 4:26).
8. I must put resentment away (Eph. 4:31-32).
9. Jesus Himself got angry at times (Matt. 21:12-13; Mark 3:5).

Reproof:

1. I get angry and sin in the process. I lose control of myself.
2. My anger is not like Jesus'. He got angry at injustice or over a lack of care for God's holiness. I got angry because I was inconvenienced at work.
3. I let many sins go down on my anger. I let it build up over time.
4. My angry outbursts harm my testimony for Christ.
5. I fail to put my anger and resentment away. I allow it to remain in me and grow.

Correction:

1. I would check my anger and make sure it is justified (Eph. 4:26; Mark 3:5; Matthew 21:12-13).
2. I would make sure that I have left room for God's wrath and not try to avenge myself (Rom. 12:19-20).
3. I would not allow resentment to build up (Eph. 4:31-32); but would take care of the matter before the day was over (Eph. 4:26).
4. I would be slow to get angry. I'd also be quick to hear and slow to speak (James 1:19-20).

Training:

1. I will daily ask God to reveal any resentment I'm holding in my heart toward a workmate; and I will ask Him to help me talk to that person before the day is over (Eph. 4:26, 31-32).
2. When I find myself getting angry I will ask God to help me determine if it's justified anger or unrighteous anger (Eph. 4:26).
 - a. If it's unrighteous, I will confess and repent (Eph. 4:26).
 - b. If it's justified, I will not express anger quickly (James 1:19-20); but will go and talk to that person calmly. If they hear me, I'll forgive them and put anger away (Eph. 4:31-32). But if they reject me, I will leave the matter in God's hand (Rom. 12:19-20).