

QUIET TIME

Theme: Applying the Bible, e.g. obeying God's Word

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understand.

- Day 1 James 1:19-25
Listen to God's Word and do what it says
- Day 2 James 2:14-26
Faith without action is dead
- Day 3 Mark 3:31-35
Doing God's will shows you belong to Christ's family
- Day 4 Matthew 7:18-24
Putting God's Word into practice is necessary to enter God's kingdom
- Day 5^{BS} Luke 6:46-49
Putting God's Word into practice is the best foundation for your life
- Day 6 Philippians 4:8-9
Putting God's Word into practice results in God's peace
- Day 7 Hebrews 6:11-12 and 10:35-36
Doing God's will is necessary to receive God's promise
- Day 8 James 3:13-18
Deeds and a blameless life show wisdom
- Day 9 James 4:13-17
Deeds done in dependence of God shows humility
- Day 10 1 Samuel 15:16-23
God requires total obedience
- Think about Colossians 4:12.
Wrestle in prayer for others.
Pray that they may stand firm in all the will of God.
 - Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Making biblical applications

Read study 38 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: Putting Christ's words into practice is laying the best foundation for life

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Luke 6:39-49**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

APPLICATIONS

John 14:23

If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.
My Father will love him,
and we will come to him
and make our home with him.

John 14:23 (NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

38. Making biblical applications

God has not given us the Bible to simply increase our knowledge of the truth, but also to transform our lives by this truth. The reading and studying of the Bible can become one of the greatest experiences of transformation in your life when you begin to apply the truth of the Bible to your life. This study teaches how you can practically apply the truth of the Bible to your life.

A. Obedience is putting God's Word into practice

1. Why is obedience to God's Word important?

The Bible clearly shows that 'obedience' is related to some of the most important areas of the Christian life. Obedience to God's Word is important for several areas of Christian life:

Obedience is important for salvation.

Read Matthew 7:21. 'Entering the kingdom of God' means the same as 'being born again' (John 3:3-8) or 'being saved' (Mark 10:24-27). You are born again, not by doing good works (Ephesians 2:8-10), but only by doing the will of God (Matthew 7:21). And doing the will of God means to believe in Jesus Christ (and in his work of salvation) (John 6:27-29).

Obedience is important for becoming a wise person.

Read Matthew 7:24-27. Knowledge without obedience is foolishness. Knowledge that is applied is wisdom.

Obedience is important for the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Read Luke 6:46. Obedience proves that Jesus Christ is really your Lord (Master, King)!

Obedience is important for building an unshakeable Christian life.

Read Luke 6:47-49. Obedience is indispensable for laying a firm foundation for your Christian life and ministry. Only when you put the words of Jesus Christ into practice can you grow spiritually, can you stand against the storms of life and can you conquer sin.

Obedience is important for developing genuine faith.

Read James 2:17,22. Obedience proves that your faith is genuine. Obedience makes your faith alive and causes your faith to have great influence. Without obedience faith is merely an intellectual, historical and dead faith.

Obedience is important for experiencing God's love.

Read John 14:21,23. Obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ proves that you love him. Obedience is also

necessary in order to experience God's confidential fellowship and presence.

Obedience is important for receiving God's promises and rewards.

Read Hebrews 10:35-36. You will only receive what God promises when you obey his will.

Obedience is important for receiving answers to prayers.

Read 1 John 3:22. God will only answer your prayers when you obey his commands and do what pleases him.

Obedience is important for discipleship.

Read Matthew 28:18-20. When you obey the commands of Jesus Christ you are a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ.

2. What is an application?

An application is a commitment to do what God says in the Bible. So, it is necessary that you believe in the truth of the Bible and believe that this truth can and will transform your life. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Without faith reading and studying the Bible has no value. And without applying God's Word the study of the Bible is incomplete.

An 'application' is a response to God's Word which God desires. It includes the response to obey God's Word and get changed yourself as well as to help other people to get changed.

After you have studied the Bible, you need to answer the following question: "Which response does God desire from me?" "What does God want me to do with what I have read" The purpose of applications is to become more and more Christ like!

B. How do you make practical applications from biblical truths?

1. Interpret the Bible correctly

Before you make applications from biblical truths you need to first read and study these truths in order to understand the truths as God intends them to be understood. That is why you need to know how to explain the Bible correctly. The following four rules are important:

The Bible is infallible.

The revelation of the Bible does not pass away (Matthew 24:35). Although the truths in the Bible are infallible, it does not follow that *our* understanding or application of these truths are infallible! Our understanding and application of the truths in the Bible will be limited, because we are imperfect!

The Bible has only one intended meaning.

God does not lie (Titus 1:2). He reveals his will and plan clearly to us. His Word (the Bible) is the truth (John 17:17). The words have only the meaning God intended

it to have. Therefore when you read the Bible you should not read something into the words, but try to grasp God's intended meaning.

The Bible does not contradict itself.

The Bible is a unity. It is one revelation. The Old and New Testament supplement one another. The Old Testament is the period of preparation and the New Testament is the period of fulfilment. That is why the Old Testament must always be interpreted in the light of the New Testament. Every Bible passage must be interpreted in the context of the whole Bible.

The Bible is its own interpreter.

Figurative expressions, parables, poetry and prophecy must each be interpreted according to its own rules of interpretation. Truths that occur more often in the Bible are more important than a truth which has no parallel (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:29). Clear teaching (Matthew 10:37) helps to explain obscure teaching (Luke 14:26). And teaching in the New Testament (Acts 15:14-18) explains the prophecies in the Old Testament (Amos 9:11-12).

2. Consider all possible applications

Although every Bible passage contains only one unmistakable truth, this truth may have several possible applications for different people in different situations. For example: "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15) is one truth, but has several possible applications: e.g. not stealing goods from a shop, not stealing the time of your employer, or not stealing the copyright material of another person.

Consider all possible applications before you choose one of them and turn that into a personal application. Here follows questions that will help you make a list of possible applications from the particular Bible passage which you are studying.

3. Questions that help you make possible applications

➤ *What does God want me to know?*

Applications in the area of my **knowledge**:

Does God want me...

- ... to remember a new fact?
- ... to realise a consequence?
- ... to understand a teaching?
- ... to gain insight?
- ... to memorise a truth?

➤ *What does God want me to believe?*

Applications in the area of my **faith**:

Does God want me...

- ... to believe a truth?
- ... to accept a new motivation?
- ... to develop a conviction?
- ... to claim a promise?

... to trust God in something?

➤ *What does God want me to be?*

Applications in the area of my **character**:

Does God want me...

- ... to develop a virtue?
- ... to change an attitude?
- ... to accept an encouragement?
- ... to accept advice?
- ... to express or suppress an emotion?
- ... to exercise a character trait?

➤ *What does God want me to do?*

Applications in the area of my **behaviour**:

Does God want me...

- ... to obey a command?
- ... to apply a teaching?
- ... to heed a warning?
- ... to make a decision or choice?
- ... to stop a bad habit?
- ... to begin a good habit?
- ... to restore a relationship?
- ... to avoid a sin?
- ... to follow an example?
- ... to share good news?
- ... to give an encouragement?
- ... to thank or praise God for something?

4. There are different kinds of applications

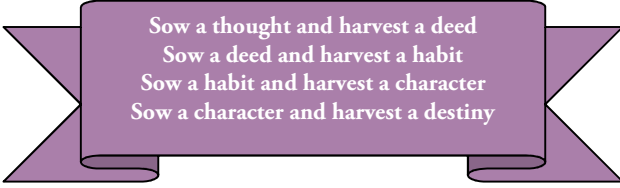
Some applications *stop* a bad habit. For example, you stop smoking.

Some applications *begin* a new habit. For example, you begin to have a daily quiet time.

Some applications *increase or decrease* a particular behaviour. For example, you spend more time with your wife and children or you spend less money on unnecessary luxury goods.

Some applications you can *execute immediately*. For example, you could phone someone immediately in order to have a serious talk.

Other applications *need more time*. For example, you want to break a particular habit or develop a particular character trait. These cost much more time! Sometimes months and years! Confess every failure and believe that every victory strengthens you. This process is described in the following words:



Sow a thought and harvest a deed
Sow a deed and harvest a habit
Sow a habit and harvest a character
Sow a character and harvest a destiny

C. How do you make a personal application?

You make a personal application by choosing one application from the list of possible applications and turning it into a personal application. Practise this personal application for at least a week.

1. Choose a personal application

You make a personal application by asking the following questions:

“Which personal application does God want me to make?” or: “Which response does God want me to give to his Word?” Ask God which possible application in the list he wants you to use (cf. B).

2. Record your personal application

Record your own personal application in the following 5 steps:

Step 1	Bible reference: “Where does this truth stand in the Bible?”
	Record the Bible reference.
Step 2	Biblical truth: “What does God intend to say in this Bible passage?”
	Explain this Bible passage as God intends it to be understood and record the thoughts.
Step 3	My situation: “What does God desire to say to me in my situation through this truth?”
	Ask yourself the following questions: How do I live different than these Bible passages? How does this Bible passage simulate me to change? How does this Bible passage spur me on to make progress in some area of my life? Record what God’s Word desires to accomplish in your life.
Step 4	My personal application: “What does God desire that I specifically know/ believe/ do?”
	Draw up a plan of action. How are you going to execute this plan? Record it. Keep your personal application simple, e.g. understandable, realistic and practicable. When you have made a personal application in the area of the development of an attitude, habit or character, decide how long you deliberately want to work on this.
Step 5	My prayer: “What is my prayer response to God’s Word?”
	Record in short what you have said to God or asked from God.

3. Practise your application

Practise your personal application for at least one or two weeks. If it is an application in the area of attitude, habit or character, practise it for at least 8 weeks, because a new habit is only formed after ample repetition.

4. Check your previous applications

Find a way to make sure that you actually execute your personal application. For example:

Share your personal application with a friend or mentor who would regularly discuss your progress.

Write your personal application on your prayer list and pray for it every day.

Write your personal application in a place you will see every day to remind you: e.g. on a mirror or in your agenda.

Evaluate your applications once in a while to determine how they have helped you.

Of course you do not need to make a personal application every week! Stay realistic.

Example of a practical application

Bible passage: Proverbs 3:1-10

What are possible applications from this Bible passage?

Proverbs 3:1-2 → Possible applications:

- to memorise this teaching or command
- to make notes when someone teaches God’s Word

Proverbs 3:3-4 → Possible applications:

- to show love to someone in a specific way (to listen to him, take him serious and accept him)
- to prove loyalty/faithfulness to someone (by regularly praying for him)

Proverbs 3:5-6 → Possible applications:

- to stop being opinionated (pig-headed) and independent and instead listen to good advice
- to pray before I make a decision or act

Proverbs 3:7-8 → Possible applications:

- to avoid wrong places and evil practices
- to let go of bad friendships
- to give up a harmful habit

Proverbs 3:9-10 → Possible applications:

- to give some of my income to God and the extension of his kingdom
- to make my home available for Christian meetings

My personal application

(one choice out of the above possible applications)

Bible reference. Proverbs 3:5-6. “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Biblical truth. Instead of just making and executing plans, a Christian needs to first pray and discuss these plans with God.

My situation. I am impulsive. Often I do not pray for wisdom, power and love before I act. I need to learn to live in dependence of God.

My personal application. My plan of action is to pray before I make a decision or a plan the coming two weeks.

My prayer. “Heavenly Father, help me to give up my independence and first pray to you before I make a decision or plan. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”