

Reading the Bible for personal application. (2)

Does the Bible have something personal to say to you, today?

We started a new series last week about **the personal application of what we read in the Bible**. Last Week we concluded that:

The Bible was written to others—but speaks to you.

*And, the Bible is about God—but draws you in. Your challenge is always to apply Scripture afresh, because God's purpose is always to *rescript* your life through reading and contemplating his Word.*

Now, let's be very practical about this! How do I start learning to apply what I read - to me, today, in my circumstance?

First of all, **read with the intention to apply the Bible in your own life**, starting with a passage well known to you. (Example John 3: 16 or Psalm 23). Ask yourself why you have turned to these words so often and what makes these exact words immediately relevant to you? Your answers to these personal questions will likely represent the following four introductory truths about how to read *any other passage* in the Bible for practical application in your life and circumstance.

First, **this (well known) passage becomes your own because you were willing to listen**. You remembered what God says and realise that he is saying it to you. You know in your heart that this promise, revelation, or command *must* be true.

The first step in application of the Bible to your own life is always *attentive listening* to what God says.

Second, **the passage and your life become fused**. What you read is not simply another passage in the Bible. A specific word from God connects to some specific struggle inside you or around you. Your life and God's words meet here. Accept that your kind of trouble is addressed in the Bible and in this passage that you apply to your life

Third, **making this passage your own reveals how God himself does the applying**. The passage arrested you. God arranged that you would need this exact word, this answer in this passage to speak to you. Know that without God's initiative you would never have made the connection. Accept that the Spirit awakened your sense of need and gave you ears to hear this particular word.

Fourth, **the application of beloved passages is usually quite straightforward**. God states something in general terms. You insert your relevant particulars and hear what the Lord is saying to your specific circumstances through this general statement and Biblical truth.

A passage becomes personal *when your personal details participate* in what is said. The gap across centuries and between cultures seems to disappear. God is today, now, present and has a helpful word for your trouble and in your personal struggle, answering your personal question and particular uncertainty.

Application of the Bible passage occurs in the specifics of your own life and the details of our own need for God to speak to you!

May the Word of God be a word of God for you, today and always!