

Reading the Bible for personal application. (3)

We are currently learning about the correct personal application of what we read in the Bible. We already concluded that:

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

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.

We already saw that we must be *willing to listen* and to *fuse the passage with our own life situations*. We also have to look for what the passage *says about God* and recognise why it is straightforward to you that this passage has relevance for you personally, today.

Before we tackle the difficult part of this process, where we read a passage that does not NOT seem to be so straightforward for personal application, let's ask ourselves, how do we read a passage that is not known to you, but you still recognise as a *straightforward passage*? Typically these passages generalize or summarize in a way that they *invite* personal application and relevance.

Think, for example, about promises of God for all believers, especially those that we came to know as the Gospel promises - about salvation, redemption, forgiveness and reconciliation with God in Jesus. Also recognise joys and sorrows, moral principles and commandments in the Bible that present themselves as of everlasting and universal importance. Apply these universal promises of God for all believers to yourself. Or test your own life situations against the universal expectations of God for all believers.

Pay attention to how various scriptures specifically reapply the same promises and standards and that the whole Bible relates to these universal assurances and decrees. Then, look for the place in such a passage where these words come to you as a Christian, as a follower of Jesus, and are therefore applied differently by you, than by a non-Christian, such as a Jew or a Muslim. In simple terms, how do I apply this for and in my relationship with my Saviour, Jesus.

In matters of obedience, the Bible often proclaims a general truth without mentioning any of the multitudes of possible practical applications. When Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and money" - Luke 16:13, you are left to decide for yourself what "love for money" means in your life and in your culture. There are multitudes of similar generalised expectations of God addressed in Scripture.

These generalised cases, where the Bible speaks in large categories, addressing many different experiences, circumstances, and actions by only stating the principle, the universal truth must be applied to me - to my challenge, my concern and my sin! Understanding what it specifically means in your life asks for self examination, prayer pondering and guidance of the Holy Spirit as to what you should take from those words in order to *rescript* your life in obedience to God's Word.