



### Introduction

- The accurate interpretation of Scripture, like a true compass, must always precede its application to life
- Learning the meaning of Scripture points the way; the believer then must also go the full distance to God's ideal!
- Christ captures the essence of this reality in explicit statements in the Gospels.

### Matthew 4:4

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

### John 6:63

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

### Introduction

- The accurate interpretation of Scripture, like a true compass, must always precede its application to life
- Learning the meaning of Scripture points the way; the believer then must also go the full distance to God's ideal!
- Christ captures the essence of this reality in explicit statements in the Gospels.
- There is a theology of Scripture application—what the Word teaches about applying itself to light.

### Important Statements to Consider

- If a believer is at peace in his conscience with his application of Scripture on a difficult cultural matter, no other believer should question or challenge his views about it.
- Each believer's applications of Scripture are to be viewed as equally weighty and valid because he has a personal relationship with Christ and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
- Pastors should not proclaim their applications of Scripture with authority; they should only proclaim the simple meaning of Scripture with authority, since it alone is the inspired Word of God.

### Important Statements to Consider

- Only the *clear statements* of Scripture should ever be used as a basis for fellowship or separation between believers, never just an *individual believer's or group's application* of Scripture to some aspect of life.
- It is possible for mature Christians to be diametrically opposed to each other in their application of Scripture concerning lifestyle and worship style and they both be correct in their views at the same time.

#### Step One: Gain Essential Perspective—Scripture Application as a Principal Pursuit in Spiritual Life.

- A. It is the way to pleasing God through faith-based obedience.

#### Daniel 1:8, 17

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”

#### Step One: Gain Essential Perspective—Scripture Application as a Principal Pursuit in Spiritual Life.

- A. It is the way to pleasing God through faith-based obedience.  
B. It is the way of no self-deception.

#### James 1:22-25

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what man of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

### Step One: Gain Essential Perspective—Scripture Application as a Principal Pursuit in Spiritual Life.

- A. It is the way to pleasing God through faith-based obedience.
- B. It is the way of no self-deception.
- C. It is the way of wisdom.

### *Biblical Wisdom Defined*

Wisdom is seeing life from God’s perspective and acting accordingly; it is the ability to make right choices for your own spiritual best interest and the glory of God.

### חָכְמָה/σοφία

- Wisdom is rooted in the fear of the Lord [humble reverence] (Proverbs 9:10).
- Wisdom is to be first acquired, before all else (Proverbs 4:5-9).
- Wisdom is of greater value than all material wealth (Proverbs 8:10-11).
- Wisdom is only known through a saving relationship with Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).
- Wisdom is a gift from God acquired through prayer (James 1:2-8).
- Wisdom is always characterized by important dispositional and behavioral qualities (James 3:17).

### Matthew 7:24, 26

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: . . . And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.”

### Step Two: Engage in Serious Word Internalization for Scripture Application.

- “For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:13-14).
- “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

### Step Two: Engage in Serious Word Internalization for Scripture Application.

- A. Intense exposure to the Word—beyond the milk to the meat (Hebrews 5: 13a-14).
- B. In-depth understanding of the Word—through the Spirit’s illumination (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

### *The Deep Things of God*

- The relationship between a passage and other select, relevant passages.
- How a passage fits with the overall teaching of Scripture on the primary point it is addressing.
- The meaning of all of the details of the passage rightly interpreted, following standard guidelines for Biblical hermeneutics.
- How the teaching of the passage intersects in many ways and at many levels with life itself.

### *The Old Testament Offers the “Deep Things” of God about Application*

- Law: teaches us about the nature of God and points to Christ as Savior.
  - “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12).
  - “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ . . . for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16).
  - “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:25).
- History: individuals and Israel model sin and righteousness for the believer.

### *The New Testament Offers the “Deep Things” of God about Application*

- Inspiration requires of us a presumption of truth.
- Christ is our example, but He is God and therefore like no other.
- God chose to reveal His truth in a limited context in history and culture.
- Association is the precursor and cause of imitation, for vice and for virtue.

### *ICEWM*

- Imitative
- Contemporary
- Entertainment
- Worship
- Model

### *The New Testament Offers the “Deep Things” of God about Application*

- Inspiration requires of us a presumption of truth.
- Christ is our example, but He is God and therefore like no other.
- God chose to reveal His truth in a limited context in history and culture.
- Association is the precursor and cause of imitation, for vice and for virtue.
- Clarity for righteousness is always what God desires.

### *Step Two: Engage in Serious Word Internalization for Scripture Application.*

- A. Intense exposure to the Word—beyond the milk to the meat (Hebrews 5: 13a-14).
- B. In-depth understanding of the Word—through the Spirit’s illumination (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).
- C. Intricate discernment based on the Word—exercising your senses to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14b).

### Step Three: Utilize Christ's Central Concepts for Scripture Application.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17-19).

### Step Three: Utilize Christ's Central Concepts for Scripture Application.

A. Focus on the spirit of God's commands, not the letter.

*"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, . . . But I say unto you" (Matthew 5:21-22, 23-26, 27-230, 31-32, 33-37, 38-42, 43-47)*

### Christ's Examples of the Spirit of God's Commands

- Murder—Avoid anger (vv.21-22)
- Unresolved conflicts—Avoid ignoring them but rather resolve them (vv. 23-26)
- Adultery—Avoid lust which is adultery (vv. 27-30)
- Divorce—Avoid divorce and remarriage which may be adultery (vv. 31-32)
- Oaths—Avoid oaths altogether; communicate with simple integrity (vv. 33-37)
- Vengeance—Avoid vengeance entirely through meekness (vv. 38-42)
- Loving neighbors and hating enemies—bless, do good, and pray for your enemies (vv. 43-47)

### Matthew 5:48

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

### Step Three: Utilize Christ's Central Concepts for Scripture Application.

- A. Focus on the spirit of God's commands, not the letter.
- B. Assess the "weight" of each command relative to other commands.
1. There are those that are less weighty.

### Matthew 23:23

"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted with weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

### *Weighty Matters Christ Presents*

Judgment  
Mercy  
Faith

### **Step Three: Utilize Christ's Central Concepts for Scripture Application.**

- A. Focus on the spirit of God's commands, not the letter.
- B. Assess the "weight" of each command relative to other commands.
  1. There are those that are less weighty.
  2. There are those that are weighty and even primary.

### **Jeremiah 9:24**

"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

### **Micah 6:8**

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

### **Matthew 22:37-40**

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets."

### ***The Remarkable Priority of Love***

- The greatest command is to love God fully.
- The second greatest command is to love others as yourself.
- All Scripture is to be understood through the lens of these commands to love.

## ἀγάπη

Love is to unconditionally, generously, selflessly, sacrificially proclaim and live for the redemption of others and the glory of God.

### Step Three: Utilize Christ's Central Concepts for Scripture Application.

- A. Focus on the spirit of God's commands, not the letter.
- B. Assess the "weight" of each command relative to other commands.
- C. Discern if a traditional Scripture application is negating the compassionate intent of one of God's commands.
  1. First century example: Sabbath-keeping.

### Matthew 12:1-2, 9-10

"At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day."

"And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him."

### Step Three: Utilize Christ's Central Concepts for Scripture Application.

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- C. Discern if a traditional Scripture application is negating the compassionate intent of one of God's commands.
  1. First century example: Sabbath-keeping.
  2. First century example: care of parents.

### Matthew 15:3-4

"But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother; let him die the death."

### Step Four: Respond to your conscience with great care in Scripture application.

- A. The meaning of "conscience" in the New Testament.

## Conscience in the New Testament

- συνείδησις
- *suneidesis*
- 30 occurrences
- A favorite word of Paul

## Step Four: Respond to your conscience with great care in Scripture application.

- A. The meaning of “conscience” in the New Testament.
1. The Greek term: συνείδησις (*suneidesis*).
  2. Some definitions from the lexicons.

## Conscience Defined

- “the consciousness man has of himself in relation to God, manifesting itself in the form of self-testimony”

*Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament, 215*

- “innate discernment, self-judging consciousness”

*Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, 427*

- “Spiritual awareness of God; . . . moral consciousness”

*Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 794*

## Conscience Defined

- “the soul distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other”

*Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 602*

## Step Four: Respond to your conscience with great care in Scripture application.

- A. The meaning of “conscience” in the New Testament.
1. The Greek term: συνείδησις (*suneidesis*).
  2. Some definitions from the lexicons.
  3. Adjectives used in the New Testament used to describe conscience.

## Adjectives that Describe Conscience in the New Testament

- Good
- Blameless
- Defiled
- Weak
- Wounded
- Evil



**Step Four: Respond to your conscience with great care in Scripture application.**

- A. The meaning of “conscience” in the New Testament.
- B. How conscience functions in the believer in contrast to the unbeliever.

**Romans 2:15**

“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”

**Romans 9:1-3**

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

**Step Four: Respond to your conscience with great care in Scripture application.**

- A. The meaning of “conscience” in the New Testament.
- B. How conscience functions in the believer in contrast to the unbeliever.
- C. The believer’s high goal for his conscience as a result of the application of Scripture.

**Acts 24:16**

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward and God and toward men.”

**Step Five: Be Controlled in the Process by the Great Aim of all Scripture Application—Holy Love.**

- A. With the right motivations.

### 1 Timothy 1:5-7

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.”

### Step Five: Be Controlled in the Process by the Great Aim of all Scripture Application—Holy Love.

- A. With the right motivations.
- B. With the highest aspirations.

### Philippians 1:9-11

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

### Questions for Applications

- Is there an example in this passage I can follow today?
- Is there a sin in this passage to avoid today?
- Is there a virtue in this passage to embrace today?
- Is there a warning I must heed today?
- Is there wisdom to aid me in a choice I must make today?

### Conclusion

- Putting the Truth to work in life is (1) the capstone purpose of the Word of God in personal sanctification, (2) central to a Scriptural bibliology, and (3) essential to the true expression of Christianity in the world.

### Conclusion

- God’s purpose for Scripture is its implementation in the believer’s life. Our ministry in general, and our preaching in particular, should aid the saints to that end by helping them see how they should respond to the Word of God in their thinking and in their living.

## Conclusion

Truth applied is the Truth alive, for men to see and for the glory of God.

