

Proper Application of Scripture

‘Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven’
Matthew 7:21

The most important part of Bible Study is to properly apply what we have learned. It is one thing to learn and understand the truth; it is another to properly apply what we have learned. In this lesson we will consider why the proper application of scripture is so important in the life of a Christian.

All of the lessons up to this point have focused on different aspects of Bible study. Respecting the authority of the scriptures, considering the context and audience, using study aids, etc. are all important parts of correctly understanding the Bible. Once we have gained an understanding of a particular passage or section of scripture, it is time for us to make application.

When a sinner learns that he must hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized, the next step is to do what the scriptures teach. Some people will hear and believe but will not do anything else. If we only partially apply what the scriptures teach, we cannot expect to be pleasing to the Lord and more importantly cannot expect to be saved in the end. We are obligated to completely follow and apply everything that we have learned.

Consider these important passages on the application of scripture:

James 1:22-25 *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a bearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”*

Luke 6:46 *“But why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”*

Romans 2:13 *“...for not the bearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified”*

1 John 3:7 *“Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous”*

James 2:14 *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?”*

Sometimes scripture is not properly applied because we have not studied thoroughly enough to understand the truth. This frequently happens in denominations. Their interpretation and application of scripture often varies greatly from what is being taught because they have not closely examined the truth. The same danger exists for all Bible students and this is why we must take our time to carefully study the Bible. God has given us minds to comprehend what is taught if we are willing to put in the time to study it correctly.

Even when we do understand the truth, one of the most challenging parts of a Christian’s life can be to consistently apply what we learn in the Bible. Why is that? There can be many reasons. Maybe we are convicted or condemned by the truth and we do not like what is said so we ignore what God’s word says or change it to suit our needs. Sometimes it can be simply that we want to do what pleases us instead of what the Bible

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teaches. Whatever the reason may be, we must understand that we will all be held accountable to the truth and to properly apply what we learn.

Questions

1. Read the following passages and state the proper application:

James 1:26 _____

Matthew 7:24-27 _____

Matthew 5:13-16 _____

Matthew 23:9 _____

1 Peter 3:15 _____

2. What are some reasons why people do not properly apply the truth?

3. An argument that is made by many denominations to justify instrumental music in worship is that we read about instruments being played in the New Testament and they site Revelation 14:2. Are we applying this scripture correctly if we use it to justify instrumental music in worship? Why or why not? _____

4. How do the Mormons incorrectly apply 1 Corinthians 15:29? Why do we know that what they believe is false and what scriptures would you use to prove it? _____

5. Many Catholics use Matthew 16:18 to prove that Peter was given supreme authority and was the first pope. Are they applying this scripture correctly? If not, what is the proper application? _____

6. Many brethren use 1 Corinthians 15:33 to teach that bad people can have a negative effect on good people, yet most scholars agree the passage is referring to false teachers. Are brethren incorrectly applying this passage? _____

7. Some believe that Jesus turned water into intoxicating wine in John 2 and therefore they are justified in drinking intoxicating beverages today. Are they applying this section of scripture correctly? If not, what arguments would you use to refute their belief? _____

8. What is the danger to the church if brethren do not properly apply the truth? _____

