

Exploring New Applications

Introduction: “What do the Scriptures principally teach?” The personal consequence of expounded truth (behavior or attitude).

I. How Important is Application

A. Broadus - “The main thing to be done”

Thus, we start early. Put reason (burden) with theme in Introduction.

B. Calvin - “If we leave it to men’s choice to follow what is taught them, they will never move one foot. Therefore, the doctrine itself can profit nothing at all.” (Sermon on II Timothy 4:1-2).

◁>Just as we expound what the Spirit must ultimately interpret, we must articulate what the Spirit will ultimately apply (contra solus Spiritus argument).

C. Personal Ethos

Ethos = Credibility (knowledge, realism) + Compassion (altruistic care, courage)

II. What Troubles Us About Application?

A. The Courage required to be specific

B. The Hermeneutics required to be specific (the movement from descriptive to imperative is always difficult but necessary).

C. The Grace denied (?) by requiring specific duties

Is it ungracious to talk about duty?

1. To redeem from an empty way of life is gracious.
2. To teach to say, No, to ungodliness is gracious.
3. To lead to the blessings of obedience is gracious.
4. To teach that there is discipline for disobedience is gracious.

-
1. To teach that there is merit in obedience is ungracious.
 2. To teach that God rejects for disobedience is ungracious.
 3. To teach that God does not require godliness is ungracious.
 4. To teach the law apart from grace is ungracious (Deadly Be’s).

III. How Do We Properly Apply?

A. Regular use of ALL four standard Questions of Application? What, Where, Why, How

1. What: Instructional specificity:

The specific instructions derived from and proved by the explanation.

2. Where: Situational specificity

Identify where in real life the expounded principles apply

a. Be concrete by going in through the who door

b. Spotlight one situation, then more quickly “unroll”
(i.e. identify other situations your people face where the
expounded principles also apply - “Don’t fence me in”)

Particular Problem/Need Possibilities

1. Building Proper Relationships (w/God, family, friends, co-workers, church people, etc.)
2. Reconciling Conflicts (in marriage, family, work, church, etc.)
3. Handling Pain and Difficult Situations (stress, debt, unemployment, grief, fatigue, etc.)
4. Overcoming Weakness and Sin (dishonesty, anger, addiction, lust, doubt, discipline, etc.)
5. Lack, or improper use, of Resources (time, treasures, talents, etc.)
6. Meeting challenges/using opportunities (education, work in or out of church, witnessing, missions, etc.)
7. Taking Responsibility (home, church, work, finances, future, etc.)
8. Honoring God (worship, confession, prayer, devotions, compartmentalizing life, etc.)
9. Other?

3. Why: Biblical motivation

a. Love over fear (contra self-protection as primary motivation)

b. Gratitude over gain (contra self-promotion as primary motivation)

∴ The motivation hierarchy (Why should I do what God requires?):

Love for God

Love for others

Love for self

∴ The relationship levers (maintaining proper motives for repentance)

What **can** change

Fellowship
Blessing
Our assurance
His delight in our actions
Discipline
Conviction

What **cannot** change

Sonship
Welfare
His affection
His desire for our good
Destiny
Justification

∠ In Christ-centered (grace-oriented) preaching the rules don't change;
the reasons do; we obey Him because we love Him.

4. Provide Biblical enablement (answering the How question)

a. By means (Instructions and Disciplines)

Instructions for:

- i. Confessing Sin
- ii. Adjusting Attitudes
- iii. Correcting or Rejecting Past Practices
- iv. Establishing new patterns of thought or behavior
- v. Utilizing means of grace (serious consideration of the nine categories of problem/need above will help keep you from overutilizing this set of instructions)

Disciplines (means of Grace ≠ Means to Grace)

- i. Informing of God's instructions
- ii. Stimulating greater love for God (primary purpose as we seek to build an ever greater expulsive power of new affections)

b. By faith

- i. Confidence in the New Creation
- identity - ability
- ii. Confidence in the Holy Spirit

B. Prudent use of Applicational Options

1. Open the Horizon

- a. Answer what but not where
- b. Answer where but not what
- c. Why and how still need to be answered

2. Reverse the Train

Application → Illustration → Explanation

3. Love a Puritan; and, a Parable

2-phase messages



4. Turn the Radio On

Information Models vs. Communication Models

Traditional "Information Model"
("Detail" or "Exegetical" Model)

"Communication Model"
("Applicational Model")

Statement of the Main Point

- a. subpoint # 1
- b. subpoint # 2 } 2-min. warning
- c. subpoint # 3

Statement of the Main Point
[Immediate proof, explanation,
or definition; 1-2 sentences]

Illustration

Illustration

Application

Applications
-Developed
-Particularized

Strengths

- 1. Dealing didactic passages
- 2. Exploding small Scripture portions
- 3. Explaining complex ideas

- 1. Simplifying large/complex themes
- 2. Distilling large Scripture portions
- 3. Applying developed truth

Weaknesses

- 1. Often dull or belabored
- 2. May lose people in detail
- 3. Little time for application

- 1. May become topical
- 2. May inadequately expound

Assumptions

- 1. Complexity = Seriousness
- 2. Higher Order Abstraction = Orthodoxy
- 3. Universal → particular

- 1. Sincerity = Seriousness
- 2. Applicability = Orthodoxy
- 3. Particular is universal

Conclusion: 1) Stay true to the text; concentrate on its authority not yours. 2) Sermons must be redemptive as well as instructive. 3) Let earnestness be your eloquence. 4) The character of the messenger is more important than the quality of the message.