

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON #4

Teacher's tip

Quote: Many lay aside Scripture as rusty armor; they are better read in romances than in St. Paul; they spend many hours “between the comb and the glass;” but their eyes begin to be sore when they look upon a Bible. ***How to read the Scriptures***” pg. 59.

Creating a teaching outline from Josh. 1:8: *“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”*

“This book of the law **[subject]** shall not depart **[action word/verb]** from your mouth,
but **[contrast word or conjunction that connects two thoughts]**
you **[subject]** shall meditate **[action word/verb]** on it day and night,
so that **[purpose statement/reason for obeying]**
you **[subject]** may be careful to do **[action word/verb]** according to all that is written in
it;
for then **[purpose statement/reason for obeying]**
you **[subject]** will make your way prosperous, **[action word/verb]**
and then
you **[subject]** will have success. **[action word/verb]**

TEACHING OUTLINE:

YOUR THREE STEPS TO BIBLICAL SUCCESS

- I. YOU MUST SPEAK THE WORD
- II. YOU MUST MEDITATE ON THE WORD
- III. YOU MUST OBEY THE WORD

CONCLUSION: YOU WILL HAVE SUCCESS AND BE PROSPEROUS IF YOU DO THESE THINGS!

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Lesson Four

So far we have worked through some of the basic Bible study principles (hermeneutics). We have discovered the importance of **genre, historical background, theme, outline, far context, near context, cultural customs, word studies**, and how this leads to **interpretation**. What we have learned so far are the more fundamental principles needed to study almost any text of the Bible. Yet, this is only the tip of the iceberg! But don't get scared because we are not going to give you the entire iceberg in this series. Having said that, I do want to expose you briefly to some of the other Bible study principles so that you know they exist. I also want to look at the relationship between studying the Bible and teaching the Bible.

I. **HOW BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLES (HERMENEUTICS) RELATES TO BIBLE STUDY (EXEGESIS) AND BIBLE TEACHING (EXPOSITION)**

Bible study principles are the tools we use to dig into the Scriptures to find the meaning of the text. Just knowing the Bible study principles is not enough, we must actually study the Bible. This is called exegesis which means *“to take information out of the text.”* The evil twin sister of exegesis is *“eisegesis”* which means *“to read information into the text.”* After learning and applying the principles we might teach or preach the truth to others. We *“expose”* the meaning of the text to them. This is called *“exposition,”* the process of *putting the truth of the Bible gained in Bible study on display*. Exposition is when we teach or preach the meaning and purpose of a text to others. All three, Bible study principles, Bible study, and teaching or preaching, are related. First, you learn the principles for studying the Bible. Then, you study the Bible, applying those principles. Finally, you tell others about what you found. To summarize:

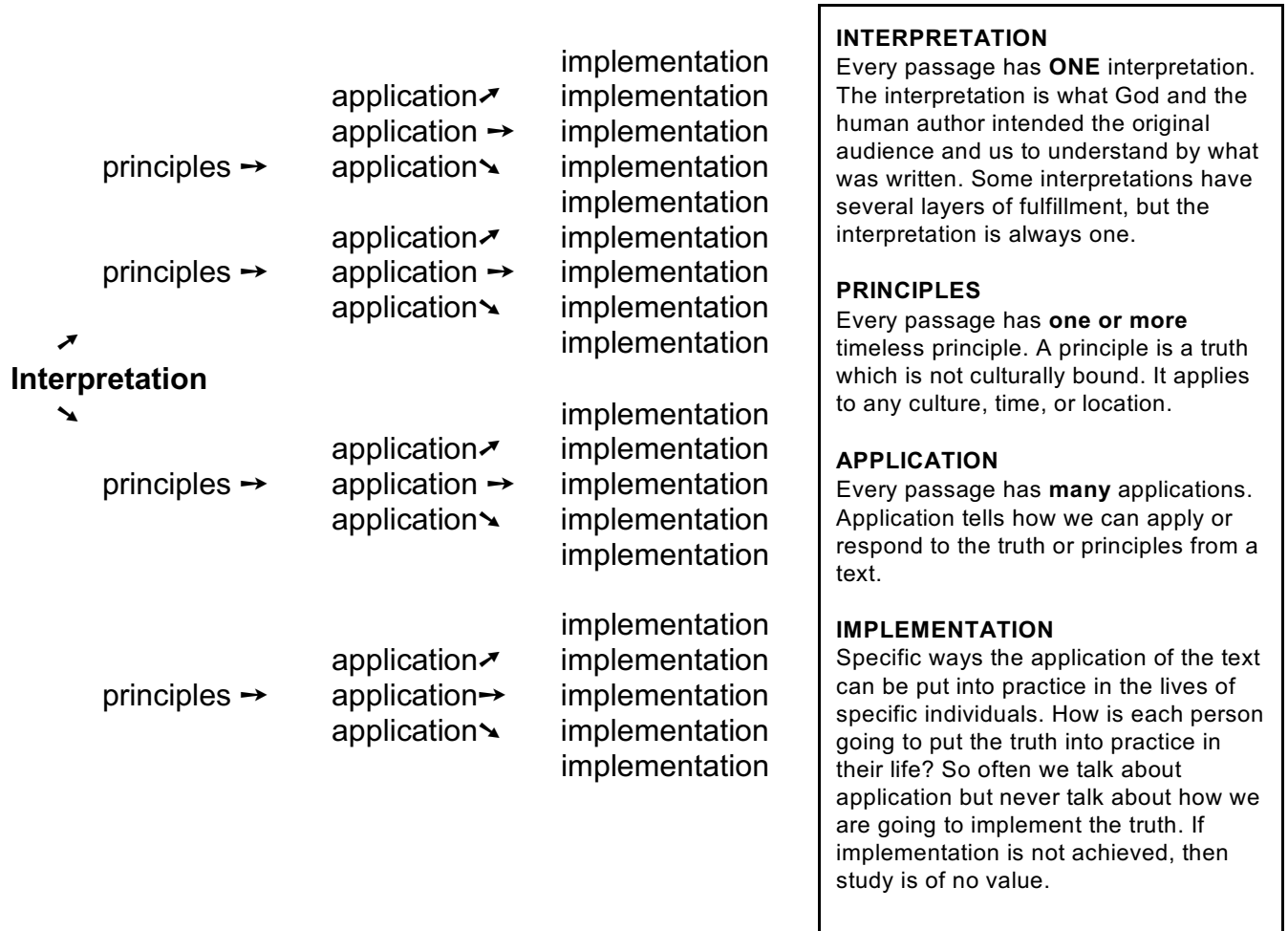
- A. **Bible Study Principles (hermeneutics)** are the principles, methods, and rules used to arrive at an accurate interpretation of the biblical text.
- B. **Bible Study (exegesis)** is the process of applying proper Bible study methods to find out what the text says and means.
- C. **Bible teaching or preaching (exposition)** is to expose the biblical author's meaning, purpose, principles, and application of the text to those hearing it today.

II. **THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- A. It must be noted that the most important thing in teaching and preaching is **not teaching techniques**. Teaching techniques are a small part of what impacts people with the truths of God's Word, but they do have some significance. The real power in teaching is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit attests or accompanies the Word making it living and active, like *“a hammer that shatters rock or a fire that consumes”* (**Jer. 23:29**). Powerful teaching and preaching has three primary qualities.

1. First, the teaching of the Word must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. This means you must be walking in the Spirit, have your sins confessed, during studying and teaching. You must be relying upon the Lord and seeking him throughout the process.
2. Second, the teacher must allow the Word of God to work on their own heart. Powerful teaching and preaching happens when the text being studied is first taken to heart by the one teaching.
3. Third, it is teaching which is accurate, exposing the original author's intended meaning of the text.
4. **Remember – Truly Powerful Teaching must Have These Three Characteristics. They must never be compromised!** Teaching must be empowered by the Spirit, delivered by a godly individual walking in the Spirit, and according to the truth of the Spirit.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPRETATION, PRINCIPLES, APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION



V. OTHER FACTORS IN TEACHING AND PREACHING

- A. **Lecture** is when the speaker is **telling** the student **about** the text. This is the most abstract form of communication, using **He, she, it, they, and them**. In a lecture, facts are communicated about other people, other places, and different times. Lecture is abstract, one-way communication. Background or cultural information is often like information heard in a lecture.
- B. **Teaching** is communicating truth through **dialoguing** with the hearers about the **purpose, meaning, and application** of the text. Teaching is less abstract mostly using **He, she, it, they, them, us, and our**. The teacher attempts to help the student find everything they can from the text through question and answer. When Jesus was accidentally left behind by his parents as a young man, they found him in the temple. **Lk. 2:46** says, *“Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.”* This is teaching. The teacher supplies information to the student that cannot be found in the text but seeks to help the student find what information means through questions that lead the student to look at and observe the text. Teaching is more personal than lecture and is two-way dialogue.
- C. **Preaching** is to proclaim the truth of God’s Word with accuracy, authority, and boldness. The preacher **proclaims** the **purpose, meaning, and application of God’s Word**. The preacher stands as the voice of God to the people. Preaching is very personal and confrontational using **you and your** in the application sections. The preacher also has sections of his sermon that are very lecture like, or teaching like, but the primary difference between lecture and preaching is preaching is direct, forceful, commanding exhortation from the Word of God to listeners calling them to obey the Lord.

VI. TECHNIQUES FOR MAINTAINING PEOPLE’S ATTENTION AND INTEREST WHILE YOU TEACH OR PREACH

Charles Spurgeon in his book *Lectures to My Students* in a chapter entitled “Attention” writes:

“Their attention must be gained, or nothing can be done with them: and it must be retained, or we may go on word-spinning, but no good will come of it. Over the head of military announcements our English officers always place the word “ATTENTION!” in large capitals, and we need some such word over all our sermons. We need the earnest, candid, wakeful, continued attention of all those who are in the congregation. If men’s minds are wandering far away they cannot receive the truth, and it is much the same if they are inactive. Sin cannot be taken out of men, as Eve was taken out of the side of Adam, while they are fast asleep. They must be awake, understanding what we are saying, and feeling its force, or else we may as well go to sleep too. There are preachers who care very little whether they are attended to or not; so long as they can hold on through the allotted time it is of very small importance to them whether their people hear for eternity, or hear in vain: the sooner such ministers sleep in the churchyard and preach by the verse on their gravestones the better.”

It is necessary that we gain some proficiency in teaching and preaching. It may be we are not gifted and in that case we should do our teaching in one on one settings. If we are not gifted and we stand to bring the word of God and yet have such a boring and painful delivery that people fall asleep, we teach people by our poor delivery that the Word of God is boring and the cure for insomnia. We must also not be quick to cast stones at our hearers. Yes, there are times when the people we teach may have been up all the previous night, but usually it is not their fault if they are not interested, engaged, and following along with us, it is our fault for failing to maintain their attention.

antithesis	Antithetical language helps to define truth through comparing opposites. E.g., "The passage does not say . . . , but it is saying. . ." or "The wicked person does . . . but the righteous . . ." or "Jesus unlike the . . ." or "So and so has said . . . but the Bible tells us . . ." or "The world tells us . . . yet the scriptures say . . ."
current events	Current events that everyone knows about, or which may be interesting to them can be used to create interest and focus attention on what will be taught. E.g. We have recently heard of the plane crash where 237 people died. Why did this happen? Why didn't God do anything about it? How does this fit into his plan? What if your son, daughter, husband or wife was on that plane? " Today we will examine a passage of Scripture which will give us some of the answers to these commonly asked questions.
dress	Your appearance should not distract from your message. The way we dress can help the way we are perceived and aid in the communication of truth. Wearing a three piece suit would not go well at a mountain retreat. Speaking in a T-shirt and shorts would not go over well in a formal Sunday morning service.
eye contact	The person you look at the most usually learns the most. Eye contact stimulates interest. Eye contact is personal. Looking down all the time, rolling your eyes up in your head, closing your eyes, staring at the ceiling, communicates that you are not interested in your audience.
gesture	Gestures need to fit the situation. Large gestures for large audience, and small gestures for small audience. Make sure your gestures match what you are saying. If you say way over there to the west, make sure you are pointing west.
illustrations	Personal illustrations are usually the best because you are the foremost authority on your experiences. Biblical illustrations are also good because you can teach the Scriptures with the Scriptures. Illustrations should attract attention to the truth of the Word, not the teacher.
metaphor	Metaphor is a type of comparison which compares the familiar with the unfamiliar. E.g. "I am the <u>door</u> ." or "I am the <u>bread of life</u> ." or "You <u>white washed tombs</u> , you <u>blind guides of the blind</u> , you <u>strain out a gnat and swallow a camel</u> ." "It would be better for you to <u>tie a millstone around your neck and jump into the sea</u> than to lead one of God's little ones astray."
openers	Openers are stories, current events, illustrations, rhetorical question/s or comments at the beginning of your teaching session which focus most or all of your audience on the subject or topic you are going to address.
pause	Pause can be very effective in maintaining attention. It is good to pause after asking a question. It is good to pause when trying to provoke thought. There he was (pause), hanging on the cross (pause), God incarnate (pause), He was dying for their sins and they didn't know it (pause), he was dying for your sins (big pause).

rhetorical questions	Questions promote thought, focus attention, and make people think about what you are trying to teach. "Does God love everyone? Then why does it say in Rom. 9 "Jacob I loved and Esau I hated?" or "We have all heard the creeds which speak of Christ being indivisibly both God and man. What happened when Jesus died? Did God die? Did only the man part die? What happened?" or "How is your prayer life? When was the last time you prayed? If you totaled up all your prayer times last week how much would that be? What can you do to improve your prayer life?"
shockers	Shockers should not be used very often. They are extreme illustrations, statements, or stories designed to shock people into paying attention. E.g. "Jesus is not God, He never claimed to be God, he was merely a good man and a wise prophet." (pause) "So say the Jehovah's Witnesses." "My wife died last night, (pause) in a dream I had."
simile	Simile is the comparison of the familiar with the unfamiliar by using "like" and "as." E.g. " <u>Like</u> a dog returns to its vomit or a sow to wallow in the mire." or "His hair was white <u>like</u> wool, his eyes <u>like</u> a flaming fire, his voice <u>as</u> the sound of many waters."
stories	Everyone loves stories. They really grab people's attention. The key is to make sure your story focuses attention on the truth of God's Word and not on the story itself. You don't want them leaving with a story, but you want them to leave with a knowledge and understanding of the Word.
voice tone	Voice tone is also important in communication. It is usually best to fluctuate voice tone. Try to use the full range of your voice and vary your voice tone and volume while teaching. If you talk at one constant level, it is harder for people to track with you.
word speed	Varying word speed is also helpful in maintaining attention. Speaking fast, then slow, then fast again helps to maintain interest. When this is coupled with varying voice tone, it can be very effective at maintaining interest.
passion	Passion or zeal is effective in maintaining people's attention. They will be able to tell if you are passionate about the truth and your passion will often make them passionate. On the other hand, if you are not passionate, you may bore them to death.
conviction	Conviction is your sureness of the truth of the text. If you are not sure about what the text is saying or its truthfulness, people will be able to tell. Your conviction lets the people know that you are thoroughly convinced that what you are saying is true, which will encourage them to do the same.
boldness	Boldness or courage also helps maintain people's attention. It lets the hearers know that you are willing to die for what you are telling them. Boldness tells the people that God's Word is important and should be heard regardless of the cost.

If you are going to study the Bible so as to teach others, make sure you have someone help you and give you honest feedback. It is also helpful to record or video tape your teaching and watch it. This is humbling but it is also very helpful as it will allow you to see your own weaknesses and improve by leaps and bounds. The Word of God is too important and wonderful to bore people with so every preacher and teacher must strive to communicate the Word of God in an interesting, engaging and practical way. This should never be done at the expense of the truth, but to amplify and draw attention to the truth. All the teaching techniques above should only be used to draw attention to the truth of the Word of God, never the teacher.

VII. **OTHER IMPORTANT BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLES**

Below is a chart surveying the more common Bible study principles. These are the rules or tools you can use to get at an accurate meaning of the text. Some principles you use all the time, like context, others you only use some of the time, like cultural customs. Yet it is good to know what tools are available just in case you need them.

Principle	Definition
Analogy of the faith	This principle states that the Bible is unified in what it teaches. In other words, no Scripture when interpreted correctly will contradict another Scripture or the unified teaching of the whole Bible.
Checking principle	This principle states that we should use other scholarly sources to check, affirm, modify, or refine our interpretations.
Clarity of Scripture	This principle says everything in God's Word is knowable to every believer. It does not mean every believer knows the meaning of all of Scripture.
Clearest interpretation	This principle states that the clearest, easiest interpretation is to be preferred over a harder, more obscure interpretation.
Christological principle	This principle recognizes that the redemptive plan of God through Christ is "the" or "a" major theme of the Scriptures. Christ can be found in "all" or "many" scriptures throughout the Bible. We can understand our text better when we understand how it fits into the redemptive plan of God.
Context (near, far, within the Bible)	Context is one of the most important hermeneutical principles. Context is what comes before and after a passage. Near context deals with the verses immediately preceding and following the text under study. Far context is how your text fits into the entire book or a major section within the book you are studying. Context within the Bible seeks to discover how the book you are studying fits in to the entire Bible corpus. The principle of context is always applied. Near context is most important followed by far and biblical contexts.
Cultural customs	This principle states that certain words, phrases, things, and events can sometimes be better understood by studying their cultural history.
Genre or literary type	This principle states that all Scripture falls into a certain kind of literary mold or genre. By identifying the genre one is aided in interpreting the Scriptures.
Geographical studies	This principle states that geographical studies often assist in the accurate interpretation of Scripture.
Grammar studies	This principle states that interpretation is aided by identifying the structure (syntactical analysis) of passages according to paragraphs, sentences, and words.
Historical background or historical priority	This principle states that we must interpret Scripture in light of its historical background and setting, not ours.
Interpretation, principles, application	This principle states that there is a three fold goal of hermeneutics i.e., interpretation, principles, and application. The interpretation or meaning of a passage is one, the principles are the timeless truths contained within the text which may be one or more, the application of the principles is usually many.

Principle	Definition
Maintain literal interpretation	This principle states that all Scripture is to be interpreted literally, historically, and grammatically. The literal method recognizes figures of speech and literary devices but realizes they derive their meaning from the literal meaning of words and phrases.
Priority of the original languages	This principle states that the original languages (Hebrew & Greek) have priority over the other languages into which the Scriptures have been translated.
Revelation is progressive	This principle recognizes that often revelation progresses from simple to complex, vague to clear, incomplete to complete.
Revelation is accommodated	This principle is that God's revelation speaks to man on his level. God describes the unfamiliar with the familiar.
Scripture interprets Scripture (also called cross reference)	This principle states that individual and specific texts can usually be interpreted more clearly and accurately when they are compared to other Scriptures which teach or discuss the same subject matter.
Unity of the meaning of Scripture	Each passage has one meaning, not two or three. In some cases, the one meaning may have near and future fulfillments or more than one part.
Word studies	This principle states that the interpretation of Scripture is enhanced through word studies (lexical analysis). By using lexicons, theological word books, and theological dictionaries the key words of Scripture can be better understood.

VIII. HOMEWORK

- A. **Read the appendix** at the end of this lesson entitled, "Implementation: The Missing Ingredient." Consider the importance of not only "knowing" the application of the text but also "putting the application into practice."
- B. **Study Psa. 1:1-3** and see if you can create a teaching outline and summary interpretation of what these verses teach as a whole.
 - 1. Break down these three verses into main points and sub points.
 - 2. Group similar points under the heading of one main point, if necessary.
 - 3. Make a teaching outline from these verses as if you were going to teach a Sunday school class or give a talk to others about what this text means.
 - 4. Then create a title for your study that matches the overall meaning of all the points and the meaning of the text. Make sure your title and the main points of the teaching outline include the second person "You" or "Your" or a command.
 - 5. Write a summary paragraph of what **Psa. 1:1-3** means or teaches.

“Implementation: The Missing Ingredient”¹

“Are you reading your Bibles?,” the preacher asks his congregation with probing seriousness. “Last week, how many days did you neglect spending time in the Word?,” he asks again causing most of his congregation to cringe with conviction and guilt. “You need to read your Bibles!” the preacher exhorts, waving his Bible in the air for emphasis as he concludes his exposition of Psalm 19:7-14. By the end of the sermon his congregation has been pierced through with conviction. They know he is telling them the truth. They realize they need to spend more time reading their Bibles. After the service many leave with a weight of guilt hanging on them like a load of wet bricks. They want to be right with God. They want to have the Scriptures richly dwelling within them. They want to be faithful students of the Word. But if the truth were told and usually it is not, especially to the preacher, they feel defeated and exasperated. Why? Because they don’t know how to go about reading their Bible, at least not in a meaningful way! It may seem so simple and obvious to us, but for many it is complex and difficult.

One of the things I tell my preaching students over and over again is, “*If you convict someone with the truth of God’s Word, you must give them a way out. You must make sure that when they leave church after being convicted by the Word, they know how to relieve the guilt through obedience. They need to know how to put the truth into practice.*” The fact is, most Christians approach the Bible like any other book instead of reading it as God’s instruction book for their lives. They start at the beginning in Genesis, carry on into Exodus where they lose a little traction towards the end of that book, and plow into Leviticus, only to get stuck in the mud-hole of the Levitical sacrificial system.

They have no idea why Leviticus is good for them except as a cure for insomnia. They may understand that “*all Scripture is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness*” (II Timothy 3:16), but their experience doesn’t seem to line up with what they know in their minds is true. They agree with you that they need to read their Bible, but they frankly don’t know how. “Maybe,” they think to themselves, “it’s because there is something wrong with me.”

Yet the blame is often to be laid at the feet of the preacher. Preachers often assume their congregations only need to be convicted by the truth. They assume that people will figure out how to live out the truth on their own after they are convicted. Preachers like this may have never stopped to consider the difference between principles, application, and implementation. They may be excellent exegetes, engaging expositors, convicting communicators and yet fail to give their people practical *how to* instruction. Their congregation leaves Sunday after Sunday feeling guilty, but not knowing what to do. This is why you must stop and consider the difference between *principle, application, and implementation.*

Biblical principles are truths which apply to Christians of any culture and any time. The preacher, using sound Bible study principles, studies the text so that he can interpret it accurately. Then he extracts biblical principles from the interpretation which apply to Christians of any culture and time. Using Psalm 19:7-14 as an example, one of the obvious principles which comes from this portion of Scripture is, *the Word of God is powerful to sanctify the believer.* This principle applies to all believers of any culture and any time. There are no exceptions. If you are going to grow in sanctification, it is going to be through the Word of

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God. And most preachers do a pretty good job at getting principles out of the text. But too often they never move on to application.

Application is how the principles of the text might be obeyed. In the case of Psalm 19:7-14, one of the applications is, "Read your Bible!" This is *what* must be done. People know what reading is, and they know what the Bible is, and they understand the concept of reading the Bible. No problem so far. But for many, the very simple exhortation, "Read your Bible," is like saying, "Go rebuild a car engine." Rebuilding a car engine is also an easy concept to understand. The problem is not with the concept, the problem is with the *implementation of the concept*. Just how do you go about rebuilding an engine? If you don't know anything about engine rebuilding, how would you find out how to do so? For a trained mechanic rebuilding a car engine is not a problem, for the rest of us, it is very complex and difficult. Well, in the same way, the seminary trained pastor has no problem reading the Bible, but for those who do not have specialized training in Bible reading, it is a very complicated process. People need more than just the bottom line application, "Read your Bible!" They need to know how to implement the truth, *how specifically does a person go about reading the Bible for profit*.

Implementation is the missing ingredient. The next step after application is the practical instruction of *how one might go about putting into practice the application of a text*. To provide implementation is to give concrete methods, techniques, and procedures one might use for living out the application e.g., reading the Bible. Implementation also seeks to bring people to the place where they say, "I am going to apply this truth to my life this week by doing. . ." If implementation is not achieved in the lives of your congregation, preaching loses its purpose because the purpose of preaching is to change the way people live before a holy God.

It is for this reason *you must help them*. You're the expert, you are the one with the seminary training, you know the issues that must be faced when the Bible is read, so tell them what you know! Don't just heap a bunch of conviction on them and send them out of church every Sunday loaded down to the axle with guilt. This will surely lead to their exasperation.

So in the adapted words of the Philippian jailer, "What must you do to help your congregation implement the text?" Let's say you are preaching from Psalm 19:7-14 and you discover in that text that the Word of God is powerful to sanctify a believer. You give your congregation the application, "You need to read your Bibles!" Now it's implementation time. It is time for you, with your greater understanding of the complexities of Bible reading, to help them out. You might give them examples of how someone might go about learning to read their Bible. Most people assume, unless someone teaches them differently, that you read the Bible like any other book, start at the beginning and read to the end. There is nothing wrong with this approach, but the fact is, most people don't make it through the book of Leviticus and they don't know how to get application for their lives from the text.

You need to put yourself into the place of a new believer and consider what will help them. Most people do not have the books of the Bible memorized let alone understand the many complexities of how to read the Bible for the most spiritual profit. The complexities of Bible reading are clear to you, but often very unclear to your congregation. Christians thirst for the knowledge of God, but when they read the Bible it is often like trying to suck water out of a block of damp wood. They get a little moisture but not enough to survive. *This is why you need to help them implement the truth of God's Word*.

For instance, you might recommend some good resources on how to study the Bible or tell them to attend a class that you will be teaching on Bible reading. Tell them to try reading five Psalms a day so that in a month they will have read through the entire book of Psalms. Tell them that there are thirty-one chapters in the book of Proverbs and tell them they might try

reading whatever chapter of proverbs corresponds to the day of the month. Suggest that they might want to alternate reading books from the Old Testament and the New, or use a schedule for reading through the Bible in a year. But don't stop there!

Speak to them directly in the second person and say, "Right now, before the Lord, when are you going to set aside time to read your Bible? How are you going to read your Bible tomorrow? If you don't know how to read the Bible in a profitable way, what are you going to do about it this week?" Now they have no excuse. You have interpreted the text for them, drawn out principles from the interpretation, given them application, and clear ideas of how to implement the text. They may still leave feeling guilty, but now they will know what they can do to apply the text to their lives. This is what you want, this is what they want, and this is what God wants!

Guard against exhortation without implementation for it leads to exasperation. Recently, I preached through Luke 3:1-15. In that section of Luke's gospel John the Baptist is calling sinners to repentance and threatening judgment for those who will not turn from their sin. The crowds are convicted of their sin and they realize they do need to repent. The concept is easy for them to understand but what they don't understand is what repentance will look like in their lives. This causes them to ask John the Baptist, "*Then what shall we do?*" Then John gives them five practical ways to implement true repentance in their lives (Luke 3:11-15). People need to know how to implement the truth of the text.

Try this. For the next month, make sure that every sermon you preach gives practical ways people can implement the truth. Give specific examples, steps, procedures and instruction for applying the text and see what kind of feedback you get. Your congregation will love you for it and become spiritually fat sheep who know how to live the truth. Christians want to obey, but they need help – so help them implement the truth!