

SIT
WITH
ME

AN INVITATION TO
MEET WITH JESUS
IN GOD'S WORD



A FAITHPATH RESOURCE



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WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

WEEK SIX

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I'm not sure why but I've had a significant competitive streak since I was young, especially when it came to basketball. Perhaps it was because I was never really any good at it, yet I held myself to a high standard. I never liked losing, but unfortunately I got a lot of practice. This all exploded when in college several friends simply refused to play ball with me because they didn't enjoy my attitude. Ouch. It was at this point I started to consider the connection between my walk with Christ (which was very new at this time) and my interaction with the world. I needed to change but I didn't really know how to do it. So I just stopped playing basketball altogether. I eliminated the problem.

But there's a problem with eliminating the problem in this way. The underlying issue just popped up somewhere else, like board games. My wife and kids play cards, dice, and board games several times a week. We highly enjoy it. I would not have made a good Puritan. And even now I struggle sometimes with my attitude, especially when I am not ahead. You see, I needed to change back in college and I still need to change now. I have some growing to do and it is much more than just intellectual. I need to apply what I am learning in God's Word.

On the subject of application, consider the following statement:

The love of a husband for his wife is never more fully lived out than with a surprise bouquet of flowers on an insignificant Wednesday.

Do you agree or disagree? What is this statement trying to say about love? About displays of love? About "fake" or "lesser" displays of love? If you were a husband, how would this make you feel? Would it motivate you to do anything specific?

In this simple interaction, you have done the hard work of application. You first read a single sentence written in the third person. It was not written about you or your specific situation. Nonetheless, you can learn something from it, even if you are a female, unmarried or uninterested in marriage.

Wait a minute, what if this husband is a total jerk every other minute of the day? What if he just did something terrible and is trying to manipulate his wife? What if he forgot her birthday or their anniversary? What if ___ (you fill in the rest)?

You would be right to ask questions like this. That is because a simple statement like this one can say some things but to say more you need more information. You need a larger story. You need to understand the characters and the details. You need context.

The same is true in Bible study. That is precisely why application comes after learning how to read prayerfully, worshipfully and intentionally. Attempting to apply a text to your life before you fully understand it is profoundly less powerful and potentially dangerous.

Howard Hendricks in his popular book on Bible study methods, *Living by the Book*, repeats a similar warning about misunderstanding application. "The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity; it was written to transform your life. The ultimate goal of Bible study is not to do something to the Bible, but to allow the Bible to do something to you..."

Consider a second statement:

Truth not lived out is truth not learned.

What do you think? Agree or disagree? What does this statement say about the nature of truth? Why is practice in life so important? What is the relationship of truth and practice?

Here again, you are doing the critical work of application. But there is more. This is the core principle of application: truth not lived out is truth not learned. It has no greater weight and significance than when you are studying your Bible in order to become more like Jesus.

Many years ago, a friend began to tell me about his almost obsessive interest in Mount Rainier. I know, random. Nevertheless, he went on and on about the details and specifics: highest mountain in the Cascade Range and the highest in the state of Washington. It is an active volcano and on the so-called "decade list," making it one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world. This many feet high... this many square miles in space... blah, blah, blah. Then he told me that he learned all of this before he actually saw Mount Rainier with his own eyes. Wait...what? I know. That was my first thought, too. Only years later did he travel to Washington and gaze upon its glorious majesty. His words. I know, dramatic. I thought that, too.

Then, about fifteen years later, I flew into Seattle Tacoma airport to visit a close friend and church planter. With a random glance out of my window just before landing, I was transformed into a little child. Even though I had forgotten all about that random and dramatic conversation so long before, the reality of Rainier's peak jutting up through the clouds took my breath away. There it was. I beheld it with my own eyes. Glorious majesty turned out to be an understatement.

The difference between the second-hand, "learned" experience of Rainier and seeing it in person always reminds me of the difference between an academic study of God's Word and actually planting it in my soul, my identity and my practice. The former has its place, but the latter has all of the power.

Real and lasting change happens from the inside out. It happens on purpose, not by accident. Christians never grow more gracious by accident. They grow in mercy, service, attitude, joy and peace by engaging God's Word and God's Spirit in a way that brings transformation. This is the difference God's Word makes.

INSIGHTS

THE S.P.A.C.E.P.E.T.S. APPLICATION METHOD

(ADAPTED FROM RICK WARREN⁶)

Each time you read a passage from the Bible, ask the SPACEPETS questions to identify specific applications.

S. Is there a SIN to confess?

P. Is there a PROMISE to claim?

A. Is there an ATTITUDE to change?

C. Is there a COMMAND to obey?

E. Is there an EXAMPLE to follow?

P. Is there a PRAYER to pray?

E. Is there an ERROR to avoid?

T. Is there a TRUTH to believe?

S. Is there SOMETHING for which to PRAISE God?

WEEK SIX

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

- Matthew 7:24

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



WEEK SIX / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."

Today read **James 1:19-25**.

Ask all the questions in the SPACEPETS acronym for this text.

Write out as many personal applications as you can in your journal.

Close in prayer.

WEEK SIX / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."

Read **Matthew 18:15-35**.

This text is about difficult personal relationships, sin, offense, confession and love. Without a doubt, it is highly relevant to your life.

Work toward as many personal and specific applications from this text as possible. Think about a specific, difficult relationship and prayerfully apply these truths to it.

Close in prayer.

WEEK SIX / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a
light to my path."*

Today read **Luke 11:1-13**.

This is a parable of Jesus about love, service, worship and sacrifice.

Use the SPACEPETS acronym and work toward as many specific personal applications from this text as possible.

Close in prayer.

WEEK SIX / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Today read **Revelation 2**, John's letter to four churches.

Identify each church and place it on a map (see the one in the back of your Bible).

Create a chart in your journal that details Jesus' words to each church.

Work toward as many personal applications as possible.

Close in prayer.

BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

WEEK SIX / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."

Today read **Revelation 3**, John's letter to the final three of seven churches.

Identify each church and place it on a map (see the one in the back of your Bible).

Create a chart in your journal that details Jesus' words to each church.

Work toward as many personal applications as possible.

Close in prayer.

WEEK SIX / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."

Today read **Galatians 5:16-25**.

This is a text full of application, but it may help to read some of what comes before it to establish the context.

Work to identify as many personal applications as possible. Write them out here or in your journal.

Close in prayer.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

What is the context of Matthew 7:24-27?

What is Jesus' main point?

Compare and contrast Matthew 7:24-27 with Luke 6:46-49.

According to Matthew 18:15,

In what case should you go and tell your brother his fault?

In what manner should you tell him? (See also Galatians 6:1)

When should you mention the sin of your brother or sister to others (Matthew 18:16)?

Have you followed these truths?

Have you ever experienced a time in your life when you thought prayer was tedious or when you lacked the desire to pray?

Have you ever asked the Lord to "teach you to pray?"

Share with the group.

What does Luke 11:5-13 tell us about the character of God

What does it mean to "be led" by the Spirit?

Is this happening to you?

In the Galatians 5 text, which of the deeds of the flesh are most common and most acceptable in our culture?

Which one is present in your life?

Review the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5: 22-23.

What is the believer's part in producing these qualities?

What is the Spirit's part? What fruit should you focus on, pray for and seek by the help of the Spirit?

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