**Applications (Step 6b)**

**I. Preliminary Issues**

A. Often, a speaker does not make specific applications in his sermon. Why not?

1. He hasn’t yet applied the message to *himself.*

2. He applied the message to himself, but he forgot how hard it had taken to get there.

3. He *doesn’t know* what he wants the listeners to do (lacks a clear purpose).

4. He runs out of time because he hasn’t practiced sufficiently.

5. He has a diverse audience, so he can’t think of applications that relate to them all.

6. He feels that he needs to only “preach the Word” because “it is the *role of the Holy Spirit* to make the applications.”

B. But why must *the speaker* make applications? Isn’t it OK to leave the applications up to the Holy Spirit or the listeners (both know the listeners better than the speaker does)?

1. While ultimately only God can change hearts, He often does that through people!

2. This is only a rationalization for laziness.

3. The pattern in Scripture is to make applications (Acts 2:38; Col. 3–4; Eph. 4–6; etc.)

4. The listeners *can* make applications to themselves but generally *won’t* do so.

5. It’s debatable whether listeners know themselves (self-deception problem).

6. Knowledge alone is incomplete and only “puffs up” (1 Cor. 8:1; Acts 17:18).

7. Our goal is godly behavior (1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

**II. Steps to Applying Scripture in Sermons**

A. *Pray* for God to give you a humble spirit of openness to see what He wants you to see in a text.

B. Go through *steps 1-4* in the “Seven Steps to Preaching Expository Sermons” study (pp. 27-28). This procedure will ensure that both observation and interpretation precede application.

C. Step 5 (“Formulate the homiletical idea”) should have already helped you boil down the truth of the passage into a universal principle. Now apply this truth to the various relationships in *your own life* (see III below).

D. Write out some specific relationships in *your listeners lives* in which this principle can be applied (again see III below). Make it measurable and specific enough to know whether the text is actually applied or not. For example, instead of “You should *feel* this way…” make the application, “You should *do* this…” Consult Zuck’s 90 verbs (p. 73).

E. Make *immediate* applications (not “when you go home today…do this…”) since most listeners won’t apply your message later.

**III. Areas of Life to Apply the Bible**(adapted from Irving L. Jensen’s *Enjoy Your Bible*)

The Christian Life is best understood as a series of new relationships (2 Cor. 5:17) involving…

A. Your Relation to God

1. Fellowship to Enjoy

2. Commands to Obey

3. Promises to Claim

4. Prayers to Express

B. Your Relation to Yourself

1. Past Experience and Heritage

2. Present Experience

3. Personal Values, Priorities, Standards

4. Future Expectations

C. Your Relation to Others

1. In the Home (parents, marriage, children, in-laws)

2. In the Church

3. In Society (neighborhood, work place)

4. In the World (non-Christians)

D. Your Relation to the Enemy

1. A Person to Resist

2. Devices to Recognize

3. Sins to Avoid

4. Armor to Wear (Eph. 6:10-18)

**IV. How to be Relevant to Different Groups**

The same Main Idea will apply to different individuals in different ways. Think of how it shows up in real life for the various people in the following scenarios…

A. Men

1. Work (owns own business, works for another, retired, unemployed)

2. Husband (newlywed, mid-life, elderly)

3. Father (small kids, teenagers, grown children)

4. Ministry (church, para church)

5. Son (close to father or distant)

6. Citizen/Neighbor

7. Sports

B. Women

1. Work

2. Wife

3. Mother

4. Ministry

5. Daughter

6. Citizen/Neighbor

C. Teens or College

1. School

2. Work

3. Dating Relationships

4. Son or Daughter

5. Ministry

6. Roommates

**V. Use Illustrations that Apply the Concept**

With limited time to speak you must make the best use of the time available for illustrations. Therefore, use illustrations that *apply* your point rather than those which merely *explain* it.

A. Some illustrations only *explain* a concept because they come from an unrelated area of life.

1. The word used for “restoring” a brother in sin (Gal. 6:1) was used of fishermen mending their nets or a doctor setting a broken bone in place. This explains reconciliation but doesn’t apply the concept directly.

2. A monkey grasping shiny tinsel through a small hole in a log gets caught since he won’t let go to escape. This only partially illustrates the perils of loving money (1 Tim. 6:10).

B. Better illustrations *apply* a concept because they relate to the same area of life.

1. To show restoration (Gal. 6:1) use an actual situation when you saw someone brought back to fellowship with Christ. Even an imagined one would work better than simply an illustration from the medical or fishing fields!

2. Show the perils of loving money (1 Tim. 6:10) with a story of a pastor or missionary who gave up his ministry simply for better pay.

C. Better to use few illustrations to apply a concept than many in a “grocery list.”

D. For further help in applying the text, read Kuhatschek’s book, *Applying the Bible.*

**Zuck’s Ninety Verbs**

*Ninety Verbs to Help Lead Scriptural Applications into Specific Action (Dr. Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Seminary)*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Accept | Experiment | Respond |
| Admit | Find | Sacrifice |
| Analyze | Follow | Save |
| Ask | Give | Schedule |
| Ask myself | Go | Select |
| Avoid | Guard | Send |
| Be sensitive | Help | Share |
| Be willing | Invite | Show |
| Build | Isolate | Sing |
| Buy | Keep | Spend time |
| Choose | List | Stay away |
| Claim | Listen | Stop |
| Collect | Look for | Study |
| Commit | Look up | Substitute |
| Compliment | Love | Take |
| Comply | Meet | Talk with |
| Confess | Memorize | Teach |
| Control | Organize | Telephone |
| Count | Plan out | Thank |
| Create | Praise | Think about |
| Decide | Pray about | Value |
| Develop | Pray to | Visit |
| Direct | Pray with | Wait |
| Discourse | Prefer | Wake up |
| Do | Pursue | Walk |
| Eliminate | Read | Watch |
| Encourage | Realize | Witness |
| Enjoy | Record | Work on |
| Evaluate | Rejoice | Write down |
| Exemplify | Repair | Write to |