

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 determine whether the text is applied. 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, workplace)
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 that 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 a 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