

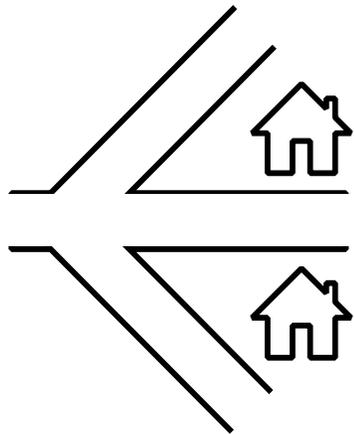
Session 4: From Principle to Application

We've considered how to understand the meaning of a text to its original hearers, and how to determine the principles that help connect it to our world, but until we work out how to apply the text in our world, the journey is incomplete. This final session looks at how to move from principle to application.

From Principle to Application

Completing the task of hermeneutics

Step 4: Grasp the text in our world



How should individual Christians apply the theological principles?

While a passage may contain only one principle, that principle may give rise to lots of different applications, since we all find ourselves in very different contexts.

Wisdom comes not just through knowing or understanding meaning, but turning that meaning into application.

'Everyone who hears these words of mine *and puts them into practice* is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.' (Matthew 7:24)

Observe how the principles address the original situation.

Note the key elements in the passage. What are the specific details about the situation that the passage was addressing?

Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context

A parallel situation should contain all the key elements from step one, otherwise it is not a genuine parallel and the application may be incorrect or misleading.

You may find multiple parallel situations.

Make your application specific rather than general

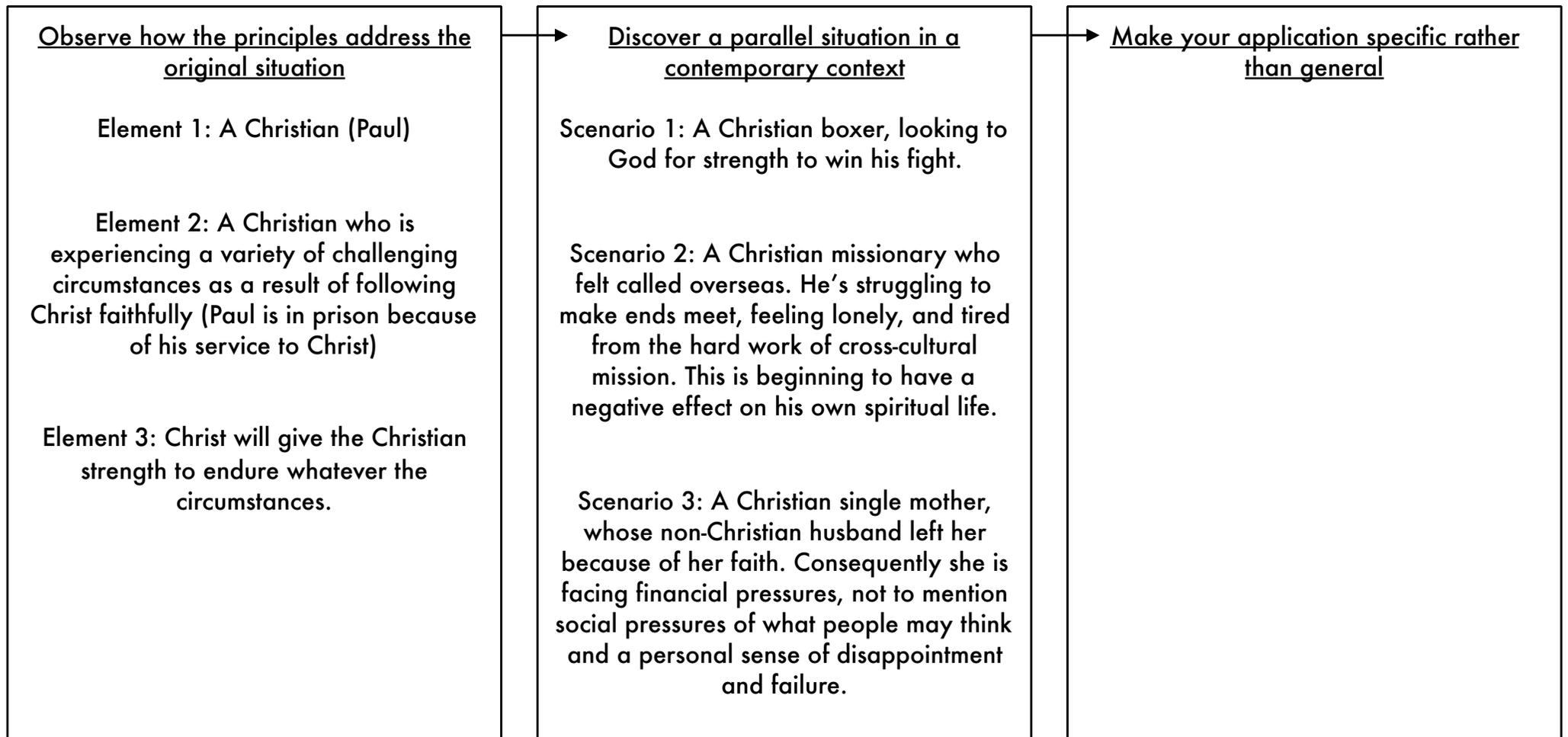
Don't just think about *what* to do, but also *how* to do it.

Consider real-world scenarios that are different from your own.

From Principle to Application

Example: Philippians 4:13

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13)



From Principle to Application

Example: Idol food (1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:14-33)

Observe how the principles address the original situation

Element 1: A Christian.

Element 2: This Christian is forbidden from participating in acts of idolatry and worshipping demons. (Eating idol food in the pagan temples as part of the sacrificial ritual)

Element 3: This Christian's conscience may allow them to practice something that is a matter of indifference. (Eating food that has previously been sacrificed to idols, since the idols are nothing)

Element 4: A Christian should seek the good of others – believer and unbeliever – and not exercise their own freedom if it causes others to stumble. (Eating idol food if it offends someone else's conscience or makes them think you are condoning/ taking part in the sacrifice.)

Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context

Scenario 1: A Christian eating halal food, purchased in a shop, served in a restaurant, or served in a home?

Scenario 2: A Christian drinking alcohol?

Scenario 3: A Christian considering sex outside marriage ok for their conscience?

Make your application specific rather than general

Scenario 2: A Christian may drink alcohol, but he/she should still abide by biblical teachings about drunkenness. But if his/her drinking causes others to stumble, then the Christian should forgo their rights for the sake of the other person's conscience.

What are matters of indifference?

1) What the Bible lists as matters of indifference may still be regarded as such. (e.g. food, drink, observance of days, cf. Romans 14-15)

2) Matters of indifference are cultural, not inherently moral.

3) The sin lists (Rom 1:29-30; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:9-10; 2 Tim 3:2-4) and lists of Christian imperatives (Rom 12; Eph 5; Col 3; etc) are moral, not matters of indifference.

Mark 7:18-19 - Jesus declared all foods clean
Acts 15:19-21 - Forbids idol food, blood, and sexual immorality. Are these matters of indifference?

From Principle to Application

Exercise 1: Mark 10:13-16

Begin by reading Mark 10:13-16. These are the main verses I want you to interpret.
Now read the next story in verses 17-31. Then work through the questions in the stages of the journey.

Step 1: Grasp the text in their world	Step 2: Measure the width of the river to cross	Step 3: Cross the Principalsing Bridge	Step 4: Grasp the text in our world
<p>Why are these stories next to each other? What words or phrases feature in both stories?</p> <p>Who are the main characters? Are we meant to see similarities or differences between them?</p> <p>Summarise Mark 10:13-16 in a sentence (past tense)</p>	<p>What is the difference between our worlds?</p>	<p>Write out the principle(s) in Mark 10:13-16 (present tense)</p>	<p>How could we apply these principles in our world?</p>

From Principle to Application

Exercise 2: Mark 10:29-31

Begin by reading Mark 10:29-31. These are the main verses I want you to interpret.
Now read the rest of the passage, v17-31. Then work through the questions in the stages of the journey.

Step 1: Grasp the text in their world	Step 2: Measure the width of the river to cross	Step 3: Cross the Principalsing Bridge	Step 4: Grasp the text in our world
<p>What are the key words or themes in this passage?</p> <p>What words or actions in this passage express emotion? And what do they tell us about the characters?</p> <p>Summarise Mark 10:29-31 in a sentence (past tense)</p>	<p>What is the difference between our worlds?</p>	<p>Is v21 a timeless principle? Or a cultural application of a timeless principle? (Justify your answer with reference to other Scripture)</p> <p>Write out the principle(s) in Mark 10:29-31 (present tense)</p>	<p>How could we apply these principles in our world?</p>

Extra question (if you have time): What links do you see between this passage and v32-34?

From Principle to Application

Exercise 3: Mark 10:35-45

Begin by reading Mark 10:35-45. These are the main verses I want you to interpret.
Now read the preceding verses, v28-34. Then work through the questions in the stages of the journey.

Step 1: Grasp the text in their world	Step 2: Measure the width of the river to cross	Step 3: Cross the Principalising Bridge	Step 4: Grasp the text in our world
<p>Why are these stories together? Are there similarities or differences between them?</p> <p>What are the key concepts in these verses and how do Jesus and the disciples understand them differently?</p> <p>Summarise Mark 10:35-45 in a sentence (past tense)</p>	<p>What is the difference between our worlds?</p>	<p>Write out the principle(s) in Mark 10:35-45 (present tense)</p>	<p>How could we apply these principles in our world?</p>

Theology Matters: How to Read the Bible

The Interpretive Journey, summarised.

Exegesis (God's word to them)		Hermeneutics (God's word to us)			
Step 1: Grasp the text in their world		Step 2: Measure the width of the river to cross	Step 3: Cross the Principalising Bridge	Step 4: Grasp the text in our world	
Context	Content	What are the differences between our worlds?	What theological principles bridge the gap?	How can I apply the principles in my world?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical Context: Who, what, why, where, when? - Literary Context: What is the genre? What is the context of the passage in its section, book, author's work, all of Scripture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do I notice about the sentence, paragraph, discourse? - What is the author saying? - Why is he saying it in this way? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture - Language - Time - Situation - Covenant / place in Redemptive History - How big is the gap? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the similarities between the worlds? - Principles should be present in the passage, timeless, not culturally bound, consistent with the rest of Scripture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did the principles address the original situation? List key elements. - Find parallel situations that contain all of those key elements. - What would it look like to apply the principles in these parallel situations? Be specific, think about <i>how</i> as well as <i>what</i>. 	
Use a mixture of internal evidence and external sources (commentaries, study Bibles etc)					Write out the principle(s). (Present tense)
Summarise the passage in a sentence (past tense)					

Theology Matters: How to Read the Bible

Recommended resources

General Resources

A lot of the material from this session has been adapted from two books, which I would highly recommend:

- [How to Read the Bible for all its Worth - Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart](#)
- [Grasping God's Word - J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays](#)

Commentaries

Choosing a good commentary can be tricky, but [bestcommentaries.com](#) is a great place to look for reviews and recommendations. If you want to study a book in depth you may want to choose a selection of commentaries; some technical and some more devotional. But if you want to read in a devotional way, then a lighter, less technical commentary might be best. Here are some general recommendations:

- The [Tyndale](#) and [Bible Speaks Today](#) series is generally reliable and fairly accessible, though not as in depth as you may like.
- [The New International Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (NICOT) and [New International Commentary on the New Testament](#) (NICNT) series are more in depth, but also more technical.
- The [Word Biblical Commentary](#) series is very technical. Full of Greek/Hebrew. Only recommended if you want something *really* detailed!
- The [Pillar New Testament Commentary](#) series and [Apollos Old Testament Commentary](#) series are great. They are towards the technical end of the spectrum, but strike a good balance between being in-depth and accessible.
- Tom Wright's [For Everyone](#) series are great little commentaries on the New Testament. They are more devotional, and not very in depth, but are great for helping with personal reflection
- Phil Moore's [Straight to the Heart](#) series contains 60 bite-sized reflections. As a result, they don't cover every passage, but are great for personal reflection.