

SCRIPTURE READING/STUDY | WEEK 4

Read | Obedience and application

Some Christians shy away from focusing on obedience out of a fear of works-based righteousness. If the real “work” of Christianity has been done by Jesus, why would we pay so much attention to our own work?

But while it’s true that the work of making us righteous before God *has been done* by Jesus—done to completion, once for all time—that saving work still calls us into a life shaped a certain way, a life that pursues the things of God and rejects the things of sin. These life-patterns are the fruit of salvation, as apples are the fruit of an apple tree. Growing in obedience doesn’t save us, but it does testify to the reality that we are saved.

To that end, when we read Scripture, we want to find out how we can *apply* it, how the truths it brings us should reshape our life.

So we need to ask: What kinds of application are there? Because not every passage has an example to follow or a command to keep. And even with a command like Leviticus 19:27—“You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard”—as we saw briefly in “Old Testament Law”—that meant something to ancient Israel that it doesn’t mean to us now. After we figure out 1) what a passage meant in its original context and 2) what it means for us in light of Jesus’ work, we can move towards applying the text. This can take a few forms:

1. **Adoration and thanksgiving.** A passage might tell us something about who God is (His *attributes*) or what God does (His *actions*). We may apply it by praising God for how great He is; we may apply it by thanking Him for what He has done (with past actions) or what He will do (with promises or future actions). If your passage points to the application of worship, spend several minutes praising or thanking God.
2. **Confession and repentance.** A passage may reveal something about human sin. If so, ask yourself, “How is this sin present in my heart or my actions? How am I tempted to this?” You may need to *confess* sin to God and repent of it; you may need to pray that God would root this sin out of your life.

3. **Instruction and guidance.** A passage may offer some instruction or guidance about what it means to live a godly life. If you find this in your study, spend some time thinking through how that passage might re-shape your life. What is one way, with God's help, you could take a step toward living in light of this instruction?
4. **Encouragement and warning.** A passage may be designed to give you courage or warn you against something. That may come through *direct words*; it may also come through the *example* of a biblical character. If you find this in your study, pray that God would help you take that to heart, that He would re-shape your thoughts, feelings, and actions according to that.

THIS WEEK'S READING PLAN

Day 1: Micah 5:1-6

Day 2: Micah 5:7-15

Day 3: Micah 6:1-8

Day 4: Micah 6:9-16

Day 5: Micah 7