

The Path Tool to Better Bible Application

by Mark Roberts

A huge key in successful daily Bible reading is to regularly make application of what we have read so that our lives are changed by what we read. James says “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22). But how do we do that? How do we translate what we have read of a long ago time, in a far away place, and a people who didn’t possess the technology we have today or live as we do into 21st century living? The answer, of course, is that while much has changed since the ink dried on the papyrus and parchment of Scripture humanity has not changed at all. We still need God, we still hunger for relationship with Him and we are still marred and broken by our sin. The overall message of Scripture is thus ever relevant and still alive because “the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

To get that power sometimes we need a little help. Over the years the PATH tool has helped many men and women to make certain their Bible reading would be transformational, that it would go beyond simply being about information and instead cause the reader to know and love God more. Working the PATH tool is simple. The reader makes certain that in their dedicated Bible reading time he or she has left a few minutes not to read more but to think and meditate on what has been read (see Psalm 1:2). Biblically meditation means to think and turn over in one’s mind the implications of what has been read. It is about considering the Word and its ramifications in how we live. We do that by PATHing each day’s reading. Each letter guides us in that process.

P

P stands for praise. In every reading we want to find something to praise God about. The Bible is largely the account of God and what He has done so this is never difficult. There is always something that awes and amazes us about the Lord if we will just stop and look for it. Good Bible reading leads us to worship and honor God. Find something to praise God for!

A

A stands for *admonish*. A good Bible reader needs to ask “What in this text admonishes me to change, to repent, or to do better?” Bible reading should lead to Bible living but usually there are matters in our life that stand in the way of that goal. Reading the Bible shines the spotlight of truth on those and should cause us to make changes. It does that by showing us men and women who sinned and displeased God. Am I doing as they did? The Scriptures also show us men and women pleasing God. Am I like them? Do I honor God like they did? Always look for something that can give you a needed a “course correction” in your reading.

T

T stands for trust. One of the express purposes of the Bible is to grow and foster faith in God. Romans 10:17 tells us “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” In the text of today’s reading search for something that builds your trust in God. Is there a prophecy? Is there a promise? Even the most minor promises, like the promise to someone that they will have a child or win a battle, can build our trust as we see that God never fails. As God keeps His word again and again throughout the Bible our trust in Him is strengthened!

H

H stands for *hope*. Being a disciple is not easy. The world wars against us. What can I find in the reading today that will encourage me and give me hope to endure and persevere? That may be as simple as seeing someone continue serving God against great odds (“if they did, I can too”) or someone failing and getting back up and starting again. It may be an affirmation of God’s continued love and care. Look and you will find something that helps you keep on following Jesus!

The PATH tool never takes long to use, and you will get better with it as you use it more and more. It provides a simple mechanism to make certain your Bible reading is affecting you and your heart. We want to know God so we can honor and glorify Him - and this is a path to do just that!