

FOLLOWING JESUS
A Disciple's Handbook

Lesson 4:
“Following Jesus in Studying and Applying”

Studying and Applying Introduction

Read Matthew 22:37-38 and Psalm 119:1-2

A disciple of Jesus is to be a life-long learner and doer of truth. Jesus said that the greatest commandment was to love God with all of one's heart, soul, and mind (thinking, desiring, and understanding). (Read Matthew 22:34-37; Mark 12:28-30.) Part of the purpose for God's design of the mind is for studying and applying. The Word of God reveals that man has been created to search out God's truth in investigation, meditation and application. (Read Proverbs 25:2; Psalm 111:2.) People were created by God to pursue Him in order to understand His Word, will and ways.

Throughout the Scriptures we are commissioned to diligently study and thoroughly apply the truth of God's Word. (Read Proverbs 1:5; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12.) Studying and applying become a dynamic source of deep satisfaction because they represent the passionate pursuit of knowing God as Creator and King.

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Studying and Applying Defined

In the Scriptures, *studying* means thoroughly investigating and inquiring into something with the intent of discovering it's true meaning and value. It's like mining for jewels with a refusal to quit until you find what you're looking for. We are commanded to diligently study the Word and works of God to thoroughly understand what God does, with the desire and devotion to do the same. (Read Psalm 111:1-10.) And, we not only study to thoroughly understand what God does, but also who He is. (Read Proverbs 8:1-17.) The writer of Hebrews tells us that we are to grow in faith as we diligently seek the knowledge of God. (Read Hebrews 11:6.) The term *diligently seek* means to investigate, scrutinize, inquire about, and ardently crave something. This is what God wants us to do with Him. He is well pleased with our faithful study of who He is, and He promises to reward us accordingly. His rewards include revelation of Him and the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to obey Him and become more like Him. As

disciples of Jesus, we are called to a lifelong study of who God is, what He has done, and what He plans to do. To study the Word of God is to study the God of the Word.

In the Scriptures, *applying* means putting into action what is revealed and required. It means that what has been thoroughly studied must be steadfastly applied. Jesus said that once something was known it had to be acted upon to access and appropriate God's blessings. (□ Read Matthew 7:24-28; John 13:17.) It's only when information becomes application that it turns into revelation and leads to transformation. To truly know God, there must be diligent studying and devoted applying of the righteous requirements of God's Word.

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Studying and Applying in the Life of Jesus

No one has ever exemplified studying and applying better than Jesus. He is without a doubt history's greatest biblical scholar and practitioner. From His youth, He was found diligently studying and applying truth. He astonished the teachers of His day with His understanding of the Scriptures. (□ Read Luke 2:46-49.) He was hungry for the truth and how to apply it. During His public ministry, the people of Israel were amazed by His understanding, teaching, and practical application of truth though he had no formal education as a rabbi. Jesus made it clear to them that His doctrine (His teachings and practices) were given to Him by His Heavenly Father whom He had diligently sought in the Word and by the Spirit. (□ Read John 7:15-18.) Jesus memorized and meditated on vast amounts of Scripture, meticulously applying all that He had diligently studied. (□ Read Matthew 5:17.) Through all of Jesus' studying and applying, there came the obeying and fulfilling of all that God had commanded and all that God had promised. (□ Read Matthew 8:16-17.)

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Studying and Applying in the Lives of Jesus' Followers

Jesus told His disciples that powerful signs and wonders would result from their commitment to the message of the gospel and the mission of seeing souls saved and disciples made. (□ Read Mark 16:15-20.) His disciples immediately applied this truth by speaking the words and doing the works of Jesus believing Him and obeying Him in everything. Jesus had opened His disciples'

understanding to comprehend what the Scriptures said concerning the Christ, and His disciples boldly proclaimed and thoroughly taught what Jesus had taught them. (☐ Read Luke 24:45; Acts 2:42; 5:42; 6:4.) In order for someone to be qualified for any significant leadership role in the church, they had to know and be able to apply the Scriptures. (☐ Read Acts 6:3-7.) When Christians were forced to leave Jerusalem due to persecution, they effectively preached the Word of God everywhere they went. (☐ Read Acts 8:4.) Philip, Peter, and John preached the doctrine of Christ and the baptism with the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans. (☐ Read Acts 8:5-17.) Philip was able to begin with a single verse in the book of Isaiah and thoroughly explain who Jesus was to an Ethiopian royal official. (☐ Read Acts 8:35.) Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, and Apollos were all able to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah and Son of God, using the Word of God as evidence. (☐ Read Acts 17:2-3; 11-12; 18:24-28.) Mature believers in the early church were expected to know foundational teachings from the Word of God and be able to apply and teach what they had studied. (☐ Read 1 Timothy 3:1; 4:6-13; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 6:1-3.) Jesus' followers saw studying and applying the Scriptures as the only sure way to direct people to King Jesus and to advance the purposes and power of His kingdom.

Studying and Applying in Our Lives

Paul instructed His son in the faith, Timothy, to diligently study God's Word and faithfully apply that Word as a fruitful worker. (☐ Read 2 Timothy 2:15.) Paul's command to Timothy rings true for every one of us as true disciples of Jesus. The term *rightly dividing* means to cut in a straight line. It's like a skilled carpenter who can make perfectly straight cuts in timber in order to build something people need and can have confidence in. Disciples of the Living Word of God are called to rightly divide the Word of God in order to bless and build up others. As followers of Jesus, we are called to work in the Word in order to see the truth of the Word worked out in our lives and in the lives of others.

As students of God's Word, it is important that we understand that we are not to study and apply by our own strength or with our own wisdom. Rather, we are called to trust in the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who inspired the writing of the Word of God. (☐ Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.) And, it is the Spirit of God who will teach us all things and lead us into all truth. (☐ Read John 14:26; 16:13.) He will help us know what the Word of God says, what it means, what it requires, and what it accomplishes. The Holy Spirit's light and life in studying and applying will ensure that the truth of God's Word will transform lives as He intends.

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MEMORIZE: *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

Use the following lines to write out the scripture to help you commit it to memory.

KEY TRUTH: Disciples of Jesus follow His example of diligently studying and thoroughly applying the Word of God.

YOUR RESPONSE:

This is how you can respond in loving obedience to Jesus as you apply the truths from this lesson to your life.

- Ask Jesus to fill you with His Holy Spirit as you commit to be a life-long learner and doer of the Word of God.
- Use a daily reading guide to study through the entire Bible every year.
- Acknowledge the Holy Spirit every time you study the Word and ask Him to teach you all things and lead you into all truth.
- Find people who are mature in studying and applying God’s Word. Ask them questions. Imitate and emulate their practices. Adopt their study tools. Be accountable to them for your study and application of God’s Word.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Lesson Review

Review each section from the lesson on the previous pages to fill in each blank below. This review will help to reinforce the truths from this lesson in your life.

1. In the Scriptures, _____ means thoroughly _____ and _____ into something with the _____ of _____ it’s true _____ and _____.
2. In the Scriptures, _____ means putting into _____ what is _____ and _____.

3. Through all of Jesus' _____ and _____, there came the _____ and _____ of all that God had _____ and all that God had _____.
4. Jesus' _____ saw _____ and _____ the Scriptures as the only sure way to _____ people to King Jesus and to _____ the _____ and _____ of His kingdom.
5. The Holy Spirit's _____ and _____ in _____ and _____ will ensure that the _____ of God's Word will _____ lives as He intends.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Using the journaling section on the pages at the end of this lesson, write in your own words your responses to the following questions.

1. What have you learned and what has impacted you personally from this lesson?
2. In reading the scripture references in this lesson, what are you sensing and seeing the Holy Spirit highlighting and revealing to you that will enable you to better follow Jesus?
3. As a disciple and follower of Jesus, what steps of loving obedience do you need to take to see what you have learned in this lesson become ongoing practices and patterns in your life?