

TheWordWorks

General Bible Handling Training

Module 1

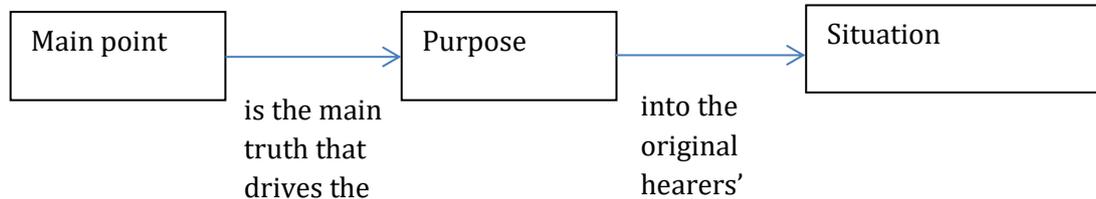
Applying the Purpose

Aim of this module:

To practice making purpose-driven, situation-specific applications

Recap (see GBHT_M1_1_Bible Handling Training Part 1)

The Big Idea of a passage:



The task of the preacher is to teach the author's **main point** in order to achieve the author's **purpose** in a **current day situation** similar to the situation of the original hearers.

In short, we want our applications to be **purpose-driven, situation-specific** applications.

Common mistakes in application

Mistake #1: Getting the author's main point but applying the main point in a way that is different from the author's purpose

Example: Ezekiel 43:1-12

Situation of original hearers:

Jewish exiled to Babylon because of their spiritual prostitution against God. Jerusalem and the temple have been destroyed (Ezek 33)

Immediate Context:

Ezekiel 40-48 is the final vision Ezekiel receives. There is the vision of the new, utterly holy temple that God promises to build (Ezek 40-42) and the vision of God returning to the temple (Ezek 43)

Main Point of Ezekiel 43:1-12:

God will return to his holy temple to dwell with his people

Wrong application (not derived from author's purpose):

Rejoice in thanksgiving!

Purpose-driven, Situation-specific application:

Be ashamed of your iniquities (43:10)

As the Jews hear Ezekiel's glorious vision of God returning to his holy temple to dwell with his people, they are to be filled with a sense of shame at how they've prostituted themselves against God! This is the **purpose of this passage**.

For the Christian, the truth that God, in the person of Jesus, has returned and now dwells with his people by the Spirit and promises to dwell with us in a fuller way in the new creation, ought to **make us ashamed** of the way we've treated God.

Mistake #2: Applying the purpose but into a generic situation and not the specific situation similar to the original situation (this is the same example used in **GBHT_M1_3_Getting the Situation**)

Example: Hebrews 1:1-2:4

Situation of original hearers:

The Hebrew Christians were recently converted from Judaism (10:26-31). They were being persecuted for their new faith in Jesus (10:33-34). They were tempted to give up Jesus and return to Judaism not only because the persecution would stop but also because Judaism was such a tangible, concrete religion with a temple, priests, rituals and sacrifices. It seemed to offer **more spiritual security**. (explains why in Hebrews 5:1-10:18, the author is at pains to stress that Jesus is better than Old Testament religion aka Judaism).

Main Point:

Jesus is better than the angels (and therefore the Mosaic law they mediated. See Acts 7:53) (1:1-14)

Author's purpose (what he wants his hearers to do):

Pay close attention to Jesus, God's final Word. Don't drift away (2:1-4)

Purpose-driven but not situation-specific application (situation is too generic):

Pay close attention to Jesus and don't drift from him in the Christian life. Make him your priority. Don't listen to the voices of the world etc. Why? He's a really important, powerful guy (> angels!)

Purpose-driven and situation-specific application:

Pay close attention to Jesus and don't drift from him as you **seek (false) spiritual security** in other things (e.g. a Jewish Christian today seeking to return to Judaism, a Christian seeking spiritual security in spiritual experiences, Christian heritage, religious leaders, religious ritual).

Exercise

How would you apply the various Colossians passages below? We've given you the situation, the main point and purpose of the various sections

The original situation - From **GBHT_M1_3_Getting the Situation**

False teachers were deceiving the Colossians (2:4, 8) that in order to grow and have fullness as Christians (, the Colossians needed to abide by OT practices (2:16-17) and live ascetic lives that promote mystic access to God (2:18-23). That's why the gospel of Jesus is presented as the all-sufficient way to growth and fullness (1:6, 10, 19, 28; 2:7, 19; 3:16; 4:12)

Passage	Author's main point	Author's purpose	Applying the purpose to a current day situation similar to original situation
1:1-14	The gospel is all-sufficient for ongoing growth	Know that the gospel you received is all-sufficient for ongoing spiritual growth	
1:15-23	The gospel is all-sufficient to make you perfectly pleasing to God because Jesus is all-supreme over everything	Continue trusting the gospel for spiritual growth, confident in Jesus' all-supremacy	
1:24-2:7	Paul suffers because he's been tasked by God to proclaim the gospel of Jesus which can grow people in spiritual maturity	Don't be deceived by persuasive arguments (regarding how to grow spiritually). Walk in the Jesus Paul proclaims	
2:8-23	You have all of God because you've been filled by the supreme Christ. You're a new-flesh, forgiven person because of Jesus' death and resurrection	Don't be kidnapped by these false teachers!	

Passage	Author's main point	Author's purpose	Applying the purpose to a current day situation similar to original situation
3:1-17	You are new people in Christ	Take off the old man clothes. Put on new man clothes.	
3:18-4:6	Our new relationship with Jesus drives new relationships with other people	[Different purposes for different groups of people]	
4:7-18	Sticking to the gospel for spiritual maturity is a team effort	Help each other to stick to the gospel for spiritual maturity	

TheWordWork's working

Here's how we did applications that flowed from the author's purpose. How does it compare with how you applied it?

Passage	Author's main point	Author's purpose	Applying the purpose to a current day situation similar to original situation
1:1-14	The gospel is all-sufficient for ongoing growth	Know that the gospel you received is all-sufficient for ongoing spiritual growth	<p>This is the opening sermon/bible study. As such, the original situation is taught here and similar current day situations are painted in broad brush strokes.</p> <p>The purpose is a cognitive one: To know that the gospel is sufficient for growth. The bulk of the sermon/bible study will concentrate on the reasons Paul gives for the main point.</p>
1:15-23	The gospel is all-sufficient to make you perfectly pleasing to God because Jesus is all-supreme over everything	Continue trusting the gospel for spiritual growth, confident in Jesus' all-supremacy	<p>This section's purpose is found in 1:23. Continue trusting. Don't shift from the hope of the gospel.</p> <p>The bulk of the sermon/bible study will concentrate on the supremacy of Christ and how that means he is all we need for growth.</p>
1:24-2:7	Paul suffers because he's been tasked by God to proclaim the gospel of Jesus which can grow people in spiritual maturity	Don't be deceived by persuasive arguments (regarding how to grow spiritually). Walk in the Jesus Paul proclaims	<p>We applied the purpose (Don't be deceived + Walk in the Jesus Paul proclaims) to current day situations where people are tempted to leave Paul's gospel behind, thinking they need to graduate to more advanced things in order to grow. The nature of the advanced things are actually spelled out in the next section (2:8-23) so in this section, we focused more on applying "Walk in the Jesus Paul proclaims". What that looks like today is to stick to bible/word ministry for growth because that's where Paul's gospel is to be found.</p>

Passage	Author's main point	Author's purpose	Applying the purpose to a current day situation similar to original situation
2:8-23	You have all of God because you've been filled by the supreme Christ. You're a new-flesh, forgiven person because of Jesus' death and resurrection	Don't be kidnapped by these false teachers!	We applied the purpose "don't be kidnapped" to the current day situation similar to the original situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Things Christians do today that should point to Christ but are possibly ends in themselves now (e.g. Lord's supper, Baptism) b) Ascetic rules that supposedly get you close to God: Church dress codes c) Mystical, visionary realm experiences that supposedly get you close to God. If you don't have them, you have less of God.
3:1-17	You are new people in Christ	Take off the old man clothes. Put on new man clothes.	We applied the purpose "Take off/Put on" to the current day situation similar to the original situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) List of worldly things in Vs 5-9 b) List of godly things in vs 12-17 <p>In this passage, it was particularly important to stress the Main point ("You are new people in Christ") that drives the purpose ("Therefore, take off/put on")</p>
3:18-4:6	Our new relationship with Jesus drives new relationships with other people	[Different purposes for different groups of people]	This section is an extension of 3:18-4:6 in that the purpose there of taking off and putting on is here applied to the specific situation of relationships at home and with outsiders. A current day situation similar to the original situation of slaves and masters (though not exactly) is the relationship between employers/employees.
4:7-18	Sticking to the gospel for spiritual maturity is a team effort	Help each other to stick to the gospel for spiritual maturity	We applied the purpose "Help each other stick to the gospel" to the current day situation of our church community. We painted a picture of how our church community can help each other stick to the gospel by speaking the gospel into each other's lives.