

2 Corinthians

Cracked Pots and Crazy Love

Week Nine

Ready to tie it all together? We've already mentioned that the whole point of Bible Study is to Apply God's Word to our lives. Up until now, that's what we've been doing when we "SPECK" a passage. Now we're going to take a more detailed approach. **The Apply Stage** of the Inductive Process is where we ask the question, "How does it WORK?" That's really a two part question, in a sense. First, "How does it work in general?" and second, "How does it work for me?"

To answer the first half of the question, we can look for principles or **Timeless Truths** that have meaning for people across time and culture. Timeless Truths are not habits, action items, or goals. They are broader and more general, and will have meaning for everyone—regardless of where or when they live. Continuing the examples from last week, here are a couple of Timeless Truths based on specific passages:

- John 4:1-42 Jesus' followers must cross social boundaries to share the good news about Him.
- Philippians 2:1-5 God's people are unified when they humbly look out for each other's interests.

These are principles that are valid for people in New York, Moscow, or Johannesburg. They were appropriate for people in the First Century, the Middle Ages, and today.

How you can cross a social boundary to share the Gospel, or humbly work for the best interests of other people may look different from how a teenager in Moscow or a monk in the Middle Ages did. That is a difference in **Personal Application**, answering the second half of the Apply question, "How does it work...for ME?" Try to make personal applications that are **"SMART"**:

- **Specific**—not be abstract or vague, but practical and concrete.
- **Measurable**—action items that allow you to measure success or completion. Who will hold you accountable, and when?
- **Attainable**—goals that are realistic. Don't set yourself up for failure by being overly ambitious or idealistic.
- **Relevant**—flowing from the Timeless Truth. Do things that really matter!
- **Time-Bound**—goals that extend "for the rest of my life" can be overwhelming.

One caution: The decisions we make to line our lives up with the Truth we see in God's Word are called Personal Applications because they are just that—personal and individual—they do not necessarily work for all people. The life-change God desires in you is not necessarily what he wants for your best friend. Missing this point can lead us into legalism.

Week Nine Homework

Observe (What Do I SEE?)

Pray...Read...Mark up the passage...List one observation per verse.

2 Corinthians 12:11-13:14 (NIV)

Observations

¹¹ I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing. ¹² The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance. ¹³ How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

¹⁴ Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. ¹⁵ So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less? ¹⁶ Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery! ¹⁷ Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent you? ¹⁸ I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did he? Did we not act in the same spirit and follow the same course?

¹⁹ Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. ²⁰ For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. ²¹ I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

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¹ This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." ² I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, ³ since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. ⁴ For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.

⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? ⁶ And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. ⁷ Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. ⁸ For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹ We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection. ¹⁰ This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

¹¹ Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints send their greetings.

¹⁴ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

"Lump and Label" ...Go back over the passage and look for 2-4 "lumps" of content that each express one idea. Give each "lump" a "label." Try to make your labels as brief as possible.

<i>Lump (verses)</i>	<i>Label</i>

List any questions you have about this passage.

Interpret (What Does it MEAN?)

Use your Interpretation Tools to gain insight...we have introduced several tools (listed below) to help us answer any of your questions. Use any that would be helpful to you.

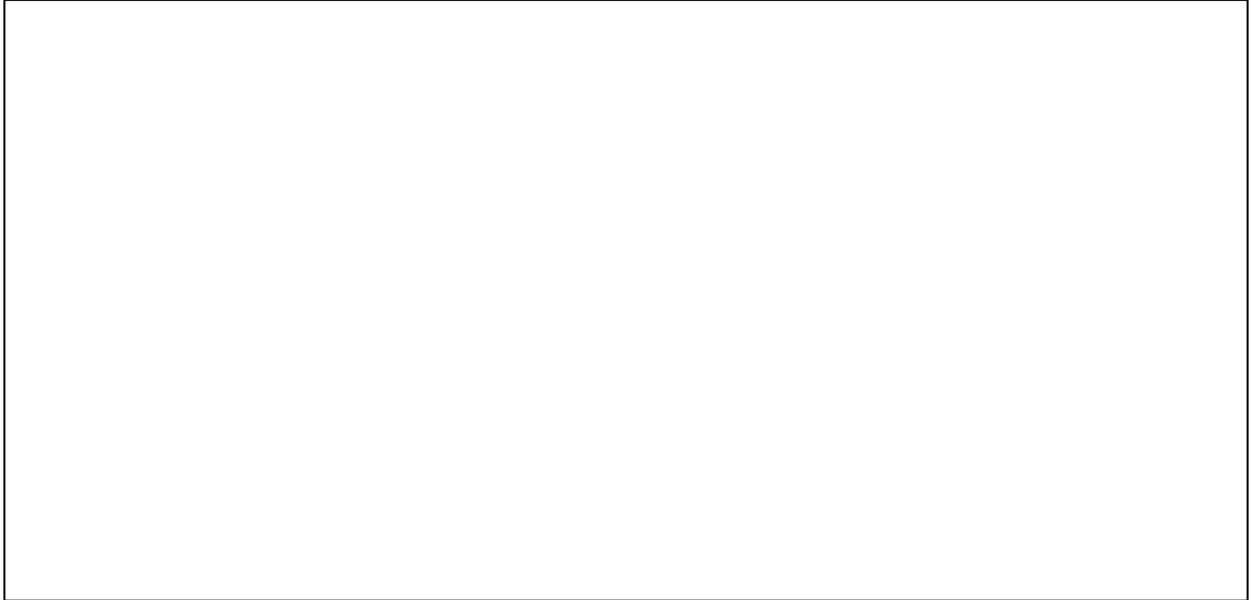
- Context
- Dictionary
- Alternate translations
- Cross references

Record what you find.

Sum It Up...in one sentence, answer the question, "What was that about?"
Stick to what the passage meant to the writer and his original readers. Don't generalize the message at this time.

Apply (How Does it WORK?)

Write a Timeless Truth...identify a Principle based on this week's focus passage that applies to people in all times and cultures. (The SPECK acronym from past weeks may still be helpful to you.)



Write your Personal Application...what can you do about the Timeless Truth you wrote? Make it SMART.

