

***Living The Christian Life Series:***  
***Lesson 22 Developing the Biblical Techniques and The Crowns That***  
***Accompany Them – Part 5***

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**Series Text: Romans 12:1** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

**Applicational Text: Isaiah 28:9-13**

*<sup>9</sup>Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. <sup>10</sup>For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: <sup>11</sup>For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. <sup>12</sup>To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. <sup>13</sup>But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*

**Introduction:**

I spoke recently about the Winchester Mystery House in California. The house was not built according to a blueprint or plan but randomly constructed just for the sake of building. It is a display of beautiful craftsmanship but, lacking an organized plan, most of it serves no useful purpose.

The majority of believers develop their Christian life in much the same way - random bits of information from the Word of God collected over a period of time, but lacking any organized framework or structure, such sermons leave the believer without any structured guidelines for application for growth or any means of measuring that growth. Great oratory, interesting and inspirational messages are empty unless we have some structured, organized method for turning that information into application- application is the objective.

In our study of the “*Biblical Techniques For Living The Christian Life and The Crowns That Accompany Them,*” we have been reminded that the structure of Spiritual Maturity is constructed of Biblical Doctrine, and we have seen that the building material of the structure is Scripture. That Scripture is to be organized into categories of Bible Doctrine that form a structure of applicable Bible knowledge and creates an environment for

spiritual growth. **Spiritual Maturity is not measured in how much Bible you know, but how much Bible you apply. Therefore it is essential for us to understand the “how to” of application.**

**The key categories of doctrine related to developing maturity are Orientation to Grace, Developing A Relaxed Mental Attitude, Mastering the Details of Life, Developing a Capacity to Love, and Inner Happiness. The foundation of the Structure is Jesus Christ and the Word of God, and the roof over the structure is comprised of more the seven thousand promises related to the believer in living out his or her designed ministry.**

**We have repeatedly reviewed the development of the Structure of Spiritual Maturity but before we move on to the third of the techniques for living the Christian life, Developing The Faith/Rest Life and its accompanying crown, The Crown of Life, we need to look at the assembly of the biblical framework of Spiritual Maturity and the application of Scripture to our circumstances.**

**Although there is a danger of defiling the dignity and nullifying the appropriate reverence toward spiritual things through our use of human illustrations for biblical truths, there is a precedent for it in the Bible itself and that is the case concerning our use of an illustration of a five storied building to represent the biblical framework for developing Spiritual Maturity. As we said in our previous study Paul uses three different words to illustrate the process of spiritual growth; "Oikodomi" refers to the structure or building. "Oikodome" refers to the act of building the structure. And, “oikodomos” refers to the builders of the structure.**

## **I. The Bible Is The Material for Erecting the Structure:**

**There was a time when the debate, concerning spiritual growth, as taught in Evangelical Fundamental Churches, centered upon the methods, but today that debate has been expanded to include the role of the Bible itself. Today the debate focuses upon the interpretation and application of the Word. Many churches do not consider the Bible as a sufficient guide and have frequently supplemented it with human philosophy and cultural adjustments such as alternative lifestyles. etc. But today you must add to that the deliberate departure from the fundamental teaching. What began as a difference in methodology invariably resulted in a watered-down theology with the church focused more on philosophy than the absolutes of God's Word. It is the Word that is to provide instruction concerning living the Christian life. And, No! It is not “out-of-date” It contains the timeless principles of an eternal God.**

**II Peter 1:3 says,**

***According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:***

But relax! I'm not going on one of my frequent rants, we will keep this on a positive note - after all we are talking about spiritual maturity. Since it is the application of Scripture to our lives that brings about spiritual maturity, the focus of this "How To" must be on the understanding and application of God's Word.

As we have seen in our previous study, the mechanics of the application of God's Word to our lives begins with the communication of the Word. Communication must be accompanied by comprehension and then we have some choices to make.

## II. Some Assembly Required:

Don't you just love it when you get something new and it is marked "Some Assembly Required."

God provides, at His expense, all we need to live the Christian life, everything we need to develop the structure of spiritual maturity in our lives.

Listen to II Peter 1:3 again,

*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

We have been called to *glory* and virtue. *Glory* refers to a character that reflects godliness resulting in honor and esteem, and *virtue* refers to the spirit controlled life. God has called us to this walk because it will provide the happiness we desire.

There is some spiritual growth that occurs chronologically for us as Christians as we are exposed to the Word of God and circumstances force us to make application. But, if we are going to develop spiritual maturity and receive a crown of glory we must develop a structure of Biblical teaching, and so some assembly is required.

The one who holds the contract to develop the structure of spiritual maturity in your life is "Elohim." "Elohim" is the Hebrew word for God. "Elohim" is a plural word which identifies the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). This Hebrew word emphasizes the triune aspect of God. The Bible describes The Father as the architect, the Son is the one who negotiates the contract between God and the believer, and the Holy Spirit is the working foreman living on the job. Believers are the laborers. I Corinthians 3:9 says, *"...we are laborers together with God..."* Perhaps with the popularity of the DIY (Do It Yourself) programs on TV we ought to broadcast our own program on renovating our lives and developing The Structure of Spiritual Maturity. Maybe this instruction provided in a Podcast on YouTube will suffice.

This passage in II Peter introduces Peter's presentation of the mechanics for developing spiritual maturity. And, although we have examined it in the past, I cite it here again to affirm that God provides everything we need to live life to its fullest: *"...According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and*

*godliness...*, God has given us everything that relates to life. Then, Peter goes on to explain how - "*... through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue...*" God has provided all the material enabling us to attain glory (the development of a Godly character) and that is developed through the knowledge of Him - through the knowledge that is emanating from God.

**Three things must occur if we are to grow spiritually: (1). There Must Be Communication and Comprehension of the Word, (2). We Must Mix The Word with Faith, and (3). We Must Make Application of The Word To Our Circumstances.**

Because we have looked at this process in our earlier study, allow me to refer you back to those notes, and we will focus here on the methodology which is the primary step in which we as a church play a major role. Mixing the Word with faith is personal and is between you and God. Making application of the Word to your circumstances is personal and between you and God.

Spheres of Grace Ministries is here to provide counsel and encourage you, but even the motivation for belief and application is personal between you and God. I can rant and rave in an attempt to motivate you, but life changing motivation is personal between you and God. My primary responsibility is to teach you the principles and methods and encourage you, but you must make the application.

So, let's review again the methodology. The First Step of this process, Communication and Comprehension is two-fold; (1). your Personal Study of the Word, (2). Corporate Study Through The structure of Spheres of Grace Ministries and similar ministries. The productive methodology of Study for Comprehension is basically the same for both personal and corporate study according to Isaiah 28:9-13

**There Are Two Gates for Communication but Three Methods:**

Communication occurs through either the Eye Gate (reading) or the Ear Gate (hearing). But Isaiah explains that there are three methods of communication of the Word through these two gates that lead to understanding.

**Background of Isaiah 28:9-13:**

Israel had become apostate - Oh, they went through some of the motions, there was a flurry of daily activity at the Temple, but they lacked both an understanding and an application of God's Word in their lives. God had appointed them as His stewards, but they refused to be obedient and would not follow His agenda.

He disciplined them repeatedly, but they would not return. Before they went in to occupy the Promised Land He warned them that if they did not walk in the way He appointed them, He would revoke their appointment and take them out of the land.

Here in Isaiah twenty-eight He gave them a sign by which they would know when they had been replaced as His stewards and by which they would know they were about to be expelled from the land.

In this passage God explains the three methods He provides for communication, comprehension, and application of His Word. Let's look at them...

Isaiah 28:9-13

*<sup>9</sup>Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. <sup>10</sup>For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: <sup>11</sup>For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. <sup>12</sup>To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. <sup>13</sup>But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*

Remember! Peter said, "Knowledge and understanding doctrine were the means of developing Spiritual Maturity." Isaiah declared, if we are going to be able to understand doctrine we had to give up the milk and be weaned from the breast. The Bible stories are fascinating and can even be motivational, but if we are going to Live the Christian Life effectively we are going to have to feed upon the meat of God's Word.

Israel was not willing to do that and resisted the teaching of the Word and the first part of this prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost in 30 AD when they were first evangelized with stammering lips and with other tongues indicating they had been removed as the administrator of the things of God. Not only had they been removed as God's administrators but for forty years (a biblical generation) they were warned by this sign (the gift of tongues) that they were going to be removed from the Land because they had rejected the Word.

So, Isaiah identifies three specific methods for the communication of God's Word. These three approaches work in both our personal study and in our corporate study. The three methods are Categorical study, Expository Study, and Textual Study. Let's look at them.

### 1. Categorical: "*For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept;*"

This word "precept" is from the Hebrew word pronounced "*saw.*" The word refers to a command or instruction given by a superior that is to be obeyed. The grammatical structure here shows the building of a command or instruction upon a command or instruction and hence refers to the formulation of categories of doctrine as established in the whole of Scripture. (Topical Studies)

Categorical Study is the approach in which Scripture is built upon other Scripture related to that subject or topic and establishes the basic doctrine for that subject from the composite of Scripture. This approach is essential to understanding and establishing the basic doctrines of the Christian Way of Life and forms the framework for the structure of Spiritual Maturity. It provides an organized structure for identifying Bible Doctrine and establishing one's personal theology and world view.

This approach is written in the emphatic position of the sentence and indicates it is to have preference over the other two approaches. You will also notice that it is repeated, stressing the importance of this method of communication of the Word.

The Word of God to be taught and studied Categorically - *precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept.*

But there are three methods, so let's look at the second...

## 2. Expository: *"...line upon line, line upon line..."*

The second approach to the comprehension of the Word is a line-by-line investigation. This statement of Isaiah, *"...line upon line, line upon line..."* is a reference to the exposition of Scripture - the verse by verse, line by line examination of the Word. It is second in the order of priority but is essential to the first - categorical. Unless we know what the text actually says we will not be able to properly classify it into categories to properly apply it.

The exposition of Scripture is undertaken on several levels from a light surface review to a word by word study and all the way to a grammatical word by word exegesis. There is a place for the surface investigation into what the passage is saying, I once preached through the Old Testament in three years - Sunday Mornings, Sunday Nights and Wednesday evenings. On the other hand, there was the five years it took when I taught the Epistle of I Peter spending three hours each week.

Exposition - *line upon line* - exploration of the Word of God is basic to understanding Scripture accurately in order to properly apply it. The debate will continue till the Saints come marching in as to how extensive and what depth that investigation should be given from the pulpit or from the facilitator in a Bible Study setting.. Most Greek scholars advise, "Leave the Greek in the Pastor's Study." As for me and my house, I feel it is essential to provide the documentation for clarification.

Although I am a rebel by nature, that is not the driving force behind my desire to go into great detail in presenting the Word. The driving force behind that desire is my own personal desire to know exactly what a text says and to understand why I know what it says. Don't just tell me what it says, others might suggest another

interpretation - show me how you arrived at the conclusion that what you say it says is true. Show me the documentation.

Although a passage of Scripture might have a number of applications, it only has one accurate interpretation! This is God's Word and precept **MUST** be upon precept, precept upon precept. In order to ascertain what the precepts are some exposition is required.

### **Exegesis and Isagogics Associated with Exposition.**

Exegesis refers to digging down into the text and extracting the meaning from within the text. The grammatical investigation explores such things as the who, what, why, how, when, and where of the text.

Isagogics refers to building upon the statements of the text, adding appropriate information concerning the setting, the culture, and the participants.

### **3. Textual: "...here a little and there a little..."**

The third form of study is Textual. Textual refers to the selection of a text with no regard to its context or setting, maybe even lifting a statement or line from it and developing a theme out of it with no regard to the actual exposition, just, "**...here a little, there a little...**"

Although the instruction concerning this approach is only stated once where as the other two approaches are repeated, this approach to Scripture has dominated the pulpit ministry of most churches for almost a century. It is motivational but all too frequently it is taken out of context and misinterpreted or inappropriately applied.

When the revival fires of the past century were dying out and the church began its shift from evangelism to a social agenda, that was more Erma Bombeck or Ann Landers than Paul the Apostle, preachers had little training or conviction to preach the Word, and Textual Preaching gave them the latitude to read a text and then go where they wanted to go with it. So it dominates the pulpit scene today and this approach leaves the newly-born believer very little structure in which to grow spiritually. These sermons are motivational but generally lack instruction concerning methods of application - the end result is frustration to the hearers.

## **III. Evaluation, Agreement, and Application:**

The degree of our spiritual maturity can be evaluated by the degree of our inner happiness. The degree of our inner happiness is determined by the degree of our agreement with God concerning specific behavior. Our behavior is determined by the degree of our application of the principles, promises, and doctrines of the Word of God. To deal effectively with temptations we must be in agreement with God about it and erect the structure of spiritual maturity framed out of Bible Doctrine organized

categorically becoming oriented to grace in order to develop a relaxed mental attitude, so we can become master the details of life, giving us a capacity to love, enabling us to experience inner happiness, thus nullifying our susceptibility to temptations.

Through my years of study of this fascinating Book, I have concluded without shadow of doubt its authenticity. The language and harmony affirm its origin. To the degree that we are in agreement with it, we will experience the joy and fulfillment it reveals. It is designed to lead us into the way that will provide the joy and fulfillment we naturally seek in all the wrong places. The objective of developing Spiritual Maturity is inner happiness. Therefore we can evaluate our degree of Spiritual Maturity by the degree of inner happiness we possess. To know the Book will not change your life. Agreeing with the Book and applying the promises, principles, doctrines, and techniques it teaches will give you a different perspective on life and inner happiness.

I am committed to the use of all three of these methods of teaching in my presentation of the of the Word with a focus on documenting what the Scripture actually says so that we can have confidence and clarity as to God's instruction. Does my approach limit the number of Believers that will listen to the documentation and take such an academic approach to a Sunday service? Yes, it does. But there is no end to the number of churches that follow the common norm of motivational speech. Our ministry is keyed to those who want the knowledge and understanding of the application to their lives. The examination of the detail's firms up our realization that the Bible is the inerrant, inspired Word of God. Every jot and every tittle has meaning and harmonizes with every other passage of Scripture and is a reliable source for instruction in Living the Christian Life.

Hebrews 4:12 says, *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edge sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

I can teach it and preach it, but there is one weakness of the system; I can't apply it for you, we must each individually apply it. I am committed to providing the "How To." I am committed to providing an example for you. But you alone must make the personal application. To the extent that you make that application will be the degree of your inner happiness and effectiveness in Living The Christian Life. So, as we go through this review of the "How To" of developing Spiritual Maturity and acquiring the Crown of Glory, the ball will be in your court. You must evaluate, agree with, and apply these truths to your life to experience the happiness they promote.

## **Conclusion:**

The primary problem with the Winchester Mystery House in California is that the focus was, "Just keep building." There was no identifiable objective for the outcome. Such is true of the Bible study pattern of most believers and the preaching in most churches. If you want maturity, you must develop some structure and organization to the reception and application of the Word. Where does a passage fit? What floor of the Structure of

Spiritual Maturity is it a part of? Does it relate to Grace, or does it relate to A Relaxed Mental Attitude, or is it material for Mastering the Details of Life, or perhaps related to development of a Capacity to Love, or is it material directly related to Inner-Happiness. Identify it! And install it on the proper floor.

**Our Applicational Text, Isaiah 28:9-13 says,**

*<sup>9</sup>Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. <sup>10</sup>For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: <sup>11</sup>For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. <sup>12</sup>To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. <sup>13</sup>But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*

**Did you get that? , *This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.* The choice between Inner Happiness and frustration is give to each of us.**

**But it all begins at Salvation:**

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

***I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.***

**(Romans 12:1)**