

CHAPTER EIGHT

Spiritual Principles are made up of Knowledge/Facts, Comprehension and/or Discernment

We are now at the point where we want to insert SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: BIBLICAL TRUTHS THAT NEVER CHANGE. These can be found from Gen 1:1 to the very last verse of Revelation. God is not the author of confusion, nor is he a man that he should change, thus what he teaches in the OT is the same as in the NT. Whatever passage we are studying teaches us practical biblical principles that will be timely and pointed. These are the building blocks of holiness and also are part of our decision making process. If we can internalize these then we can apply them and we are able to quench the fiery darts of the enemy as he flings them our way. Recall the Expanded “4C’s” chart.

Spiritual Principles are ready at our fingertips if we turn what we have learned into practical and factual statements that are true no matter the situation. Here are some ways to gather these principles into our framework. Recall from our Bloom’s Taxonomy that analysis is part of the ongoing growth of critical thinking skills. Now is the time to implement that strategy into your worksheet. Start by analyzing the passage under discussion and then you can formulate your statements.

What it is: Analysis is taking the whole and breaking it into the component parts so the organizational structure may be understood.

Key Words: categorize; classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, inspect, survey, relationships; function, inference; assumption; conclusion

An example of how the Bible presents it: The disciples asked Jesus about the leaven of the Pharisees. His answer using the comparative illustration of the baskets of leftovers led the disciples to understand that it was not leaven as used in baking, but the doctrine of the Pharisees.

How you can use it: When studying, seek to dissect a story into its component parts to ascertain how each part fits together like a puzzle to bring about the whole. For example: the story of Jonah has unique parts which, when fit together, tell a story of man who seeks to go his own way. Analyze each part to see how God used them to bring about His intended end, which was to show mercy to the Ninevites. Then begin to ask yourself questions about Jonah, his journey, his interaction with God etc. Our next step is to analyze ourselves; the message of God and how we are to respond when God calls us to speak to the unsaved of their need of salvation. From that we can ascertain one or more principles to guide us when the “Jonah opportunity” strikes. Thus here are a couple of questions to ask:

1. What point is God teaching through Jonah to the Israelites about the heathen and

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their nationalism?

2. What is the resulting behavior of the Ninevites upon hearing the message of Jonah?

Here are two principles we can glean:

1. God's heart is that no one perishes but all have the opportunity to choose eternal life.
2. God sees the heart of people who choose to hear and respond to His message and then offers them eternal life.

A study of scripture reveals to us that God is seeking men/women of faith. We all fall into one of the categories we call faith: We either have it, we don't have it, or we may have feeble faith which is so weak as to appear as none. Those who have accepted Christ have some measure of faith. Think about Jonah; what was his measure? Think about yourself, what is your measure? If Jonah did not have what we might categorize as full faith, what did God use to bring an increase in his faith? Remember that if we have faith we are commended to utilize it and in contrast we are rebuked if we do not. In the OT and NT we find that God shows us both true as well as false faith and also feeble faith, through circumstances and people's actions.

Now look at yet another example from Matthew chapters 14 to 16. It is here that through the eyes of Matthew we see three distinct and living demonstrations of faith: feeble faith, false faith, and full faith, two of which respond to Him in worship. Thus we can ascertain some principles to guide our thinking:

PRINCIPLES: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. [[Heb 11:1](#)] False/weak faith is condemned whereas proven faith is rewarded.

Now look at yet another scripture sample, Matt 18. Here are some sample principles to give you an idea on how to write them:

1. A child's humility is a mark of greatness.
2. Forgiveness is required
3. What God forgives, we must also
4. Jesus is there among believers (he says he is there whether there are 2 or 3)
5. God holds accountable those who cause His children to sin and those who refuse to forgive

Therefore from this we can be assured that God's Word is alive and powerful. He has provided scriptural principles to help us live out His commands and Word. Therefore, because this is a truth you and I can count on, we can trust these principles to correct us, enhance our learning, instruct us where we are in error and train us in righteousness. [2Tim 3:16]

Now utilizing these understandings, please return to your work on Matthew 14 or the passage from Titus that you have been working on. From this passage determine

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some spiritual principles. Here are some that this author arrived at for you to see as samples.

1. Principle: Jesus works and we must work. HINT: This will then help us arrive at Application questions which is in the queue of future lessons but can be inserted here as a sample. Application Question: Where are you working alongside Jesus?
2. Principle: Jesus prays while we work. Application question: Do you trust that Jesus is praying for you while you are working?
3. Principle: Jesus sends us on ahead while he prays. Thought/challenge question: Have you ever been “sent on ahead” without understanding why? How did you respond? Did you later see the evidence of why? Share that with the instructor or friend.

Now let’s work on inserting our Principles into our worksheet. Next to this explanation is a sample of the author’s principles. On your worksheet you may use these or perhaps the Holy Spirit will guide you to new ones.

NOW YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Consider these questions as you determine the principles:

1. What is the problem in Matt 14: 22-36?
2. What are the spiritual principles you see?
3. How will you use what is taught here in your own life this week?
4. What do you learn about God?

Other Challenges for you to consider:

Here are some sample passages that you can try on your own: Luke 12:22-26, 1Tim 1:1-7 or a passage of your choice.

10 WORD SUBJECT SENTENCE DIVISIONS/SECTIONS
PRINCIPLES: Jesus prepares through prayer Jesus knows us, Little faith = doubts Courageous/“big faith” = Certainty While we are in a storm, J+ prays J+ commands: have courage, do not be afraid

Continue to work on reading, praying and asking the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts. Begin to apply some of what you have learned to test if they are practical principles that you could find no matter the passage under discussion. Begin to analyze your thinking.

CHALLENGE: Has your faith/thinking been biblically based or secularly based?