

APPLYING THE BIBLE TO YOUR LIFE

Though all you need is a printed copy of the Bible, there's an incredible array of 'apps' related to the Bible. Software tools put the Bible in your phone, computer, notepad, the cloud. You have digital, audio, PDF and interactive options for reading, studying, understanding, and living out what God has written. Whether you engage paper and ink or pixels and files, you can put the context of God's text into your mind and heart. So you can put it to work in your life, as you step out in faith to heed what you read. That's the third step in your journey to understanding the Bible. It begins with observation of what the text says, then interpretation of what it means to its Author, then application in your own life, to be transformed in Christ.

Truth Tractor App - the Bible itself offers a suite of non-electronic "apps" for your life. There's a list in 2Timothy 3:16-17 where the Holy Spirit says, "*All Scripture is breathed out by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*" The Bible offers practical help for today's life situations, using the timeless truths that God wrote down, to be applied and put to work, by all people in all places and all times. Here's the Bible's "Truth Tractor App" (spelled TRCTR).

T- teaching App - The Bible teaches what God says, what's true about Him, you, and others. Are you teachable? Already know all you think you want to know? Or just don't want to learn the good, the bad, the ugly about yourself? You're no better than other people. Scripture deals with reality. Through it you learn what you don't know, don't want to know, and need to know. Get real, repent, and learn.

R- reproof App - Scripture shows you how you deviate from truth. That's reproof. What should you stop doing or believing? The Bible reproves the lies of the world, the outside influences that tell you to exalt yourself over others. It rebukes the lies of the flesh, those inside influences that demand you satisfy your wants. And it reveals the lies of the devil, those evil spiritual influences that don't come from God or His Word, that say you're right and others are wrong. Are you reprovable? Or is it all about your way?

C- correction App - God's Word shows you what to do about what you've learned. How you need to change your thoughts, attitudes, actions, words. How you need to repent, turn away from lies. To forsake and renounce the lies of the world, the flesh, the devil. Because they're always attacking you, pressuring you to change course out of line with God's Word. Are you correctable? Or do you refuse to change?

T- training App - The Bible shows you specific steps to take to get back on God's track. That's training, similar to physical or mental disciplines. It's the renewing of your mind according to God's written-down truth. To be conformed to the image of Christ. And it's all revealed in His written Word, the propositions of truth, and revealed in His living Word, the person of Jesus Christ. Are you trainable? Or do you refuse to take action? God says, do the hard work of trusting and obeying what He says, to become like Him.

R- righteousness App - Training has a goal, and the Bible trains you toward righteousness, which means becoming more like the Lord Jesus Christ. Life is all about training for transformation. Because God's eternal truth is the measure to which all things compare. And it's the measure to which you are growing as you trust and obey. Are you righteous? Becoming righteous? As far as possible, daily?

The Holy Spirit works God's Word in your life like a "truth tractor" that stirs up your ground, so you can produce His crop, His fruit in your life. Not dry old words on dusty old pages, but living words of the living God lived out in your life each day. He puts you in perfect order, completely equipped for every good work, profitable, useful for returning value. Believe what He says, and live it out, all by the Spirit's power.

SPECS app - As you understand what God says in the content and context of the passage, to conform you to Christ, "application" is how you're going to get there. Practical things you can do: SPECS, S-sin to confess. P-promises to claim. E-examples to follow. C-commands to obey. S-something else:

Change your thinking, change your ways. Getting unstuck from your default responses to other people and situations. Scripture to memorize or meditate on, prayers to repeat, errors to avoid, conditions to meet, challenges to face, etc. Write it down. Pray the truth of God's Word into your mind and life.

The context of 2Timothy 3:16-17 is about trials, tribulations, and persecutions that followers of Christ experience in daily life. Paul says, "*all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted... because people are deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.*" He goes on to describe the Bible as profitable for you, returning great value as you believe it and live it. Because God's truth, worked out in your mind, your heart, your will, makes you a complete person, spiritually prepared for every good work. Not just knowing, but growing. Not just reading the Bible, but truly understanding it. To apply it, and live it, and be changed - for God and by God! ☐