

**LIVING MY FAITH OUT LOUD:**  
**Accurately Applying Scripture to Life**

\* There are **two scriptures** that should be at the **foundation** of my life of faith:

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)**

16 All **Scripture is God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

**2 Timothy 2:15 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC)**

**15 Study and be eager and do your utmost** to present yourself to God approved, a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, **correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching]** the Word of Truth.

- \* We must all realize and acknowledge that we often “read things into” the scripture because of our cultural context!
- \* At times we read things into the context that isn’t there or we totally miss what the Holy Spirit inspired to be written and understood!
- \* May we commit to God, ourselves and each other that we will truly be seekers of truth as we approach scripture with honor and respect!

I. Let’s learn from the Jewish roots of our faith!!

A. A few days ago on Monday October 1st was ***Simchat Torah!***

1. This is a celebration among the Jews celebrating Torah!!
2. Torah is the Jewish scriptures and the first five books of the Christian Bible!
3. It marks the end of the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings in Synagogue and the beginning of the new yearly readings!
4. It celebrates the love of Torah, the scriptures, and it’s study!!
5. During this celebration, they spend the evening dancing, singing and rejoicing over the Word of God that was given to them!!

**Romans 3:1-2 (NIV)**

1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? **2** Much in every way! First of all, **the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God.**

6. This celebration usually spilled out into the streets and lasted into into the night!!

B. With this in mind, isn’t it amazing to read that a time came when, “the word was made flesh”!

### **John 1:1-4 (NIV)**

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **14** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1. As Christians we must understand that our example in all things is **THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST!**
2. If we want to see an accurate reflection of the character of God we need look no further than the life and person of Jesus!

### **Hebrews 1:1-3 (NIV)**

**1** In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. **3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being,** sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

3. I say all of this for the purpose of discouraging needless arguments about verses and their meanings!

II. With this honor and respect for scripture in mind, let's begin our study and learn how to **"accurately apply scripture to life"**!

A. One of the many stories we often read with our cultural slant is the "Prodigal Son" in Luke 15! ( I encourage you to re-read it! )

1. A seminary professor gave an assignment to twenty-four students.
2. They were to pair up into twelve couples, read the story of the prodigal son and then immediately tell their partner the story.
3. None of the twelve American students mentioned the **famine** in the story that precipitated the son's return to his father.
4. He enlarges his test to one hundred students. Only six mentioned the famine. Only 6 out of 100!!!
5. The group was ethnically, racially and socioeconomically diverse! The only common element was they were all from the United States.
6. While teaching in St. Petersburg, Russia he tries the same assignment. He pulls 50 pairs of students together!
7. This time 42 out of the 50 students mention the famine as the main factor bringing the Prodigal son home!

8. Why? Just seventy years prior 670,000 people had died of starvation from the Nazi siege of the capital city and a three year famine began!
9. Based solely on cultural location, people from America and Russia disagreed about crucial details of the story!
10. So which is it, squandering inheritance or famine? It's both!!

B. Cultural assumptions can affect our interpretation of scripture for several reasons! We cannot pretend our American context is norm!!

1. Cultural blind spots will cause us to misinterpret the Bible and thus cause us to misapply the scriptures to our life! In other words we can **“inaccurately handle the word of truth”!**
2. A missionary told the story of starting his ministry on the coast of Borneo.
3. He met with some Elders who ask about a couple who wanted to join the church there. The Elders said absolutely not!!!
4. When asked what terrible sin they were a part of the Elders replied, “They married in the run”!
5. The couple had eloped!!
6. When Randy asked them why was this such a great sin, the Elders responded, “Have you not read Paul?”
7. Randy actually had gotten his Ph.D.. in the “The life and writings of Paul”.
8. The Elders said to him, “Paul said to obey your parents.”

C. Let's use these scriptures as another example of the Middle Eastern context of our faith!!

**Romans 16:16, I Cor. 16:20, II Cor. 13:12, I Thess. 5:26, I Peter 5:14**

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

1. Do we do that?
2. Is an actual kiss the point Paul is making? Engaging the lips?
3. Could it be that Paul is saying what he says in many other places in scripture “to be kind and affectionate and hospitable?”

D. Take the phrase, “That was a good dog!”

1. To the American it means an obedient dog.
2. To the Australian rancher it means that dog can herd sheep.
3. To the Minahasan people of Indonesia it means a tasty meal!

III. Good grief...what's the point here????????????

A. The point is that the eternal, God breathed Words of God deserve the respect of accurate study and application!!!

### **Isaiah 55:8-11 (NIV)**

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,”  
declares the Lord.

“As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

1. Examples abound of the misapplication of scripture within our Western American context!
2. From **holy kisses** to **head coverings** to **a little wine for your stomach** to the **sins of Sodom** all the way to **what modest dress** really is!

B. God’s redemption and His Kingdom covers all of creation, not just my cultural context!!!

### **Revelation 5:9-10 (NIV)**

And they sang a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from **every tribe and language and people and nation**. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”