

TRYING TO MAKE IT NOT APPLY

When I first started Bible college (the wrong one), I often heard why some verse did not say what it clearly said; in many cases, professors said that a passage was wrongly translated. The professors would say, “What this verse really means is...” or “This verse should have been translated as...” Of course, some passages were interpreted by the teachers, which to them had some strange concept, far from the obvious meaning. After hearing too often that the Bible did not say what it clearly said, I decided to stop trying to figure out why passages did not apply to me and started asking myself how I could live them.

For example:

1 Timothy 2:9 “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;”

I was told that the word *modest* applies to clothing which is not fancy or elaborate. When I read that passage, I really had never thought that. In fact, I thought the exact opposite. After some years, I wondered if those men would ever consider preaching on expensive clothing. (I do not expect they would.) For them, it was easier to explain away the issue of modest dress in financial terms than risk losing members by addressing what we all understand as immodest clothing. Either way, I do not believe those men were ever planning to address a woman’s wardrobe, whether immodest or expensive — the subject was too controversial.

Another principle I heard explained away was this:

2 Timothy 4:5 “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

There seemed to be a problem with the admonition to do “the work of an evangelist.” For some reason, the professors believed that this instruction was only to the first-century Apostles and prophets. (I am not sure why they felt that way, but that is what they told us.) In fact, they also said that soul winning was a gift that only a few people possess. That statement took care of Proverbs 11:30: “...he that winneth souls is wise.” These men taught that this passage simply did not apply to us in modern times.

Rather than belabor the point, I learned something: every time a verse was pointed or demanded a change in the life of the teacher, it somehow did not apply to him. The same position was taken when we looked at verses on tithing, holiness, faithful church attendance, and honoring and loyally following the pastor.

I spent a year and a half at that school and felt sure that I needed different leaders. But I did take a lesson from their sorry loyalty to the Bible. What was being taught in that Bible college “did not apply to me.” I needed to find a college that believed the Word of God — and I happily did so. I wanted every verse to be mine and every command one to honor.

Pastor Goddard