



Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith #2 :: Practical Teaching {Andy Stanley}

INTRODUCTION

It's one thing to know a lot about weightlifting and another thing to actually lift weights. It's one thing to know a lot about nutrition and another thing to eat healthy. Similarly, it's one thing to know a lot about the Bible and another thing to actually live out what it teaches. That's why the Christian life isn't just about knowledge. It's when our acts of faith intersect with God's faithfulness that our faith grows. From Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish builders, we discover that hearing and learning are not enough. The value is in the application, because, in the end, it's obedience that makes all the difference.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The premise of this series is that there are five things God uses to grow our faith. How many of the five can you remember?

- Practical Teaching
- Providential Relationships
- Private Disciplines
- Personal Ministry
- Pivotal Circumstances

Have everyone in your group answer and discuss the following:

1. Did you grow up attending a church that emphasized application? If not, what was emphasized in your church? Doctrine? Sacraments? Attendance?
2. In the message for this session, Andy said that there is a time and a place for quiet reflection and stillness, but church isn't that place. What do you think about that? Was the lack of quiet and stillness a barrier for you when you first attended BBCC/BC/NP or the church you currently attend?

Have someone read Matthew 7:24-28. Then answer and discuss the following questions:

3. This parable follows the Sermon on the Mount. Why do you think Jesus concluded his sermon with this parable?
4. What does this strong exhortation say about Jesus' view of his own teaching?
5. What is the relationship between "... and puts them into practice" in verse 24 and "... had its foundation on the rock" in verse 25?
6. Have you ever applied a specific teaching of Scripture that, looking back, prepared you for an unexpected storm?



7. Can you think of a difficult time you have faced that could have been avoided if you had applied the principles of Scripture?
8. In verse 27, Jesus said that the foolish man's house fell with a great crash. Chances are you know individuals or couples whose lives or marriages could be described in similar terms. Without giving names or too many specifics, describe a situation you know about where someone experienced a great crash that could have been avoided if he or she had consistently applied the teachings of Jesus.
9. If, for the past five years, you had been applying what you know the Scriptures teach about finances, how would things be different in your finances today? Apply this same question to marriage or relationships in general.

MOVING FORWARD

"Unapplied truth is like paint. It doesn't do anybody any good until it is applied." We can be the most learned of believers, but if our knowledge doesn't move us toward application, then our faith will wither. The Bible challenges us to respond to God's truth in many different ways: love your enemies, show forgiveness, and practice generosity. What have been the most difficult truths from the Bible for you to apply?

This week, identify two areas of your life where a bit more application would make a noticeable difference. And then apply.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Matthew 7:24-27