

“Tools”

I’ve bought, borrowed, owned, loaned, used, sold, and given away literally tons of tools in my lifetime. There are a few lessons I’ve learned over the years regarding them that might be useful...

- Tools don’t work well **when they’re the wrong tools for the job.** Anyone who has ever attempted to remove a Metric (millimeter-sized) nut with a S.A.E (inch-sized) wrench knows this. With rare exceptions, the nut is rounded off and has to be removed with a cutting torch- leaving an even bigger mess with which to deal.
- Tools don’t work well **when used contrary to their designed purpose.** Pipe wrenches are awful for driving nails, but are the perfect tool for holding or twisting a pipe to install a fitting.
- Tools don’t work well **when they’re not specific enough.** So-called “multipurpose” tools usually work only moderately well at general applications, and perform poorly at specific ones. For instance, an adjustable wrench works pretty well for fasteners that are exposed in an open location, but they have such a big head (due to the adjustable mechanism) that they are pretty much useless in tighter spaces and specific applications. This is why there are so many tools in the chest. You may be able to accomplish many simple tasks with a hammer, adjustable wrench, and pliers, but these are vastly insufficient for removing and rebuilding an engine!
- Tools don’t work well **when used in an application where the load is too big or too small.** I’ve bent and broken many wrenches, sockets, ratchets, and extensions over the years through the use of a “cheater” pipe (slid over the end of the wrench or ratchet handle to extend them and thereby greatly increase the torque applied). Then too, at times I’ve become very frustrated when using a tool that was too big and heavy for the job because I lacked the proper smaller one.

But this article wasn’t written for DIY purposes, or to justify buying bigger toolboxes and more tools to fill them. **Everything stated above about “tools” also applies to the Word of God, and verses or passages within it.** Think through this with me for a moment....

- Bible verses/passages don’t work well **when they’re the wrong “tool” for the job.** The New Testament gospel message wasn’t given as platform for espousing pet theories, “*strange doctrines,*” or “*myths and endless genealogies,*” or anything else that gives rise “*to speculation rather than the furthering God’s provision which is by faith,*” 1Timothy 2:3-4. Instead, it’s “job” is clearly defined in the next verse, “*But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith,*” 1Timothy 2:5. If we’re using the New Testament for any other purpose(s), we’ve got the wrong job for the tool!
- Bible verses/passages don’t work well **when used contrary to their designed purpose.** For example, the “Parable of the Talents” in Matthew 25:14-30, and v.27 specifically, is about *spiritual* productivity and preparedness for judgment, not church finances and the use of the treasury.
- Bible verses/passages don’t work well **when they’re not specific enough.** The reason we have been given a New Testament consisting of 27 books instead of just John 3:16 and Matthew 7:1 is simple. Though these are great and useful verses, they aren’t specific enough to provide us with everything we need to know and use in our walk of faith. Just as an adjustable wrench and a pair of pliers, useful as they may be in general applications, are insufficient to accomplish specific and formidable tasks, two verses aren’t going to get you or anyone else to heaven. If they could, God would have given us just those two!
- Bible verses/passages don’t work well **when used in an application where the load is too big or too small.** Almost all of the parables taught by Jesus had one main, and usually fairly specific, point to the primary audience- which was the one to whom it was originally spoken. This point is typically fairly obvious if we go back and read the context preceding the parable. We do great disservice to Jesus and the Text when we attempt to make points and applications of these parables beyond His purpose, and often wind up missing the singular point He was making!

The Bible generally, and the New Testament specifically, is a “tool chest” that provides just the right “tool” for every situation in life, 2Timothy 3:16-17. Find and use the right “tool” for each specific “job,”

and you will do well and accomplish much for the Lord. (Philip C. Strong; Southside Church of Christ; 602 Henderson St. (mail to P.O.B. 1448), Jacksonville, TX; online at southsidechurchofchrist.net; on youtube and facebook @ [southsidecoctx](https://www.facebook.com/southsidecoctx); email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)